

By: Representatives Scott (17th), Scott
(80th), Barnett (92nd), Clark, Clarke,
Coleman (29th), Cummings, Fredericks,
Henderson (9th), Hudson, Miller, Morris,
Simmons, Smith (27th), Thomas, Walker

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1234

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT AND
2 IMPLEMENTATION OF A PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN MISSISSIPPI; TO
3 PROVIDE FOR A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
4 2000 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

6 SECTION 1. (1) The Legislature finds the following:

7 (a) Studies show that children who attend
8 prekindergarten have higher academic and social ratings by their
9 kindergarten teachers and better kindergarten attendance than
10 children who do not attend prekindergarten;

11 (b) Participation in a high quality prekindergarten
12 program helps children develop social and preacademic skills that
13 will help them succeed in kindergarten and throughout their
14 educational experiences;

15 (c) The Georgia Prekindergarten Program is a model
16 statewide program established in 1993 to provide a developmentally
17 appropriate program for four-year-old children, emphasizing growth
18 in language and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical
19 development, and personal and social competence, and other
20 southeastern states have implemented prekindergarten programs
21 similar to the Georgia Prekindergarten Program.

22 (2) There is created a Task Force to Study the Development
23 and Implementation of a Prekindergarten Program in Mississippi.
24 The task force shall make a report of its findings and
25 recommendations to the Legislature at least thirty (30) days
26 before the beginning of the 2000 Regular Session of the
27 Legislature for implementation in the 2000-2001 school year.

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29 (3) The task force shall be composed of sixteen (16) members
30 as follows:

31 (a) The chairmen of the Senate Education and
32 Appropriations Committees and two (2) senators appointed by the
33 President of the Senate;

34 (b) The chairmen of the House Education and
35 Appropriations Committees and two (2) members of the House of
36 Representatives appointed by the Speaker;

37 (c) The State Superintendent of Education;

38 (d) The Chairman of the State Board of Education;

39 (e) A local school board member appointed by the State
40 Superintendent of Education;

41 (f) An elementary principal appointed by the State
42 Superintendent of Education;

43 (g) A kindergarten teacher employed in a public school,
44 appointed by the State Superintendent of Education;

45 (h) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Head
46 Start Association;

47 (i) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the
48 President of the Senate; and

49 (j) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the
50 Speaker of the House. In the event the chairman of the Senate or
51 House Education or Appropriations Committees is unable to attend
52 any meeting of the task force, the vice chairman of the respective
53 committee may attend and vote at such meeting. Appointments shall
54 be made within thirty (30) days after passage of this act, and,
55 within fifteen (15) days thereafter on a day to be designated
56 jointly by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House
57 and the State Superintendent of Education, the task force shall
58 meet and organize by selecting from its membership a chairman and
59 a vice chairman. The vice chairman also shall serve as secretary
60 and shall be responsible for keeping all records of the task
61 force. A majority of the members of the task force shall
62 constitute a quorum. In the selection of its officers and the
63 adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of
64 a majority of the task force shall be required. All members shall

65 be notified in writing of all meetings, such notices to be mailed
66 at least five (5) days before the date on which a meeting is to be
67 held.

68 (3) Subject to the availability of funds, members of the
69 task force who are not legislators shall be compensated at the per
70 diem rate authorized by Section 25-3-69 and shall be reimbursed in
71 accordance with Section 25-3-41 for mileage and actual expenses
72 incurred in the performance of their duties. Any member who is
73 also a state employee shall not be eligible to receive per diem
74 compensation. No task force member may incur per diem, travel or
75 other expenses unless previously authorized by vote, at a meeting
76 of the task force, which action shall be recorded in the official
77 minutes of the meeting. Legislative members of the committee
78 shall be paid from the contingent expense funds of their
79 respective houses in the same amounts as provided for committee
80 meetings when the Legislature is not in session; however, no per
81 diem or expense for attending meetings of the task force will be
82 paid while the Legislature is in session. Nonlegislative members
83 shall be paid from any funds made available to the task force for
84 that purpose.

85 (4) The task force may accept money from any source, public
86 or private, to be expended in implementing its duties under this
87 act.

88 (5) The task force may hire staff and utilize clerical and
89 legal staff employed by the State Department of Education, the
90 Office of the Governor, the Legislature and any other staff made
91 available to it.

92 (6) Funding for the task force may be provided from any
93 funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature to the State
94 Department of Education for that purpose.

95 (7) Upon presentation of its report to the 2000 Regular
96 Session, the task force shall be dissolved.

97 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from

98 and after its passage.