

By: Representative Ford

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 474

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-23-15, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 WHICH REQUIRES THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT PILOT
3 PROGRAMS FOR THE TESTING OF DYSLEXIA IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, TO EXTEND
4 THE DATE OF REPEAL FROM JULY 1, 2001, TO JULY 1, 2002; AND FOR
5 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 SECTION 1. Section 37-23-15, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 37-23-15. (1) The State Department of Education, in
10 accordance with Sections 37-23-1 through 37-23-75, and any
11 additional authority granted in this chapter, shall:

12 (a) Adopt pilot programs under which certain students
13 enrolled or enrolling in public schools in this state shall be
14 tested for dyslexia and related disorders as may be necessary.
15 The pilot programs shall provide that upon the request of a
16 parent, student, school nurse, classroom teacher or other school
17 personnel who has reason to believe that a student has a need to
18 be tested for dyslexia, such student shall be reviewed for
19 appropriate services. However, a student shall not be tested for
20 dyslexia whose parent or guardian objects thereto on grounds that
21 such testing conflicts with his conscientiously held religious
22 beliefs.

23 (b) In accordance with the pilot programs adopted by
24 the State Department of Education, such school boards shall
25 provide remediation in an appropriate multi-sensory, systematic
26 language-based regular education program or programs, as
27 determined by the school district, such as the Texas Scottish Rite
28 Hospital Dyslexia Training Program, pertinent to the child's

29 physical and educational disorders or the sensory area in need of
30 remediation for those students who do not qualify for special
31 education services.

32 (c) The State Department of Education, by not later
33 than January 1, 1997, shall make recommendations to the school
34 boards designated for the pilot programs for the delivery of
35 services to students who are identified as dyslexic.

36 (d) For the purposes of this section:

37 (i) "Dyslexia" means a language processing
38 disorder which may be manifested by difficulty processing
39 expressive or receptive, oral or written language despite adequate
40 intelligence, educational exposure and cultural opportunity.
41 Specific manifestations may occur in one or more areas, including
42 difficulty with the alphabet, reading comprehension, writing and
43 spelling.

44 (ii) "Related disorders" shall include disorders
45 similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory
46 imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia,
47 developmental dysgraphia and developmental spelling disability.

48 (e) Local school districts designated for the pilot
49 programs may utilize any source of funds other than minimum
50 program funds to provide any services under this section.

51 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to
52 require any school district to implement this section unless the
53 local school board, by resolution spread on its minutes,
54 voluntarily agrees to comply with this section and any regulations
55 promulgated under this section. Any local school board may
56 withdraw from participation in the program authorized under this
57 section by providing written notice of its determination to
58 withdraw to the State Department of Education no later than June 1
59 of the preceding fiscal year.

60 (2) State funding for the pilot programs for testing
61 students for dyslexia shall be subject to the availability of
62 funds specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature.

63 (3) The State Department of Education shall prepare a report
64 for the 1999 Regular Session of the Legislature to be submitted to
65 the Chairmen of the Education Committees of the Senate and House
66 of Representatives not later than November 1, 1998, with
67 recommendations as to the effectiveness of the pilot programs for
68 students with dyslexia and whether or not the pilot programs
69 should be expanded or discontinued.

70 (4) This section shall stand repealed from and after July 1,
71 2002.

72 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
73 and after July 1, 2001.