AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-11-55, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT RULES OR REGULATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO DIRECT LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO ADOPT OR REJECT SUCH PROCEDURES FOR USE IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS PRIOR TO THE 2001-2002 SCHOOL YEAR; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-11-55, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-11-55. (1) On or before August 1, 2001, the State Board of Education shall adopt rules or regulations regarding the administration of corporal punishment in the public schools and shall promulgate such rules or regulations to all local school boards. Such rules or regulations shall provide procedures for the administration of corporal punishment in a reasonable manner and not authorizing the use of excessive force or cruel punishment, and shall be audited by the Attorney General for compliance with applicable federal or state court decisions.

(2) The local school boards of each public school district in Mississippi shall either (a) adopt the procedures adopted by the State Board of Education regarding the use of corporal punishment in the schools as the local school district policy effective with the 2001-2002 school year, or (b) shall reject the procedures adopted by the State Board of Education regarding the use of corporal punishment in the local school district, and may adopt a different local policy regarding the use of corporal punishment in the local schools effective with the 2001-2002 school year. The action required of all school boards under this subsection (2) shall be spread upon the minutes of the local
school board, and shall be incorporated in the code of student
conduct provided under this section.

(3) The local school board shall adopt and make available to all teachers, school personnel, students and parents or guardians, at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year and each school year thereafter, a code of student conduct developed in consultation with the State Board of Education, teachers, school personnel, students and parents or guardians. The code shall be based on the rules governing student conduct and discipline adopted by the school board and may be made available at the school level in the student handbook or similar publication. The code shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Specific grounds for disciplinary action;
(b) Procedures to be followed for acts requiring discipline; and
(c) An explanation of the responsibilities and rights of students with regard to attendance, respect for persons and property, knowledge and observation of rules of conduct, the right to learn, free speech and student publications, assembly, privacy and participation in school programs and activities.

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