HOUSE BILL NO. 1487

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
ESTABLISH MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS
IMPLEMENTED IN LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES; TO PROVIDE THAT
LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION
FAILING TO MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM
OPERATING; TO REQUIRE FACILITIES IN THE DELTA REGION WHICH ARE
REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED BY THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH BUT HAVE
FAILED TO PROCURE A LICENSE TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW BEFORE JANUARY
1, 2010; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The Legislature finds that many children of
the Mississippi Delta region experience low quality, out-of-home
care and inferior child care programs. The Legislature further
finds that high quality child care is essential for children in
the Delta and is an investment in their future.

(2) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act
establish a means to begin to effectuate a change in the culture
of licensed child care in the Delta region and to assist parents
in choosing quality care for their children.

SECTION 2. For purposes of this act, the terms "Mississippi
Delta region," "Delta region" and "region" are defined as the
western section of the State of Mississippi that lies between the
Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, encompassing in part or whole the
Counties of Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Holmes,
Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman,
Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and
Yazoo.

SECTION 3. (1) The State Department of Education to
prescribe minimal guidelines for quality childhood education
programs implemented in licensed child care facilities.
(2) Before January 1, 2010, each child care facility licensed by the State Board of Health in the Delta region must meet the minimal requirements for quality child care education established by the State Department of Education pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. The guidelines must describe: the minimum qualifications required of teaching staff; desirable teacher-child ratios in the educational setting; acceptable curricula and educational materials and equipment; and such other matters determined by the department to be indicators of quality education in the child care setting.

(3) The State Department of Education shall develop a process to assess the quality of education programs in licensed child care facilities. Any child care facility determined to not be in compliance with the minimum requirements for quality education will be prohibited from operating until the facility has taken steps to correct the noncompliance and the State Department of Education has approved of the corrective measures taken.

(4) Any child care facility in the Delta region which is required to be licensed under Chapter 20, Title 43, Mississippi Code of 1972, must be licensed and in compliance with the minimum guidelines for quality education programs established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section before January 1, 2010.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2007.