HOUSE BILL NO. 1345

AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION PROGRESS BOARD; TO CHARGE THE BOARD WITH THE DUTY OF ANNUALLY ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AT ALL LEVELS AND TO SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE LEGISLATURE AND THE AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD; TO PROVIDE THAT THE BOARD SHALL MAKE A REPORT OF ITS WORK TO THE LEGISLATURE BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2002; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds that because the quality of education has a profound impact upon the social, cultural and economic enhancement of the people of Mississippi, the following are some of the educational goals of the state:

(a) That the students, parents, general citizenry, local schoolteachers and administrators, local governments, local school boards, colleges, universities and state government shall share the responsibility for the quality of education delivered through the educational systems in the State of Mississippi:

(i) To produce a functionally literate school population;

(ii) To ensure that all students master the most essential parts of a basic education;

(iii) To encourage the common efforts of students, parents, teachers, administrators and business and professional leaders for the establishment of specific goals for performance;

(iv) To improve instructional and administrative quality, to relate the education community to other policymakers and to achieve increased competency among students, teachers and administrators;
(b) That emphasis shall be placed upon early mastery of the skills necessary to succeed in school and that quality, performance-based early childhood education programs shall be considered an essential element of a comprehensive education system;

(c) That the children of this state shall receive a period of instruction sufficient to train each in the basic educational skills adequate for the student to take his or her place in society and make a contribution as a citizen of this state, and that all children shall be encouraged to continue their education until they have completed high school;

(d) That the high school students of this state shall receive the opportunity and encouragement to complete a college preparation curriculum; and

(e) That the citizenry of this state shall have access to programs in adult lifelong learning, worker training and professional development activities.

SECTION 2. (1) There is created the Mississippi Education Progress Board, the duties of which shall be to assess annually educational progress at all levels and specifically to determine whether the appropriate agencies, institutions or entities of the state:

(a) Launched a broad public campaign directed to all segments of the population underscoring the importance of high school completion, advanced education and adult lifelong learning;

(b) Developed ways to expand and improve prekindergarten programs for children in all areas of the state by establishing pilot projects in selected school districts, using college-student volunteers and creating partnerships among the state's schools, colleges, universities, social service agencies and providers;

(c) Made a comprehensive study of those school districts ranking lowest on the state's accreditation measures and
created guidelines for enhancing partnerships between those school
districts and the teaching programs in the colleges and
universities;
(d) Developed a business plan to strengthen teacher
supply and quality in all academic areas;
(e) Researched ways to obtain federal funds to help
increase advanced placement course offerings throughout the state;
(f) Designed methods to develop better preservice and
inservice training for school principals through a coordinated
approach among the institutions of higher learning, the community
colleges and the State Department of Education;
(g) Facilitated partnerships among college and
university faculty and school administrators and teachers to
develop a school-based strategic research plan to address real
needs in the classroom;
(h) Developed a plan to promote the college prep
curriculum and to encourage all high school students to complete
it;
(i) Conducted a study of the state's human resource
needs and reshaped educational offerings in adult lifelong
learning, worker training and professional development; and
(j) Reviewed possibilities of creating proactive
partnerships with business and industry that will enable the
state's colleges and universities to become full partners in
economic development.
(2) The Mississippi Education Progress Board shall be
composed of fifteen (15) members as follows:
(a) The Governor;
(b) The Lieutenant Governor;
(c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives;
(d) The Executive Director of Mississippi Economic
Council;
(e) The chairman and one (1) other member of the State Board of Education;

(f) The chairman and two (2) other members of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges;

(g) The three (3) executives of the Institutions of Higher Learning;

(h) Three (3) members at large, one (1) of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, one (1) of whom shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and one (1) of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(3) At its first meeting, the board shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from its membership and shall adopt rules for transacting its business and keeping records. Members of the board shall receive a per diem in the amount provided in Section 25-3-69 for each day engaged in the business of the board. Members of the board shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while engaged in official business of the board in accordance with Section 25-3-41, and the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall receive the expense allowance provided for in Section 5-1-47.

(4) Before December 1, 2002, the board shall make a report of its work and recommendations for action, and it shall submit a copy of the report to the Legislature.

(5) The board shall be assigned to the Governor's Office for administrative purposes only, and the Governor's Office shall designate staff to assist the board. The board may solicit grants, donations and other funds and may accept and expend any funds that are made available to the entity to carry out its purpose.

(6) All agencies, departments, offices and institutions of the state, including the state universities and the community and junior colleges, shall cooperate with the board with such assistance as requested by the board.
SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.