AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-3-53, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD TO USE CERTAIN FEDERAL CRITERIA AND CATEGORIES FOR REPORTING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS UNDER THE "MISSISSIPPI REPORT CARD"; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-3-53, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-3-53. Each school year, the State Board of Education, acting through the Office of Educational Accountability, shall develop a public school reporting system, or "Mississippi Report Card," on the performance of students and schools at the local, district and state level, in conformity with federal law. The Mississippi Report Card shall be a school-by-school report card for parents, as well as on the Internet, for all public schools. The Mississippi Report Card shall use the following categories for designating the performance of schools and school districts:

   Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, Below Average and Low-Performing. These report cards shall include math and reading results disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, poverty, students with disabilities as compared to nondisabled students, and English proficiency. These report cards shall be integrated with federal report card requirements where possible. In developing the report card, the Office of Educational Accountability shall collect school, district and state level student achievement data in the appropriate grades as designated by the State Board of Education in all core subjects, and compare the data with national standards to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. The Mississippi
The report card shall provide more than reports to parents on the level at which their children are performing; the report shall provide clear and comparable public information on the level at which schools, school districts and the state public education system are performing. The Office of Educational Accountability shall encourage local school districts and the general public to use Mississippi Report Card information along with local individual student data to assess the quality of instructional programs and the performance of schools and to plan and implement programs of instructional improvement.

Beginning with the 1998-1999 school year, the Mississippi Report Card shall include information, as compiled by the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement, which demonstrates clearly the absenteeism and dropout rates in each school district and the state and whether those rates reflect a positive or negative change from the same information as reported in the previous year's Mississippi Report Card.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.