MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

Mississippi legislature

Regular session 2001

By: Representative Clark

To: Education; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 824

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A TRIMESTER SCHOOL YEAR PILOT PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE BOARD TO SELECT UP TO TWELVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE BOARD TO REPORT TO THE CHAIRMEN OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2004, ON THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT PROGRAM AND THE DESIRABILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A TRIMESTER CALENDAR IN ALL MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL DISTRICTS; TO REQUIRE THE BOARD TO ESTABLISH THE ANNUAL SCHOOL CALENDAR, WHICH MUST BE NO LESS THAN 225 DAYS, FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT PROGRAM; TO PRESCRIBE THE CORE CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE BOARD TO INCREASE THE ADEQUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOTMENT TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-13-67, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The State Board of Education shall establish a Trimester School Year Pilot Program to determine the feasibility and desirability of implementing a trimester school year in all public school districts in the state.

(2) During the 2001-2002 school year, the State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations for the implementation of the pilot program and an application process for interested school districts to apply for participation in the pilot program. The board may select up to twelve (12) eligible school districts in which the trimester school year calendar shall be implemented. In selecting participants for the program, the board shall endeavor to include school districts representative of all Mississippi school districts, with consideration given to factors including, but not necessarily limited to, each applying school district's: size; accreditation level; urban or rural nature; demographic profile; and geographical location. At least one (1) school district in each congressional district, as those districts...
exist on July 1, 2001, must be selected for participation in the pilot program unless no application is received by the board from an eligible school district within a particular congressional district.

(3) School districts participating in the Trimester School Year Pilot Program must agree to adhere to the trimester school year calendar adopted by the State Board of Education for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years.

(4) Before January 1, 2004, the State Board of Education shall submit a report to the Chairmen of the Education Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate on the results of the Trimester School Year Pilot Program. The report must include recommendations on whether or not the trimester calendar should be implemented on a permanent basis in all or certain public school districts of the state.

SECTION 2. The State Board of Education shall establish a school year calendar to be observed by those school districts participating in the Trimester School Year Pilot Program. The opening day of the school term must be the Tuesday immediately succeeding the first Monday of September (National Memorial Day). Each trimester must consist of no less than seventy-five (75) days in which students and teachers are in regular attendance for scheduled school work. Upon the conclusion of each trimester, there shall be a break of no less than fifteen (15) calendar days; however, the State Board of Education may designate a total of fourteen (14) days during the breaks as teacher work days or in-service training days. The complete scholastic year for school districts participating in the pilot program must be no less than two hundred twenty-five (225) days. The State Board of Education shall designate the legal holidays that may be observed in school districts participating in the pilot program.

SECTION 3. (1) The core curriculum for students in the fourth through twelfth grades in the school districts
participating in the Trimester School Year Pilot Program shall consist of the following five (5) core courses, each consisting of a minimum of eighteen (18) trimester units of developmental, content-mastery instruction:

(a) Language Arts -- Reading Recognition, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, Grammar, Written Expression and Literature;

(b) Math -- Math Calculations, Math Reasoning, Business Math, Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, Trigonometry and Calculus;

(c) Foreign Language -- Written Expression, Verbal Expression and Literature;

(d) Social Studies:

   (i) Eighth and ninth grades -- World History, consisting of four (4) trimesters with each course following an established timeline and incorporating major social, political and economic issues for South and Central America, North America, the Far East, the Middle East, Africa, Australia and Europe, with all courses to include related geography segments;

   (ii) Tenth and eleventh grades -- American History, consisting of two (2) trimesters from the Indigenous People through the Civil War and two (2) trimesters from the Civil War to the present; and

   (iii) Twelfth grade -- United States Government and two (2) trimesters of Current Political and Social Issues; and

(e) Science -- Earth Science, Biology, Zoology, Chemistry and Physics.

(2) In each school in those school districts participating in the Trimester School Year Pilot Program, the content area teachers shall develop skill progression-based course outlines identifying the primary and secondary data to be mastered. The principal of the school shall collate and assimilate the information into one (1) outline, which shall be forwarded to the school district's central office. The local school board then
shall collate and assimilate the data gathered from the various
schools in that school district into one (1) outline to be
submitted to the State Department of Education. The State
Department of Education shall collate and assimilate the data
gathered from the various school districts participating in the
pilot program into one (1) outline. The department shall submit
the final outline to a panel of university and college educators
for revision.

(3) The State Department of Education shall provide
standardized tests for the core curriculum defined in this
section. Local school districts shall administer the standardized
tests in particular subject areas to all students in the public
schools on the same day, as designated by the State Department of
Education. In administering the tests, a classroom teacher may
not be permitted to monitor the testing of that teacher's
students. All tests shall be scored by machine, and the test
results may be posted only in a pass or fail format.

(4) The State Board of Education shall establish the number
of hours of actual teaching which constitutes a school day in
those school districts participating in the Trimester School Year
Pilot Program. The number of hours of each school day must be
sufficient to satisfy the core curriculum requirements established
in this section.

SECTION 4. In order to sufficiently fund school districts
participating in the Trimester School Year Pilot Program, the
State Board of Education shall increase the annual funding for the
participating school districts under the Mississippi Adequate
Education Program by an amount determined by the following
formula: The annual allocation to the particular school district
under the Mississippi Adequate Education Program shall be divided
by the average number of days that teachers and students are in
actual attendance in all Mississippi school districts that are not
participating in the pilot program. This sum, which represents
the Mississippi Adequate Education Program daily allotment, shall
be multiplied by the difference between two hundred twenty-five
(225) and the average number of days that teachers and students
are in actual attendance in all Mississippi school districts that
are not participating in the pilot program. The result of the
last calculation shall be added to the annual allocation to the
particular school district under the Mississippi Adequate
Education Program.

SECTION 5. Section 37-13-67, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
amended as follows:

37-13-67. Except as otherwise provided under Section 3 of
this act for school districts participating in the Trimester
School Year Pilot Programming, twenty (20) days of actual teaching
in which both teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for
scheduled school work shall constitute a scholastic month. The
number of hours of actual teaching which shall constitute a school
day in any school district not participating in that pilot program
shall be determined and fixed by the board of trustees of the
school district at not less than five (5) hours nor more than
eight (8) hours.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2001.