

By: Blackmon, Simmons, Turner, Johnson  
(38th)

To: Education;  
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2332

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT  
 2 A PROGRAM TO MAKE AVAILABLE A FULL DAY PRE-KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION  
 3 PROGRAM FOR FOUR-YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
 4 WITH SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
 5 THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, HEAD START OR OTHER CHILD  
 6 DAYCARE PROGRAMS; TO ESTABLISH CERTAIN CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAM;  
 7 TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH AN APPLICATION  
 8 PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE  
 9 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO USE AVAILABLE FUNDING FOR GRANTS TO  
 10 PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS; TO ESTABLISH A PRE-KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION  
 11 PROGRAM FUND; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO RECOMMEND  
 12 TO THE LEGISLATURE WHETHER OR NOT THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE  
 13 PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 SECTION 1. (1) As used in this act, the term "four-year  
 16 old" means any child age 4 on or before September 1.

17 (2) To ensure that all four-year olds have access to quality  
 18 educational services, the Legislature hereby finds and declares  
 19 that:

20 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their  
 21 young preschool children.

22 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist parents in  
 23 their role as the primary caregivers and educators by providing  
 24 services for a full day pre-kindergarten program that addresses  
 25 instructional, social and emotional needs for four-year old  
 26 children.

27           (3) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the  
28 Department of Human Services, shall develop and implement a  
29 program to provide services for a full day pre-kindergarten  
30 program that addresses the cognitive, social and emotional needs  
31 of four-year old children, subject to the following conditions and  
32 provisions:

33           (a) The State Board of Education, the Department of  
34 Human Services, the State Board of Health, the Mississippi Head  
35 Start Association and the public and private daycare centers shall  
36 jointly develop criteria for (i) the enrollment of four-year old  
37 children who have predicted significant readiness deficiencies,  
38 (ii) the qualifications of personnel employed to serve the said  
39 children, (iii) pupil/teacher ratio, (iv) health and safety  
40 standards, (v) hours of operation of such programs, and (vi)  
41 provide for the transportation of said children.

42           (b) The core curriculum of all such four-year old  
43 programs will meet or exceed the State Department of Education's  
44 Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum benchmarks. The curriculum shall  
45 encompass language development, mathematics language development:  
46 math concepts, social/emotional development and physical  
47 development (fine, gross, sensory motor development).

48           (c) To ensure coordination, the school district shall  
49 review available educational resources, programs and services in  
50 order to avoid duplication of public services.

51           (d) The State Board of Education shall determine a  
52 process for interested school districts to apply for grant funds  
53 in order to participate in such four-year old programs. Beginning  
54 in fiscal year 2001, the State Board of Education shall award  
55 grants for not less than one (1) program in each Mississippi  
56 congressional district and not more than twenty-five (25) programs  
57 in all, and in subsequent years may award additional program

58 grants subject to the availability of funds specifically  
59 appropriated therefor by the Legislature. These programs shall be  
60 awarded to targeted school districts which are in need of an  
61 instructional program for four-year old children who have  
62 predicted significant readiness deficiencies. The State  
63 Department of Education will annually determine a cost-per-child  
64 rate which shall be used in funding a targeted program, and shall  
65 collaborate with the Department of Human Services in the  
66 determination of fair market rates for subsidized child care. The  
67 targeted districts will be responsible for blending services for  
68 children to avoid duplication in the areas of transportation,  
69 personnel, training of personnel, facilities and child nutrition.

70 (4) The Pre-Kindergarten Education Program Fund is  
71 established. Funds made available by the Legislature for the  
72 support and maintenance of full day pre-kindergarten education  
73 programs authorized under this act shall be deposited into the  
74 fund.

75 (5) The State Board of Education shall report to the  
76 Legislature on July 1, 2001, and annually thereafter, on the  
77 desirability of expanding and permanently establishing the  
78 program.

79 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
80 and after July 1, 2000.