

By: Representative Brown

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 632

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT
2 A PROGRAM TO MAKE AVAILABLE A FULL-DAY VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN
3 PROGRAM BY 2007 FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT
4 BETWEEN HEAD START, LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS AND SCHOOL
5 DISTRICTS, BEGINNING WITH COUNTIES THAT REFLECT A NEED AS REPORTED
6 BY POPULATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR PREKINDERGARTEN FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS; TO
7 IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO MAKE AVAILABLE A VOLUNTARY FULL-DAY
8 PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM BY 2009 FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS THROUGH A
9 COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN HEAD START, LICENSED CHILD CARE
10 CENTERS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS, BEGINNING WITH COUNTIES THAT REFLECT
11 A NEED AS REPORTED BY POPULATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR PREKINDERGARTEN FOR
12 THREE-YEAR-OLDS; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
13 REPORT ANNUALLY TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE STATUS OF THE PROGRAMS;
14 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

16 **SECTION 1.** (1) As used in this section, the following terms
17 shall have the following meanings:

18 (a) "Four-year-old" means any child age four (4) on or
19 before September 1.

20 (b) "Three-year-old" means any child age three (3) on
21 or before September 1.

22 (2) To ensure that all four-year-olds and three-year-olds
23 have access to quality educational services, the Legislature
24 finds and declares that:

25 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their
26 young preschool children.

27 (b) The State of Mississippi may assist parents in
28 their role as the primary caregivers and educators by providing
29 services for a full-day prekindergarten program that addresses
30 instructional, social and emotional needs of four-year-old and
31 three-year-old children.

32 (3) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the
33 Department of Human Services, shall develop and implement a

34 voluntary program to provide services for a full-day
35 prekindergarten program that addresses the cognitive, social, and
36 emotional needs of four-year-old and three-year-old children,
37 subject to the following conditions and provisions:

38 (a) The program shall be voluntary.

39 (b) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with
40 the Department of Human Services, the State Board of Health, the
41 Mississippi Head Start Association and the public and private
42 early childhood centers, shall jointly develop criteria for the
43 prekindergarten program including, but not limited to, the
44 following:

45 (i) The enrollment of four-year-old and
46 three-year-old children who have predicted significant readiness
47 deficiencies;

48 (ii) The qualifications of personnel employed to
49 serve the children;

50 (iii) The pupil/teacher ratio;

51 (iv) The health and safety standards;

52 (v) The hours of operation of the programs; and

53 (vi) The transportation of the children to the
54 programs.

55 (c) The core curriculum of all four-year-old and
56 three-year-old programs shall meet or exceed the State Department
57 of Education's prekindergarten curriculum benchmarks.

58 (d) To ensure coordination, the school district shall
59 review available educational resources, programs and services in
60 order to avoid duplication of public services.

61 (e) The State Board of Education shall determine a
62 process for interested school districts to apply for grant funds
63 in order to participate in four-year-old programs. Beginning in
64 fiscal year 2006, the State Board of Education shall award grants
65 for not less than one (1) program in each Mississippi
66 congressional district and not more than twenty-five (25) programs

67 in all, and in later years, may award additional program grants,
68 subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated
69 therefor by the Legislature. These programs shall be awarded to
70 targeted school districts that are in need of an instructional
71 program for four-year-old children who have predicted significant
72 readiness deficiencies. The State Department of Education shall
73 annually determine the cost-per-child rate at the same rate as the
74 base student cost formula under Section 37-151-7. The targeted
75 districts are responsible for blending services for children to
76 avoid duplication in the areas of transportation, personnel,
77 training of personnel, facilities and child nutrition. The
78 program for four-year-olds shall be implemented not later than
79 July 1, 2007.

80 (f) The State Board of Education shall determine a
81 process for interested school districts, Head Start Centers and
82 public and private early childhood development centers to apply
83 for grant funds in order to participate in three-year-old
84 programs. Beginning in fiscal year 2008, the State Board of
85 Education shall award grants for not less than one (1) program in
86 each Mississippi congressional district and not more than
87 twenty-five (25) programs in all, and in later years, may award
88 additional program grants, subject to the availability of funds
89 specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature. These
90 programs shall be awarded to targeted school districts that are in
91 need of an instructional program for three-year-old children who
92 have predicted significant readiness deficiencies. The State
93 Department of Education shall annually determine a cost-per-child
94 rate at the same rate as the base student cost formula under
95 Section 37-151-7. The targeted districts are responsible for
96 blending services for children to avoid duplication in the areas
97 of transportation, personnel, training of personnel, facilities
98 and child nutrition. The program for three-year-olds shall be
99 implemented not later than July 1, 2009.

100 (4) The State Board of Education shall report to the
101 Legislature by December 1 of each year on the status of programs.

102 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
103 and after July 1, 2005.