SENATE BILL NO. 2024

AN ACT TO CREATE A "REGIONAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM (R.A.S.P.)" WHICH SHALL BE AN INTERDICTION RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 WHO ARE NOT APPROPRIATE FOR REFERRAL TO LOCAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SAID PROGRAM BY THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) There is created under the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human Services a program to be known as the "Regional Alternative School Pilot Program (R.A.S.P.)." The program shall be an interdiction/boot camp style program designed for children in Grades 9 through 12 who are determined to be inappropriate for the alternative school programs operated by the local school districts. The program shall be located in a properly licensed residential facility located in Noxubee County or a county adjacent to Noxubee County.

(2) The Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human Services shall implement and administer the Regional Alternative School Pilot Program and shall promulgate rules and regulations concerning the administration of the program. The Division of Youth Services shall prepare written guidelines concerning the nomination and selection process of participants in the program, and such guidelines shall include a list of the factors considered in the selection process.

(3) Participation in the Regional Alternative School Pilot Program shall be on a voluntary basis. No child may be sentenced by any court to participate in the program; however, a youth court judge may refer the program to a child when, under his...
determination, such program would be sufficient to meet the needs
of the child.

(4) The Division of Youth Services may award an adult high
school diploma to each participant who meets the minimum academic
requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education for
graduation from the Regional Alternative School Pilot Program.
Participants in the program who do not meet the minimum academic
requirements may be awarded a special certificate of attendance.
The State Board of Education shall establish rules and regulations
for awarding the adult high school diploma and shall prescribe the
form for such diploma and the certificate of attendance.

(5) The Department of Human Services may accept any
available funds that may be used to defray the expenses of the
program, including, but not limited to, federal funding, public or
private funds and any funds that may be appropriated by the
Legislature for that purpose.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2003.