AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-31-205, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO UTILIZE APPROPRIATE STAFF TO PERFORM SERVICES FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND TO EXPEND VOCATIONAL FUNDS FOR RELATED COSTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-31-205, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-31-205. (1) The State Board of Education shall have the authority to:

(a) Expend funds received either by appropriation or directly from federal or private sources;

(b) Channel funds to secondary schools, community and junior colleges and regional vocational-technical facilities according to priorities set by the board;

(c) Allocate funds on an annual budgetary basis;

(d) Set standards for and approve all vocational and technical education programs in the public school system and community and junior colleges or other agencies or institutions which receive state funds and federal funds for such purposes, including, but not limited to, the following vocational and technical education programs: agriculture, trade and industry, occupational home economics, consumer and homemaking education, distributive education, business and office, health, industrial arts, guidance services, technical education, cooperative education, and all other specialized training not requiring a bachelors degree, with the exception of programs of nursing education regulated under the provisions of Section 37-129-1. The
State Board of Education shall authorize local school boards, within such school board’s discretion, to offer distributive education as a one-hour or two-hour block course. There shall be no reduction of payments from state funding for distributive education due to the selection of either the one-hour or two-hour course offering;

(e) Set and publish licensure standards for vocational and technical education personnel. The State Board of Education shall recognize a vocational and technical education teacher’s work when school is not in session which is in the teacher’s particular field of instruction as a means for the teacher to fulfill the requirements for renewal of the teacher’s license. The board shall establish, by rules and regulations, the documentation of such work which must be submitted to the board and the number of actual working hours required to fulfill renewal requirements. If a vocational and technical education teacher who does not have a bachelor’s degree takes classes in fulfillment of licensure renewal requirements, such classes must be in furtherance of a bachelor’s degree;

(f) Require data and information on program performance from those programs receiving state funds;

(g) Expend funds to expand career information;

(h) Supervise and maintain the Division of Vocational and Technical Education and to utilize, to the greatest extent possible, the division as the administrative unit of the board responsible for coordinating programs and services with local institutions;

(i) Utilize appropriate staff of the State Department of Education to perform services for the vocational student organizations, including, but not limited to, procurement, accounting services, tax services and banking services. The department may also procure and pay for annual audits of the vocational student organizations using vocational funds or other...
available funds of the State Department of Education. It is the
intent of this provision that any related costs be paid with
vocational funds appropriated by the Legislature.

(j) Promulgate such rules and regulations necessary to
carry out the provisions of this chapter in accordance with
Section 25-43-1 et seq.;

(k) Set standards and approve all vocational and
technical education equipment and facilities purchased and/or
leased with state and federal vocational funds;

(l) Encourage provisions for lifelong learning and
changing personal career preferences and advancement of vocational
and technical education students through articulated programs
between high schools and community and junior colleges;

(m) Encourage the establishment of new linkages with
business and industry which will provide for a better
understanding of essential labor market concepts;

(n) Periodically review the funding and reporting
processes required of local school districts by the board or
division with the aim of simplifying or eliminating inefficient
practices and procedures;

(o) Assist in the development of high technology
programs and resource centers to support current and projected
industrial needs;

(p) Assist in the development of a technical assistance
program for business and industry which will provide for
industrial training and services, including the transfer of
information relative to new applications and advancements in
technology; and

(q) Enter into contracts and agreements with the State
Board for Community and Junior Colleges for conditions under which
vocational and technical education programs in community and
junior colleges shall receive state and federal funds which flow
through the State Board of Education for such purposes.
(2) It is the intent of the Legislature that no vocational and technical education course or program existing on June 30, 1982, shall be eliminated by the State Board of Education under the authority vested in paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of this section prior to June 30, 1985. It is further the intent of the Legislature that no vocational and technical education teacher or other personnel employed on June 30, 1983, shall be discharged due to licensure standards promulgated by the board under paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of this section, if any such teacher or personnel shall have complied with any newly published licensure standards by June 30, 1985. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to abrogate or affect in any manner the authority of local public school districts or community and junior colleges to eliminate vocational and technical education courses or programs or to discharge any vocational and technical education teacher or other personnel.

(3) The State Board of Education and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges may provide that every vocational and technical education course or program in Mississippi may integrate academic and vocational-technical education through coherent sequences of courses, so that students in such programs achieve both academic and occupational competencies. The boards may expend federal funds available from the 1990 Perkins Act, or other available federal funds, for the alignment of vocational-technical programs with academic programs through the accreditation process and the teacher licensure process.

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