By: Senator(s) Chaney, King, White

To: Education;
Appropriations

## SENATE BILL NO. 2274 (As Passed the Senate)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7	APPROPRIATE PRIVATE ENTITY TO PERFORM FUNCTIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS UNDER SEVISE SANCTIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS CONFORM TO THOSE APPLICABLE TO PRIORIT	N TO CONTRACT WITH AN MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT STATE CONSERVATORSHIP; TO UNDER CONSERVATORSHIP; TO
8	BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE	OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:
9	SECTION 1. Section 37-17-6, Mississip	opi Code of 1972, is amended
10	as follows:	
11	37-17-6. (1) The State Board of	f Education, acting through
12	the Commission on School Accreditation	n, shall establish and
13	implement a permanent performance-base	ed accreditation system, and
14	all public elementary and secondary so	chools shall be accredited
15	under this system.	
16	(2) No later than June 30, 1995	, the State Board of
17	Education, acting through the Commiss:	ion on School Accreditation,
18	shall require school districts to prov	vide school classroom space
19	that is air conditioned as a minimum n	requirement for
20	accreditation.	
21	(3) (a) Beginning with the 1994	4-1995 school year, the State
22	Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School	
23	Accreditation, shall require that school districts employ	
24	certified school librarians according to the following formula:	
25	Number of Students	Number of Certified
26	Per School Library	School Librarians
27	0 - 499 Students	1/2 Full-time Equivalent

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500 or More Students

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Certified Librarian

1 Full-time Certified

30 Librarian

31 (b) The State Board of Education, however, may increase

- 32 the number of positions beyond the above requirements.
- 33 (c) The assignment of such school librarians to the
- 34 particular schools shall be at the discretion of the local school
- 35 district. No individual shall be employed as a certified school
- 36 librarian without appropriate training and certification as a
- 37 school librarian by the State Department of Education.
- 38 (d) School librarians in such district shall spend at
- 39 least fifty percent (50%) of direct work time in a school library
- 40 and shall devote no more than one-fourth (1/4) of the workday to
- 41 administrative activities which are library related.
- 42 (e) Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit any
- 43 school district from employing more certified school librarians
- 44 than are provided for in this section.
- 45 (f) Any additional millage levied to fund school
- 46 librarians required for accreditation under this subsection shall
- 47 be included in the tax increase limitation set forth in Sections
- 48 37-57-105 and 37-57-107 and shall not be deemed a new program for
- 49 purposes of the limitation.
- 50 (4) On or before December 31, 2002, the State Board of
- 51 Education shall implement the performance-based accreditation
- 52 system for school districts and for individual schools which shall
- 53 include the following:
- 54 (a) High expectations for students and high standards
- 55 for all schools, with a focus on the basic curriculum;
- 56 (b) Strong accountability for results with appropriate
- 57 local flexibility for local implementation;
- 58 (c) A process to implement accountability at both the
- 59 school district level and the school level;
- (d) Individual schools shall be held accountable for
- 61 student growth and performance;

- (e) Set annual performance standards for each of the
- 63 schools of the state and measure the performance of each school
- 64 against itself through the standard that has been set for it;
- (f) A determination of which schools exceed their
- 66 standards and a plan for providing recognition and rewards to such
- 67 schools;
- (g) A determination of which schools are failing to
- 69 meet their standards and a determination of the appropriate role
- 70 of the State Board of Education and the State Department of
- 71 Education in providing assistance and initiating possible
- 72 intervention; and
- 73 (h) Development of a comprehensive student assessment
- 74 system to implement these requirements.
- 75 The State Board of Education may continue to assign school
- 76 district performance levels by using a number classification and
- 77 may assign individual school performance levels by using a number
- 78 classification to be consistent with school district performance
- 79 levels.
- 80 (5) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to require a
- 81 nonpublic school which receives no local, state or federal funds
- 82 for support to become accredited by the State Board of Education.
- 83 (6) The State Board of Education shall create an
- 84 accreditation audit unit under the Commission on School
- 85 Accreditation to determine whether schools are complying with
- 86 accreditation standards.
- 87 (7) The State Board of Education shall be specifically
- 88 authorized and empowered to withhold adequate minimum education
- 89 program or adequate education program fund allocations, whichever
- 90 is applicable, to any public school district for failure to timely
- 91 report student, school personnel and fiscal data necessary to meet
- 92 state and/or federal requirements.
- 93 (8) Deleted.

The State Board of Education shall establish, for those 94 (9) 95 school districts failing to meet accreditation standards, a 96 program of development to be complied with in order to receive 97 state funds, except as otherwise provided in subsection (14) of 98 this section when the Governor has declared a state of emergency 99 in a school district or as otherwise provided in Section 206, Mississippi Constitution of 1890. The state board, in 100 establishing these standards, shall provide for notice to schools 101 102 and sufficient time and aid to enable schools to attempt to meet these standards, unless procedures under subsection (14) of this 103 104 section have been invoked. (10) Beginning July 1, 1998, the State Board of Education 105 106 shall be charged with the implementation of the program of 107 development in each applicable school district as follows: Develop an impairment report for each district 108 109 failing to meet accreditation standards in conjunction with school 110 district officials; 111 Notify any applicable school district failing to meet accreditation standards that it is on probation until 112 113 corrective actions are taken or until the deficiencies have been removed. The local school district shall develop a corrective 114 action plan to improve its deficiencies. For district academic 115 deficiencies, the corrective action plan for each such school 116 117 district shall be based upon a complete analysis of the following: 118 student test data, student grades, student attendance reports, student drop-out data, existence and other relevant data. 119 120 corrective action plan shall describe the specific measures to be taken by the particular school district and school to improve: 121 (a) instruction; (b) curriculum; (c) professional development; (d) 122

personnel and classroom organization; (e) student incentives for

performance; (f) process deficiencies; and (g) reporting to the

local school board, parents and the community. The corrective

action plan shall describe the specific individuals responsible S. B. No. 2274  $$^{*}SS01/R704PS^{*}$$  05/SS01/R704PS PAGE 4

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- 127 for implementing each component of the recommendation and how each
- 128 will be evaluated. All corrective action plans shall be provided
- 129 to the State Board of Education as may be required. The decision
- 130 of the State Board of Education establishing the probationary
- 131 period of time shall be final;
- 132 (c) Offer, during the probationary period, technical
- 133 assistance to the school district in making corrective actions.
- 134 Beginning July 1, 1998, subject to the availability of funds, the
- 135 State Department of Education shall provide technical and/or
- 136 financial assistance to all such school districts in order to
- 137 implement each measure identified in that district's corrective
- 138 action plan through professional development and on-site
- 139 assistance. Each such school district shall apply for and utilize
- 140 all available federal funding in order to support its corrective
- 141 action plan in addition to state funds made available under this
- 142 paragraph;
- 143 (d) Assign department personnel or contract, in its
- 144 discretion, with the institutions of higher learning or other
- 145 appropriate private entities with experience in the academic,
- 146 finance and other operational functions of schools to assist
- 147 school districts;
- 148 (e) Provide for publication of public notice at least
- one (1) time during the probationary period, in a newspaper
- 150 published within the jurisdiction of the school district failing
- 151 to meet accreditation standards, or if no newspaper is published
- 152 therein, then in a newspaper having a general circulation therein.
- 153 The publication shall include the following: declaration of
- 154 school system's status as being on probation; all details relating
- 155 to the impairment report, and other information as the State Board
- 156 of Education deems appropriate. Public notices issued under this
- 157 section shall be subject to Section 13-3-31 and not contrary to
- 158 other laws regarding newspaper publication.

(a) If the recommendations for corrective action are (11)159 160 not taken by the local school district or if the deficiencies are 161 not removed by the end of the probationary period, the Commission 162 on School Accreditation shall conduct a hearing to allow such 163 affected school district to present evidence or other reasons why 164 its accreditation should not be withdrawn. Subsequent to its consideration of the results of such hearing, the Commission on 165 School Accreditation shall be authorized, with the approval of the 166 167 State Board of Education, to withdraw the accreditation of a public school district, and issue a request to the Governor that a 168 169 state of emergency be declared in that district. If the State Board of Education and the Commission 170 171

on School Accreditation determine that an extreme emergency situation exists in a school district which jeopardizes the safety, security or educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools in that district and such emergency situation is believed to be related to a serious violation or violations of accreditation standards or state or federal law, the State Board of Education may request the Governor to declare a state of emergency in that school district. For purposes of this paragraph, such declarations of a state of emergency shall not be limited to those instances when a school district's impairments are related to a lack of financial resources, but also shall include serious failure to meet minimum academic standards, as evidenced by a continued pattern of poor student performance.

- (c) Whenever the Governor declares a state of emergency in a school district in response to a request made under paragraph (a) or (b) of this subsection, the State Board of Education may take one or more of the following actions:
- (i) Declare a state of emergency, under which some or all of state funds can be escrowed except as otherwise provided in Section 206, Constitution of 1890, until the board determines corrective actions are being taken or the deficiencies have been S. B. No. 2274 \*SSO1/R704PS\*

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removed, or that the needs of students warrant the release of 192 193 funds. Such funds may be released from escrow for any program 194 which the board determines to have been restored to standard even 195 though the state of emergency may not as yet be terminated for the 196 district as a whole; (ii) Override any decision of the local school 197 198 board or superintendent of education, or both, concerning the management and operation of the school district, or initiate and 199 200 make decisions concerning the management and operation of the school district; 201 202 (iii) Assign an interim conservator, or in its 203 discretion, contract with a private entity with experience in the 204 academic, finance and other operational functions of schools and 205 school districts, who will have those powers and duties prescribed in subsection (14) of this section; 206 (iv) Grant transfers to students who attend this 207 school district so that they may attend other accredited schools 208 209 or districts in a manner which is not in violation of state or 210 federal law; 211 (v)Issue a written request with documentation to 212 the Governor asking that the office of the superintendent of such school district be subject to recall. Whenever the Governor 213 214 declares that the office of the superintendent of such school district is subject to recall, the local school board or the 215 216 county election commission, as the case may be, shall take the 217 following action: 218 1. If the office of superintendent is an elected office, in those years in which there is no general 219 election, the name shall be submitted by the State Board of 220 221 Education to the county election commission at least sixty (60) days before the next regular special election, and the county 222 election commission shall submit the question at the next regular 223 224 special election to the voters eligible to vote for the office of

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225	superintendent within the county. The ballot shall read	
226	substantially as follows:	
227	"Shall county superintendent of education (here	
228	the name of the superintendent shall be inserted) of the	
229	(here the title of the school district shall be inserted) be	
230	retained in office? Yes No"	
231	If a majority of those voting on the question votes against	
232	retaining the superintendent in office, a vacancy shall exist	
233	which shall be filled in the manner provided by law; otherwise,	
234	the superintendent shall remain in office for the term of such	
235	office, and at the expiration of such term shall be eligible for	
236	qualification and election to another term or terms.	
237	2. If the office of superintendent is an	
238	appointive office, the name of the superintendent shall be	
239	submitted by the president of the local school board at the next	
240	regular meeting of the school board for retention in office or	
241	dismissal from office. If a majority of the school board voting	
242	on the question vote against retaining the superintendent in	
243	office, a vacancy shall exist which shall be filled as provided by	
244	law. Otherwise the superintendent shall remain in office for the	
245	duration of his employment contract.	
246	(vi) Issue a written request with documentation to	
247	the Governor that the membership of the school board of such	
248	school district shall be subject to recall. Whenever the Governor	
249	declares that the membership of the school board shall be subject	
250	to recall, the county election commission or the local governing	
251	authorities, as the case may be, shall take the following action:	
252	1. If the members of the local school board	
253	are elected to office, in those years in which the specific	
254	member's office is not up for election, the name of the school	
255	board member shall be admitted by the State Board of Education to	
256	the county election commission at least sixty (60) days before the	
257	next regular special election, and the county election commission	
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258	at the next regular special election shall submit the question to	
259	the voters eligible to vote for the particular member's office	
260	within the county or school district, as the case may be. The	
261	ballot shall read substantially as follows:	
262	"Members of the (here the title of the school	
263	district shall be inserted) School Board who are not up for	
264	election this year are subject to recall because of the Governor's	
265	declaration of an emergency in the school district. Shall the	
266	member of the school board representing this area,	
267	(here the name of the school board member holding the office shall	
268	be inserted), be retained in office? Yes No"	
269	If a majority of those voting on the question vote against	
270	retaining the member of the school board in office, a vacancy in	
271	that board member's office shall exist which shall be filled in	
272	the manner provided by law; otherwise, the school board member	
273	shall remain in office for the term of such office, and at the	
274	expiration of the term of office, the member shall be eligible for	
275	qualification and election to another term or terms of office.	
276	However, if a majority of the school board members are recalled in	
277	the regular special election, the Governor shall authorize the	
278	board of supervisors of the county in which the school district is	
279	situated to appoint members to fill the offices of the members	
280	recalled. The board of supervisors shall make such appointments	
281	in the manner provided by law for filling vacancies on the school	
282	board, and the appointed members shall serve until the office is	
283	filled at the next regular special or general election.	
284	2. If the local school board is an appointed	
285	school board, the name of all school board members shall be	
286	submitted as a collective board by the president of the municipal	
287	or county governing authority, as the case may be, at the next	
288	regular meeting of the governing authority for retention in office	
289	or dismissal from office. If a majority of the governing	
290	authority voting on the question vote against retaining the board	
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in office, a vacancy shall exist in each school board member's
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     office, which shall be filled as provided by law; otherwise, the
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     members of the appointed school board shall remain in office for
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     the duration of their term of appointment, and such members may be
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     reappointed.
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                         3. If the local school board is comprised of
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     both elected and appointed members, the elected members shall be
     the subject to recall in the manner provided in item 1 of this
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     subsection. Appointed members shall be subject to recall in the
     manner provided in item 2.
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                    (vii) For states of emergency declared under
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     paragraph (a) only, if the accreditation deficiencies are related
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     to the fact that the school district is too small, with too few
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     resources, to meet the required standards and if another school
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     district is willing to accept those students, abolish that
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     district and assign that territory to another school district or
     districts. If the school district has proposed a voluntary
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     consolidation with another school district or districts, then if
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     the State Board of Education finds that it is in the best interest
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     of the pupils of the district for such consolidation to proceed,
     the voluntary consolidation shall have priority over any such
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     assignment of territory by the State Board of Education;
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                    (viii) For states of emergency declared under
     paragraph (b) only, reduce local supplements paid to school
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     district employees, including, but not limited to, instructional
     personnel, assistant teachers and extracurricular activities
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     personnel, if the district's impairment is related to a lack of
     financial resources, but only to an extent which will result in
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     the salaries being comparable to districts similarly situated, as
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     determined by the State Board of Education;
                    (ix) For states of emergency declared under
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     paragraph (b) only, the State Board of Education must take such
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     action as prescribed in Section 37-17-13.
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324 (d) At such time as satisfactory corrective action has 325 been taken in a school district in which a state of emergency has 326 been declared, the State Board of Education may request the 327 Governor to declare that the state of emergency no longer exists

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in the district.

(e) Not later than July 1 of each year, the State

Department of Education shall develop an itemized accounting of
the expenditures associated with the management of the conservator
process with regard to each school district in which a conservator
has been appointed, and an assessment as to the extent to which
the conservator has achieved, or failed to achieve, the goals for
which the conservator was appointed to guide the local school
district.

Upon the declaration of a state of emergency in a (12)school district under subsection (11) of this section, the Commission on School Accreditation shall be responsible for public notice at least once a week for at least three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper published within the jurisdiction of the school district failing to meet accreditation standards, or if no newspaper is published therein, then in a newspaper having a general circulation therein. The size of such notice shall be no smaller than one-fourth (1/4) of a standard newspaper page and shall be printed in bold print. If a conservator has been appointed for the school district, such notice shall begin as "By authority of Section 37-17-6, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, adopted by the Mississippi Legislature during the 1991 Regular Session, this school district (name of school district) is hereby placed under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Education acting through its appointed conservator (name of conservator)."

The notice also shall include, in the discretion of the State Board of Education, any or all details relating to the school district's emergency status, including the declaration of a state S. B. No. 2274 \*SSO1/R704PS\* 05/SSO1/R704PS

of emergency in the school district and a description of the district's impairment deficiencies, conditions of any conservatorship and corrective actions recommended and being Public notices issued under this section shall be subject to Section 13-3-31 and not contrary to other laws regarding newspaper publication. Upon termination of the state of emergency in a school district, the Commission on School Accreditation shall cause notice to be published in the school district in the same manner

Upon termination of the state of emergency in a school district, the Commission on School Accreditation shall cause notice to be published in the school district in the same manner provided in this section, to include any or all details relating to the corrective action taken in the school district which resulted in the termination of the state of emergency.

(13) The State Board of Education or the Commission on School Accreditation shall have the authority to require school districts to produce the necessary reports, correspondence, financial statements, and any other documents and information necessary to fulfill the requirements of this section.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to grant any individual, corporation, board or conservator the authority to levy taxes except in accordance with presently existing statutory provisions.

emergency in a school district in response to a request made under subsection (11) of this section, the State Board of Education, in its discretion, may assign an interim conservator to the school district, or in its discretion, may contract with an appropriate private entity with experience in the academic, finance and other operational functions of schools and school districts, who will be responsible for the administration, management and operation of the school district, including, but not limited to, the following activities:

(i) Approving or disapproving all financial

obligations of the district, including, but not limited to, the

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employment, termination, nonrenewal and reassignment of all
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     certified and noncertified personnel, contractual agreements and
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     purchase orders, and approving or disapproving all claim dockets
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     and the issuance of checks; in approving or disapproving
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     employment contracts of superintendents, assistant superintendents
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     or principals, the interim conservator shall not be required to
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     comply with the time limitations prescribed in Sections 37-9-15
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     and 37-9-105;
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                    (ii) Supervising the day-to-day activities of the
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     district's staff, including reassigning the duties and
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     responsibilities of personnel in a manner which, in the
     determination of the conservator, will best suit the needs of the
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     district;
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                    (iii) Reviewing the district's total financial
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     obligations and operations and making recommendations to the
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     district for cost savings, including, but not limited to,
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     reassigning the duties and responsibilities of staff;
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                    (iv) Attending all meetings of the district's
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     school board and administrative staff;
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                    (v) Approving or disapproving all athletic, band
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     and other extracurricular activities and any matters related to
     those activities;
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                    (vi) Maintaining a detailed account of
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     recommendations made to the district and actions taken in response
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     to those recommendations;
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                    (vii) Reporting periodically to the State Board of
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     Education on the progress or lack of progress being made in the
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     district to improve the district's impairments during the state of
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     emergency; and
                    (viii)
                            Appointing a parent advisory committee,
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     comprised of parents of students in the school district, which may
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     make recommendations to the conservator concerning the
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administration, management and operation of the school district.

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Except when, in the determination of the State Board of 423 424 Education, the school district's impairment is related to a lack of financial resources, the cost of the salary of the conservator 425 426 and any other actual and necessary costs related to the 427 conservatorship paid by the State Department of Education shall be 428 reimbursed by the local school district from nonminimum program 429 The department shall submit an itemized statement to the funds. 430 superintendent of the local school district for reimbursement 431 purposes, and any unpaid balance may be withheld from the 432 district's minimum or adequate education program funds. 433 At such time as the Governor, pursuant to the request of the 434 State Board of Education, declares that the state of emergency no 435 longer exists in a school district, the powers and 436 responsibilities of the interim conservator assigned to such 437 district shall cease. 438 In order to provide loans to school districts under (b) 439 a state of emergency which have impairments related to a lack of 440 financial resources, the School District Emergency Assistance Fund 441 is created as a special fund in the State Treasury into which 442 monies may be transferred or appropriated by the Legislature from 443 any available public education funds. The maximum amount that may 444 be appropriated or transferred to the School District Emergency 445 Assistance Fund for any one (1) emergency shall be Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00), and the maximum amount that may be 446 447 appropriated during any fiscal year shall be Three Million Dollars 448 (\$3,000,000.00). 449 The State Board of Education may loan monies from the School 450 District Emergency Assistance Fund to a school district that is under a state of emergency in such amounts, as determined by the 451 452 board, which are necessary to correct the district's impairments 453 related to a lack of financial resources. The loans shall be 454 evidenced by an agreement between the school district and the 455 State Board of Education and shall be repayable in principal,

without necessity of interest, to the State General Fund or the 456 457 Education Enhancement Fund, depending on the source of funding for 458 such loan, by the school district from any allowable funds that 459 are available. The total amount loaned to the district shall be 460 due and payable within five (5) years after the impairments 461 related to a lack of financial resources are corrected. 462 school district fails to make payments on the loan in accordance 463 with the terms of the agreement between the district and the State 464 Board of Education, the State Department of Education, in 465 accordance with rules and regulations established by the State 466 Board of Education, may withhold that district's minimum program 467 funds in an amount and manner that will effectuate repayment 468 consistent with the terms of the agreement; such funds withheld by 469 the department shall be deposited into the State General Fund or 470 the Education Enhancement Fund, as the case may be. If the State Board of Education determines that an extreme 471 472 emergency exists, simultaneous with the powers exercised in this 473 subsection, it shall take immediate action against all parties 474 responsible for the affected school districts having been 475 determined to be in an extreme emergency. Such action shall 476 include, but not be limited to, initiating civil actions to 477 recover funds and criminal actions to account for criminal 478 activity. Any funds recovered by the State Auditor or the State Board of Education from the surety bonds of school officials or 479 480 from any civil action brought under this subsection shall be applied toward the repayment of any loan made to a school district 481 482 hereunder. 483 In the event a majority of the membership of the school board of any school district resigns from office, the State Board 484 485 of Education shall be authorized to assign an interim conservator, 486 who shall be responsible for the administration, management and 487 operation of the school district until such time as new board

members are selected or the Governor declares a state of emergency

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- in that school district under subsection (11), whichever occurs first. In such case, the State Board of Education, acting through the interim conservator, shall have all powers which were held by the previously existing school board, and may take such action as prescribed in Section 37-17-13 and/or one or more of the actions authorized in this section.
- 495 (16) Beginning with the school district audits conducted for
  496 the 1997-1998 fiscal year, the State Board of Education, acting
  497 through the Commission on School Accreditation, shall require each
  498 school district to comply with standards established by the State
  499 Department of Audit for the verification of fixed assets and the
  500 auditing of fixed assets records as a minimum requirement for
  501 accreditation.
- shall recommend a program to the Education Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate for identifying and rewarding public schools that improve or are high performing. The program shall be described by the board in a written report, which shall include criteria and a process through which improving schools and high-performing schools will be identified and rewarded.
  - The State Superintendent of Education and the State Board of Education also shall develop a comprehensive accountability plan to ensure that local school boards, superintendents, principals and teachers are held accountable for student achievement. A written report on the accountability plan shall be submitted to the Education Committees of both houses of the Legislature before December 1, 1999, with any necessary legislative recommendations.
- SECTION 2. The Attorney General of the State of Mississippi shall submit this act, immediately upon approval by the Governor, or upon approval by the Legislature subsequent to a veto, to the Attorney General of the United States or to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in accordance with the

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- 521 provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended and
- 522 extended.
- 523 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
- 524 and after the date it is effectuated under Section 5 of the Voting
- 525 Rights Act of 1965, as amended and extended.