

By: Nunnelee

To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2890

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
2 EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A MENTORING PILOT PROGRAM UNDER WHICH LOCAL
3 SCHOOL DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT MISSISSIPPI WILL ESTABLISH MENTORING
4 PROGRAMS FOCUSING ON SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SCHOOL-BASED
5 SETTINGS; TO SET CRITERIA FOR SUCH MENTORING PROGRAMS; TO PROVIDE
6 FOR AN ASSESSMENT PROCESS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 SECTION 1. (1) The State Department of Education is
9 authorized and directed to establish up to eight (8) pilot
10 programs to involve school districts across Mississippi in
11 developing effective mentoring services in local elementary and
12 middle schools. One (1) pilot program shall be established in
13 each Mississippi Congressional District and three (3) in the
14 state-at-large, one (1) of which shall be located in an urban
15 school district and one (1) of which shall be located in a
16 district having a Level 1 or Level 2 accreditation. The school
17 district mentoring pilot programs will support schools and their
18 mentoring programs by providing recruitment of volunteer mentors,
19 mentor training, support for the mentoring activities and quality
20 control to assure that the children of Mississippi receive the
21 highest standard of mentoring. Such services will be provided
22 through a central state office and regional service centers
23 strategically located throughout the state.

24 (2) The goals of the program are to build confidence, and
25 competence among students needing the support of a caring role
26 model. Studies show that the bond between mentor and mentee
27 reduces the likelihood of substance abuse, skipping school and the
28 use of violence as well as increasing a child's school performance

29 and positive family ties. Mentoring services shall consist of
30 screened adult or high school volunteers regularly meeting on a
31 one-to-one basis with elementary or middle school students at the
32 school during or after school hours. Mentors and mentees meet for
33 activities connected to increasing school success, tutoring, and
34 conversations allowing the child to grow in confidence and
35 self-understanding. The programs will screen mentors and match
36 students with their prospective mentors. Mentoring services will
37 be developed in partnership with school staff, corporations, civic
38 and religious groups and nonprofit organizations. The State
39 Department of Education shall develop, in cooperation with
40 national mentoring initiatives, an assessment process in which the
41 children involved will be assessed for impact in the areas of
42 academic performance and youth development.

43 (3) The State Department of Education shall provide to the
44 Legislature an annual report reflecting school districts involved,
45 number of mentoring relationships and growth of the mentees in the
46 areas of academic performance and youth development.

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