

By: Senator(s) Carter

To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2609

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A
2 PRE-KINDERGARTEN "PARENTS AS TEACHERS PILOT PROGRAM" IN THE SCHOOL
3 DISTRICTS IN THE STATE TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
4 LEARNING SKILLS OF THEIR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE; TO SET
5 FORTH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM; TO SET FORTH THE COMPONENTS
6 OF THE PROGRAM; TO SET FORTH PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION; TO
7 PROVIDE FOR FUNDING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 SECTION 1. (1) The State Board of Education shall provide
10 for the establishment of a pre-kindergarten pilot program in the
11 public schools of Mississippi for children under the age of five
12 (5) years, which shall be designated the "Parents as Teachers
13 Pilot Program" following the procedures set forth in this section.

14 The Parents as Teachers Pilot Program shall provide parent
15 education services, including resource materials on home learning
16 activities, private and group educational guidance, individual and
17 group learning experiences for the parent and child, and other
18 activities that enable the parent to improve learning in the home.

19 The objectives of the Parents as Teachers Pilot Program shall be
20 as follows:

21 (a) The program shall be an early childhood parent
22 education and family support program designed to empower all
23 parents to give their child the best possible start in life, based
24 on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most
25 influential teachers.

26 (b) The program shall be a home-school-community
27 partnership providing parents with information on child
28 development from birth to age five (5) which suggests learning

29 opportunities that encourage language and intellectual growth,
30 basic skills leading to reading instruction, and physical and
31 social skills.

32 (c) The program shall be voluntary.

33 (2) Components of the Parents as Teachers Pilot Program
34 shall include, but shall not be limited to:

35 (a) Personalized home visits by certified parent
36 educators, trained in child development, who assist parents in
37 understanding what to expect in each stage of their child's
38 development, and recommend methods to encourage learning and
39 promote strong parent-child relationships.

40 (b) Parent group meetings in which parents share
41 concerns and successes and participate in group parent-child
42 activities.

43 (c) Periodic screening services of the child's overall
44 development, language, hearing and vision, in order to provide
45 early detection of potential learning problems.

46 (d) Provide families with access to other early
47 childhood services and related community services.

48 (3) The State Board of Education shall establish rules and
49 regulations for the submission of school district applications for
50 the Parents as Teachers Pilot Program and criteria and procedures
51 for the operation of the program by local school districts. The
52 State Board of Education shall receive and review applications for
53 the program from local school boards and may award program funding
54 to up to six (6) local school districts throughout the state, with
55 one (1) district in each Mississippi congressional district as
56 such districts exist on the effective date of this and at least
57 one (1) local school district situated in the Delta region of the
58 state, unless there are no applications submitted from a
59 particular congressional district or the Delta.

60 (4) A Parents as Teachers Pilot Program may be funded by:
61 federal funds, nonminimum or nonadequate education program school
62 district funds, grants, gifts or donations from any private
63 sources, and any state funds appropriated for the support of the
64 Parents as Teachers Pilot Program. Any state funds shall be
65 specifically appropriated for the purpose of supporting the

66 Parents as Teachers Pilot Program.

67 (5) School districts that offer an approved Parents as
68 Teachers Pilot Program shall be eligible for state reimbursement
69 subject to appropriations therefor for each participating family.

70 If a school district fails or is unable to offer an approved
71 program the district shall enter into a contract which meets the
72 requirements of this subsection with another district or public
73 agency offering an approved program for such services. If the
74 district finds that no approved program is available in another
75 district or through public agencies, it shall request the State
76 Department of Education to assist it in obtaining from an approved
77 program services at the reimbursable rate. Costs of contractual
78 arrangements shall be the obligation of the school district of
79 residence of each preschool child. Costs of contractual
80 arrangements shall not exceed an amount equal to an amount
81 reimbursable to the school districts under the provisions of this
82 section. No program shall be approved or contract entered into
83 which requires any additional payment by participants or their
84 parents or guardians. Payments for participants for Parents as
85 Teachers Pilot Programs shall be uniform for all districts or
86 public agencies.

87 (6) No person shall be required to participate in any
88 Parents as Teachers Pilot Program.

89 (7) The State Board of Education shall evaluate the Parents
90 as Teachers Pilot Program in participating school districts and
91 shall report to the Legislature and the Governor on or before
92 August 1, 2000, identifying exemplary programs and making
93 recommendations regarding methods and criteria for funding such
94 programs.

95 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
96 and after July 1, 1999.