

By: Senator(s) Johnson (38th)

To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2641

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-3-81 AND 37-3-83, MISSISSIPPI
 2 CODE OF 1972, TO DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
 3 ESTABLISH A SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND CRISIS
 4 ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND TO AUTHORIZE SCHOOL SAFETY
 5 GRANTS TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO FINANCE CERTAIN PROGRAMS TO
 6 PROVIDE SCHOOL SAFETY; TO ESTABLISH A SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT
 7 PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO PROVIDE FOR A
 8 TEAM OF PROFESSIONAL INDIVIDUALS TO RESPOND TO TRAUMATIC OR
 9 VIOLENT SITUATIONS THAT IMPACT STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN THE PUBLIC
 10 SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE PROCEDURES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM
 11 AND TO AUTHORIZE FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED
 12 PURPOSES.

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

14 SECTION 1. Section 37-3-81, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
15 amended as follows:

16 37-3-81. The Department of Education shall establish and
 17 maintain a School Safety Center, which shall operate a statewide
 18 information clearinghouse that (a) provides assistance to school
 19 districts and communities during school crisis; and (b) provides
 20 technical assistance to public school officials and parents who
 21 need assistance in developing school safety plans and in
 22 maintaining a safe school environment.

23 SECTION 2. Section 37-3-83, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
24 amended as follows:

25 37-3-83. (1) There is established within the State
 26 Department of Education a School Safety Grant Program, available
 27 to all eligible public school districts, to assist in financing
 28 programs to provide school safety.

29 (2) Subject to the extent of appropriations available, the
 30 School Safety Grant Program shall offer any of the following
 31 specific preventive services, and other additional services

32 appropriate to school safety, to be provided through the School
33 Safety Center:

34 (a) Metal detectors;

35 (b) Video surveillance cameras, communication equipment
36 and monitoring equipment for classrooms, school buildings and
37 school buses;

38 (c) Crisis management/action teams responding to school
39 violence; and

40 (d) Violence prevention training, conflict resolution
41 training, and other appropriate training designated by the State
42 Department of Education for faculty and staff.

43 (3) Each local school district of this state may annually
44 apply for * * * school safety grant funds subject to
45 appropriations by the Legislature. In order to be eligible for
46 such program, each local school board desiring to participate
47 shall apply to the State Department of Education by May 31 before
48 the beginning of the applicable fiscal year on forms provided by
49 the department, and shall be required to establish a local School
50 Safety Task Force to involve members of the community in the
51 school safety effort. The State Department of Education shall
52 determine by July 1 of each succeeding year which local school
53 districts have submitted approved applications for school safety
54 grants.

55 (4) As part of the School Safety Grant Program, the State
56 Department of Education may conduct a pilot program to research
57 the feasibility of using video camera equipment in the classroom
58 to address the following:

59 (a) Determine if video cameras in the classroom reduce
60 student disciplinary problems;

61 (b) Enable teachers to present clear and convincing
62 evidence of a student's disruptive behavior to the student, the
63 principal, the superintendent and the student's parents; and

64 (c) Enable teachers to review teaching performance and
65 receive diagnostic feedback for developmental purposes.

66 The results of any such pilot program shall be reported to
67 the Chairmen of the Education Committees in the House of
68 Representatives and Senate by December 15 of the year following
69 implementation of the pilot program. Any funds appropriated by
70 the Legislature for the support of the pilot program shall be used
71 only for the purchase of equipment and supplies necessary for
72 implementation of the pilot program.

73 (5) Any local school district may use video camera equipment
74 in classrooms for the purpose of monitoring school disciplinary
75 problems.

76 SECTION 3. (1) There is established a School Crisis
77 Management Program which shall be attached to the State Department
78 of Education. Under this program, the State Department of
79 Education shall create an office to provide a quick response team
80 of mental health professionals, law enforcement officers
81 experienced in school crisis situations, attorneys and other
82 individuals with appropriate training, to respond to traumatic or
83 violent situations that impact students and faculty in the public
84 schools in Mississippi. The State Department of Education may
85 enter into a contractual agreement with the Mississippi Chapter of
86 the National Association of Social Workers for the administration
87 of the program. The School Crisis Management Program shall meet
88 the following conditions:

89 (a) The basic response team shall consist of at least
90 three (3) individuals, and may consist of a larger number
91 depending on the size of the school and the nature of the event.
92 Each team shall include a licensed counselor or licensed
93 psychologist, a licensed social worker, a law enforcement officer
94 experienced in school crisis situations, and may include an
95 attorney and other individuals with appropriate training. The
96 State Department of Education shall contract with the following

97 associations in order to train and commit individuals on a team:
98 The Mississippi Counseling Association, the Mississippi
99 Psychological Association, the Mississippi Chapter of the National
100 Association of Social Workers, the Mississippi Sheriffs
101 Association, The Mississippi Bar and other appropriate
102 associations associated with individuals trained in school crisis
103 management.

104 (b) In order to access the services of a response team,
105 the request shall be made by the local school principal or the
106 superintendent of schools who shall make the request to the State
107 Department of Education, or its contact designee.

108 (c) The requesting school or school district shall
109 commit student time to the response team during the school day
110 either individually or in groups.

111 (d) A response team shall enter a school to work with
112 students and faculty for no more than a three-day period.

113 (e) Response teams shall be organized on a regional
114 basis in order to provide immediate access to these services.

115 (f) The State Department of Education, or its contact
116 designee, shall operate a toll-free incoming wide area telephone
117 service for the purpose of reporting suspected cases of school
118 violence, and other traumatic situations impacting on students and
119 faculty in the public schools.

120 (g) Subject to the availability of funds specifically
121 appropriated therefor by the Legislature, the expenses of the
122 quick response teams and their administrative support shall be
123 provided from state funds, and the State Department of Education
124 may apply for and expend funds for the support and maintenance of
125 this program from private and other funding sources.

126 (2) Local school districts, school superintendents and
127 principals shall be fully authorized to request and utilize the
128 services of quick response teams provided for under this section.
129 This section shall not be construed to require school officials to

130 request the services of quick response teams provided for under
131 this section.

132 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from
133 and after July 1, 2001.