SENATE BILL NO. 2558

AN ACT TO PROVIDE AN ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS UNDER THE ADEQUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYING SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS BASED UPON SCHOOL STUDENT ENROLLMENT, TO PROVIDE CERTAIN CONDITIONS ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF STATE-FUNDED SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, in addition to other funds allotted under the adequate education program, each school district shall be allotted funding to employ one (1) school social worker for every two thousand (2,000) students enrolled in the school district, or fraction thereof; provided that each school district shall be eligible for at least one (1) state-funded social worker.

(2) The State Department of Education may, however, increase the number of positions funded each year beyond the above requirements as money is made available.

(3) The assignment of state-funded social workers to the particular schools within the district shall be at the discretion of the local school board with the following restrictions:

(a) No individual shall be employed as a school social worker without appropriate training and certification as determined by the State Department of Education; and

(b) School social workers shall be full-time professional personnel and shall spend a minimum of eighty-five percent (85%) of work time in direct social worker relationships with students.
(4) Nothing in this section shall prohibit any school district from employing with local funds more school social workers than are provided for in this section.

(5) The State Department of Education may adopt regulations regarding the activities of the school social workers as are not inconsistent with this section.

SECTION 2. All new programs authorized in this act are subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2003.