To: Education

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2009
By: Representative Warren

HOUSE BILL NO. 1

AN ACT TO REENACT THE VARIOUS CODE SECTIONS CREATED AND
AMENDED BY THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2006; TO
REENACT SECTION 37-161-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH SETS
FORTH LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS RELATING TO PUBLIC
EDUCATION IN MISSISSIPPI; TO REENACT SECTION 37-161-3, MISSISSIPPI
CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRES THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO
ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM; TO
REENACT SECTION 37-161-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH CREATES
THE LIFELONG LEARNING COMMISSION TO STUDY THE RELEVANCE OF THE
HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE IN MISSISSIPPI; TO REENACT SECTION
37-161-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A WELLNESS CURRICULUM FOR USE BY SCHOOL
DISTRICTS; TO REENACT SECTION 37-19-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
WHICH PRESCRIBES THE SALARY SCALE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND
PROVIDES FOR SALARY SUPPLEMENTS FOR CERTAIN SCHOOL EMPLOYEES; TO
REENACT SECTION 37-3-2, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH
ESTABLISHES THE COMMISSION ON TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR EDUCATION,
CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PRESCRIBES THE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS
FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN MISSISSIPPI; TO REENACT SECTION
37-61-33, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH CREATES THE EDUCATION
ENHANCEMENT FUND AND PROVIDES FOR THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION AND
DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES IN THE FUND; TO REENACT SECTION 37-7-301.1,
MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH AUTHORIZES LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
TO EXERCISE HOME RULE WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN MATTERS; TO REENACT
SECTION 37-13-80, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH CREATES THE
OFFICE OF DROPOUT PREVENTION WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION; TO REENACT SECTION 37-13-81, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
WHICH CREATES THE OFFICE OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
ENFORCEMENT WITHIN THE OFFICE OF DROPOUT PREVENTION; TO REENACT
SECTION 37-13-83, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRE THE
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO APPOINT A DIRECTOR FOR
THE OFFICE OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT; TO REENACT
SECTION 37-9-18, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRE SCHOOL
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS TO FURNISH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THEIR
RESPECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS AND AUTHORIZES THE STATE AUDITOR TO AUDIT
SCHOOL DISTRICTS' FINANCIAL RECORDS; TO REENACT SECTION 37-15-38,
MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH AUTHORIZES LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS,
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND
THE STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES TO ESTABLISH
DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS ALLOWING CERTAIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO
ENROLL IN POSTSECONDARY STATE INSTITUTIONS; TO REENACT SECTION
37-15-39, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRE SCHOOL
DISTRICTS TO OFFER PRE-ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT
COURSES; TO REENACT SECTION 37-3-97, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
WHICH REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF
TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO JOINTLY PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON STATE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS; TO REENACT SECTION 37-7-346, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRES THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AREAS TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INCREASING THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCIES; TO REENACT SECTION 43-1-65, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRES THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI CHILD CARE QUALITY STEP SYSTEM BY DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PILOT VOLUNTARY QUALITY RATING SYSTEM (QRS) FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LICENSED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS; TO REENACT SECTION 43-1-67, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH REQUIRES THE OFFICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR INCENTIVES FOR CERTAIN TEACHERS AND DIRECTORS WHO MAKE EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENTS LISTED IN THE QRS CRITERIA; TO AMEND SECTION 19, CHAPTER 504, LAWS OF 2006, TO DELETE THE REPEALER ON THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2006; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-161-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-161-1. (1) This act [Laws of 2006, Chapter 504] shall be known and may be referred to as the "Mississippi Education Reform Act of 2006."

(2) The Legislature finds and determines that the quality and accountability of public education and its effect upon the social, cultural and economic enhancement of the people of Mississippi is a matter of public policy, the object of which is the education and performance of its children and youth.

SECTION 2. Section 37-161-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-161-3. (1) The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(a) Meeting the educational needs of children in our state's schools is of the greatest importance to the future welfare of the State of Mississippi;

(b) Closing the achievement gap between high-performing students, including the achievement gap among at-risk students, is a significant and present challenge;
(c) Providing a broader range of educational options to parents and utilizing existing resources, along with technology, may help students in the state improve their academic achievement; and

(d) Many of the state's school districts currently lack the capacity to provide other public school choices for students whose schools are low performing.

(2) There is created the Mississippi Virtual Public School Program, which is the responsibility of the State Department of Education. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Mississippi Virtual Public School established under this section provide Mississippi families with an alternative choice to access additional educational resources in an effort to improve academic achievement. The Mississippi Virtual Public School must be recognized as a public school and provide equitable treatment and resources as are other public schools in the state. Private providers, overseen by the State Department of Education, may be selected by the State Board of Education to operate virtual school programs in this state.

(3) Nothing in this section may be interpreted as precluding the use of computer- and Internet-based instruction for students in a virtual or remote setting utilizing the Mississippi Virtual Public School.

(4) As used in this section, the following words and phrases have the meanings respectively ascribed unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(a) "Mississippi Virtual Public School" means a public school in which the state uses technology in order to deliver instruction to students via the Internet in a virtual or remote setting.

(b) "Sponsor" means the public school district is responsible for the academic process for each student, including...
but not limited to, enrollment, awarding of credit and monitoring progress.


(b) Students who enroll in the Mississippi Virtual Public School may reside anywhere in the State of Mississippi.

(6) The Mississippi Virtual Public School must be evaluated annually according to the following criteria:

(a) The accountability and viability of the Mississippi Virtual Public School, as demonstrated by its academic, fiscal and operational performance.

(b) The access of each student in the Mississippi Virtual Public School to a sequential curriculum that meets or exceeds the state's academic standards and which has an interactive program with significant on-line components.

(c) Whether or not each student achieves the required number of hours of learning opportunities prescribed by each course per academic year, or alternatively, has demonstrated mastery or completion of appropriate subject areas.

(7) Subject to appropriation, the Mississippi Virtual Public School shall provide to each student enrolled in the school all necessary instructional materials. Subject to appropriation, the sponsored school must ensure that each student is provided access to the necessary technology, such as a computer and printer, and to an Internet connection for school work purposes.

(8) The State Board of Education shall have approval authority for all course work and policy of the Mississippi Virtual Public School.

(9) Each teacher employed by or participating in the delivery of instruction through the Mississippi Virtual Public School must meet all qualifications for licensure in the State of Mississippi.
Any student who meets state residency requirements may enroll in the Mississippi Virtual Public School.

Enrollment in the Mississippi Virtual Public School must be free of charge to students. The costs associated with the operations of the virtual school must be shared by the State Department of Education, subject to appropriation, and/or the local school districts.

SECTION 3. Section 37-161-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-161-5. (1) There is established a commission to be known as the "Lifelong Learning Commission."

(2) The commission shall consist of four (4) members, who shall serve ex officio, as follows:

(a) The Governor of the State of Mississippi, who shall serve as chairman;

(b) The State Superintendent of Public Education;

(c) The Commissioner of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges; and

(d) The Commissioner of Higher Education.

(3) The duties of the Lifelong Learning Commission shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

(a) To assess the dropout crisis in Mississippi and recommend action steps to address it;

(b) To create a set of common definitions for graduation and dropout rates which can be used to compare the commission's progress relative to other states;

(c) To facilitate agreements that will make the Mississippi high school experience more meaningful;

(d) To encourage more rigor and relevance in the high school experience;

(e) To facilitate the transferability of education from secondary to postsecondary institutions;
(f) To raise state awareness on the need for improving Mississippi’s high schools;

(g) To develop a series of best practices policy actions that state policymakers and legislators can implement to achieve system-wide high school reform; and

(h) To convene town hall meetings around the state, when the commission determines necessary, where students, teachers, administrators and parents can discuss high school, the senior year and impediments to greater success.

(4) The commission may prepare an annual report for the consideration of the Chairmen of the House and Senate Education and Universities and Colleges Committees pertaining to the information gathered in the performance of its duties.

(5) The commission members shall meet at those times and places deemed necessary by the commission. The commission may use any available resources to fulfill its mission.

SECTION 4. Section 37-161-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-161-7. The State Board of Education shall develop a wellness curriculum for use by each school district and the board shall establish rules and regulations to be followed by the districts whereby the districts shall implement the curriculum. Such wellness curriculum shall include educating students about the value of exercise, proper diet and abstinence from use of tobacco and alcohol. The state board shall also adopt regulations for districts' compliance concerning what products may be sold in vending machines on campus and when they can be sold.

SECTION 5. Section 37-19-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-19-7. (1) This section shall be known and may be cited as the Mississippi "Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP)." The allowance in the Mississippi Adequate Education Program for teachers' salaries in each county and separate school district

H. B. No. 1
09/HR03/R23
PAGE 6 (RKM/LH)
shall be determined and paid in accordance with the scale for teachers' salaries as provided in this subsection. For teachers holding the following types of licenses or the equivalent as determined by the State Board of Education, and the following number of years of teaching experience, the scale shall be as follows:

**2007-2008 School Year and School Years Thereafter**

**Less Than 25 Years of Teaching Experience**

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<th>Salary</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>$30,900.00</td>
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</table>

**25 or More Years of Teaching Experience**

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<th>License Type</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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</table>

The State Board of Education shall revise the salary scale prescribed above for the 2007-2008 school year to conform to any adjustments made to the salary scale in prior fiscal years due to revenue growth over and above five percent (5%). For each one percent (1%) that the Sine Die General Fund Revenue Estimate Growth exceeds five percent (5%) for fiscal year 2006, as certified by the Legislative Budget Office to the State Board of Education and subject to specific appropriation therefor by the Legislature, the State Board of Education shall revise the salary scale to provide an additional one percent (1%) across-the-board increase in the base salaries for each type of license.

It is the intent of the Legislature that any state funds made available for salaries of licensed personnel in excess of the funds paid for such salaries for the 1986-1987 school year shall be paid to licensed personnel pursuant to a personnel appraisal and compensation system implemented by the State Board of Education.
Education. The State Board of Education shall have the authority to adopt and amend rules and regulations as are necessary to establish, administer and maintain the system.

All teachers employed on a full-time basis shall be paid a minimum salary in accordance with the above scale. However, no school district shall receive any funds under this section for any school year during which the local supplement paid to any individual teacher shall have been reduced to a sum less than that paid to that individual teacher for performing the same duties from local supplement during the immediately preceding school year. The amount actually spent for the purposes of group health and/or life insurance shall be considered as a part of the aggregate amount of local supplement but shall not be considered a part of the amount of individual local supplement.

**2008-2009 School Year**

**Annual Increments**

For teachers holding a Class AAAA license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Seven Hundred Ninety-four Dollars ($794.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have twenty-five (25) years of teaching experience, and shall be increased by Three Hundred Ninety-seven Dollars ($397.00) for each year of teaching experience over twenty-five (25) years up to thirty-five (35) years.

For teachers holding a Class AAA license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Seven Hundred Twenty-seven Dollars ($727.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have twenty-five (25) years of teaching experience, and shall be increased by Three Hundred Sixty-four Dollars ($364.00) for each year of teaching experience over twenty-five (25) years up to thirty-five (35) years.
For teachers holding a Class AA license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Six Hundred Sixty Dollars ($660.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have twenty-five (25) years of teaching experience, and shall be increased by Three Hundred Thirty Dollars ($330.00) for each year of teaching experience over twenty-five (25) years up to thirty-five (35) years.

For teachers holding a Class A license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Four Hundred Ninety-five Dollars ($495.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have twenty-four (24) years of teaching experience, and shall be increased by Two Hundred Forty-eight Dollars ($248.00) for each year of teaching experience over twenty-four (24) years up to thirty-five (35) years.

2009-2010 School Year

Annual Increments

For teachers holding a Class AAA license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Seven Hundred Ninety-four Dollars ($794.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have thirty-five (35) years of teaching experience.

For teachers holding a Class AAA license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Seven Hundred Twenty-seven Dollars ($727.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have thirty-five (35) years of teaching experience.

For teachers holding a Class AA license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Six Hundred Sixty Dollars ($660.00) for each year of teaching.
experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have thirty-five (35) years of teaching experience. For teachers holding a Class A license, the minimum base pay specified in this subsection shall be increased by the sum of Four Hundred Ninety-five Dollars ($495.00) for each year of teaching experience possessed by the person holding such license until such person shall have thirty-five (35) years of teaching experience.

The level of professional training of each teacher to be used in establishing the salary allotment for the teachers for each year shall be determined by the type of valid teacher's license issued to those teachers on or before October 1 of the current school year.

(2) (a) The following employees shall receive an annual salary supplement in the amount of Six Thousand Dollars ($6,000.00), plus fringe benefits, in addition to any other compensation to which the employee may be entitled:

(i) Any licensed teacher who has met the requirements and acquired a Master Teacher certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and who is employed by a local school board or the State Board of Education as a teacher and not as an administrator. Such teacher shall submit documentation to the State Department of Education that the certificate was received prior to October 15 in order to be eligible for the full salary supplement in the current school year, or the teacher shall submit such documentation to the State Department of Education prior to February 15 in order to be eligible for a prorated salary supplement beginning with the second term of the school year.

(ii) A licensed nurse who has met the requirements and acquired a certificate from the National Board for Certification of School Nurses, Inc., and who is employed by a local school board or the State Board of Education as a school nurse and not as an administrator. The licensed school nurse
shall submit documentation to the State Department of Education
that the certificate was received before October 15 in order to be
eligible for the full salary supplement in the current school
year, or the licensed school nurse shall submit the documentation
to the State Department of Education before February 15 in order
to be eligible for a prorated salary supplement beginning with the
second term of the school year. Provided, however, that the total
number of licensed school nurses eligible for a salary supplement
under this paragraph (ii) shall not exceed thirty (30).

(iii) Any licensed school counselor who has met
the requirements and acquired a National Certified School
Counselor (NCSC) endorsement from the National Board of Certified
Counselors and who is employed by a local school board or the
State Board of Education as a counselor and not as an
administrator. Such licensed school counselor shall submit
documentation to the State Department of Education that the
derendorsement was received prior to October 15 in order to be
eligible for the full salary supplement in the current school
year, or the licensed school counselor shall submit such
documentation to the State Department of Education prior to
February 15 in order to be eligible for a prorated salary
supplement beginning with the second term of the school year.

However, any school counselor who started the National Board for
Professional Teaching Standards process for school counselors
between June 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004, and completes the
requirements and acquires the Master Teacher certificate shall be
entitled to the master teacher supplement, and those counselors
who complete the process shall be entitled to a one-time
reimbursement for the actual cost of the process as outlined in
paragraph (b) of this subsection.

(iv) Any licensed speech-language pathologist and
audiologist who has met the requirements and acquired a
Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American
Speech-Language-Hearing Association and who is employed by a local school board or is employed by a state agency under the State Personnel Board. Such licensed speech-language pathologist and audiologist shall submit documentation to the State Department of Education that the certificate or endorsement was received prior to October 15 in order to be eligible for the full salary supplement in the current school year, or the licensed speech-language pathologist and audiologist shall submit such documentation to the State Department of Education prior to February 15 in order to be eligible for a prorated salary supplement beginning with the second term of the school year.

(b) An employee shall be reimbursed one (1) time for the actual cost of completing the process of acquiring the certificate or endorsement, excluding any costs incurred for postgraduate courses, not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars ($500.00) for a school counselor or speech-language pathologist and audiologist, regardless of whether or not the process resulted in the award of the certificate or endorsement. A local school district or any private individual or entity may pay the cost of completing the process of acquiring the certificate or endorsement for any employee of the school district described under paragraph (a), and the State Department of Education shall reimburse the school district for such cost, regardless of whether or not the process resulted in the award of the certificate or endorsement. If a private individual or entity has paid the cost of completing the process of acquiring the certificate or endorsement for an employee, the local school district may agree to directly reimburse the individual or entity for such cost on behalf of the employee.

(c) All salary supplements, fringe benefits and process reimbursement authorized under this subsection shall be paid directly by the State Department of Education to the local school district and shall be in addition to its minimum education program.
allotments and not a part thereof in accordance with regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and subject to appropriation by the Legislature. Local school districts shall not reduce the local supplement paid to any employee receiving such salary supplement, and the employee shall receive any local supplement to which employees with similar training and experience otherwise are entitled.

(d) The State Department of Education may not pay any process reimbursement to a school district for an employee who does not complete the certification or endorsement process required to be eligible for the certificate or endorsement. If an employee for whom such cost has been paid in full or in part by a local school district or private individual or entity fails to complete the certification or endorsement process, the employee shall be liable to the school district or individual or entity for all amounts paid by the school district or individual or entity on behalf of that employee toward his or her certificate or endorsement.

(3) (a) Effective July 1, 2007, if funds are available for that purpose, the Legislature may authorize state funds for additional base compensation for teachers holding licenses in critical subject areas or the equivalent and who teach at least a majority of their courses in a critical subject area, as determined by the State Board of Education.

(b) Effective July 1, 2007, if funds are available for that purpose, the Legislature may authorize state funds for additional base compensation for teachers employed in a public school district located in a geographic area of the state designated as a critical teacher shortage area by the State Board of Education.

(4) (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Mississippi Performance Based Pay (MPBP)" plan. In addition to the minimum base pay described in this section, only after full
funding of MAEP and if funds are available for that purpose, the
State of Mississippi may provide monies from state funds to school
districts for the purposes of rewarding certified teachers,
administrators and nonlicensed personnel at individual schools
showing improvement in student test scores. The MPBP plan shall
be developed by the State Department of Education based on the
following criteria:

(i) It is the express intent of this legislation
that the MPBP plan shall utilize only existing standards of
accreditation and assessment as established by the State Board of
Education.

(ii) To ensure that all of Mississippi's teachers,
administrators and nonlicensed personnel at all schools have equal
access to the monies set aside in this section, the MPBP program
shall be designed to calculate each school's performance as
determined by the school's increase in scores from the prior
school year. The MPBP program shall be based on a standardized
scores rating where all levels of schools can be judged in a
statistically fair and reasonable way upon implementation. At the
end of each year, after all student achievement scores have been
standardized, the State Department of Education shall implement
the MPBP plan.

(iii) To ensure all teachers cooperate in the
spirit of teamwork, individual schools shall submit a plan to the
local school district to be approved before the beginning of each
school year beginning July 1, 2008. The plan shall include, but
not be limited to, how all teachers, regardless of subject area,
and administrators will be responsible for improving student
achievement for their individual school.

(b) The State Board of Education shall develop the
processes and procedures for designating schools eligible to
participate in the MPBP. State assessment results, growth in
student achievement at individual schools and other measures
deemed appropriate in designating successful student achievement shall be used in establishing MPBP criteria. The State Board of Education shall develop the MPBP policies and procedures and report to the Legislature and Governor by December 1, 2006.

(5) (a) Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, if funds are available for that purpose, each school in Mississippi shall have mentor teachers, as defined by Sections 37-9-201 through 37-9-213, who shall receive additional base compensation provided for by the State Legislature in the amount of One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) per each beginning teacher that is being mentored. The additional state compensation shall be limited to those mentor teachers that provide mentoring services to beginning teachers. For the purposes of such funding, a beginning teacher shall be defined as any teacher in any school in Mississippi that has less than one (1) year of classroom experience teaching in a public school. For the purposes of such funding, no full-time academic teacher shall mentor more than two (2) beginning teachers. The State Department of Education shall annually provide to the Legislature, no later than January 2, the number of beginning teachers in each school in Mississippi as defined in this subsection.

(b) To be eligible for this state funding, the individual school must have a classroom management program approved by the local school board.

SECTION 6. Section 37-3-2, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-3-2. (1) There is established within the State Department of Education the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development. It shall be the purpose and duty of the commission to make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding standards for the certification and licensure and continuing
professional development of those who teach or perform tasks of an educational nature in the public schools of Mississippi.

(2) The commission shall be composed of fifteen (15) qualified members. The membership of the commission shall be composed of the following members to be appointed, three (3) from each congressional district: four (4) classroom teachers; three (3) school administrators; one (1) representative of schools of education of institutions of higher learning located within the state to be recommended by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning; one (1) representative from the schools of education of independent institutions of higher learning to be recommended by the Board of the Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges; one (1) representative from public community and junior colleges located within the state to be recommended by the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges; one (1) local school board member; and four (4) lay persons. All appointments shall be made by the State Board of Education after consultation with the State Superintendent of Public Education. The first appointments by the State Board of Education shall be made as follows: five (5) members shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year; five (5) members shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years; and five (5) members shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, all members shall be appointed for a term of four (4) years.

(3) The State Board of Education when making appointments shall designate a chairman. The commission shall meet at least once every two (2) months or more often if needed. Members of the commission shall be compensated at a rate of per diem as authorized by Section 25-3-69 and be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses as authorized by Section 25-3-41.

(4) An appropriate staff member of the State Department of Education shall be designated and assigned by the State Superintendent of Public Education to serve as executive secretary.
and coordinator for the commission. No less than two (2) other
appropriate staff members of the State Department of Education
shall be designated and assigned by the State Superintendent of
Public Education to serve on the staff of the commission.

(5) It shall be the duty of the commission to:

(a) Set standards and criteria, subject to the approval
of the State Board of Education, for all educator preparation
programs in the state;

(b) Recommend to the State Board of Education each year
approval or disapproval of each educator preparation program in
the state;

(c) Establish, subject to the approval of the State
Board of Education, standards for initial teacher certification
and licensure in all fields;

(d) Establish, subject to the approval of the State
Board of Education, standards for the renewal of teacher licenses
in all fields;

(e) Review and evaluate objective measures of teacher
performance, such as test scores, which may form part of the
licensure process, and to make recommendations for their use;

(f) Review all existing requirements for certification
and licensure;

(g) Consult with groups whose work may be affected by
the commission's decisions;

(h) Prepare reports from time to time on current
practices and issues in the general area of teacher education and
certification and licensure;

(i) Hold hearings concerning standards for teachers'
and administrators' education and certification and licensure with
approval of the State Board of Education;

(j) Hire expert consultants with approval of the State
Board of Education;
(k) Set up ad hoc committees to advise on specific areas; and

(l) Perform such other functions as may fall within their general charge and which may be delegated to them by the State Board of Education.

(6) (a) **Standard License - Approved Program Route.** An educator entering the school system of Mississippi for the first time and meeting all requirements as established by the State Board of Education shall be granted a standard five-year license. Persons who possess two (2) years of classroom experience as an assistant teacher or who have taught for one (1) year in an accredited public or private school shall be allowed to fulfill student teaching requirements under the supervision of a qualified participating teacher approved by an accredited college of education. The local school district in which the assistant teacher is employed shall compensate such assistant teachers at the required salary level during the period of time such individual is completing student teaching requirements. Applicants for a standard license shall submit to the department:

   (i) An application on a department form;

   (ii) An official transcript of completion of a teacher education program approved by the department or a nationally accredited program, subject to the following:

   Licensure to teach in Mississippi prekindergarten through kindergarten classrooms shall require completion of a teacher education program or a bachelor of science degree with child development emphasis from a program accredited by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) or by the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Licensure to teach in Mississippi kindergarten, for those applicants who have completed a teacher education program, and in Grade 1 through Grade 4 shall require the completion of an
interdisciplinary program of studies. Licenses for Grades 4 through 8 shall require the completion of an interdisciplinary program of studies with two (2) or more areas of concentration. Licensure to teach in Mississippi Grades 7 through 12 shall require a major in an academic field other than education, or a combination of disciplines other than education. Students preparing to teach a subject shall complete a major in the respective subject discipline. All applicants for standard licensure shall demonstrate that such person's college preparation in those fields was in accordance with the standards set forth by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) or, for those applicants who have a bachelor of science degree with child development emphasis, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS);

(iii) A copy of test scores evidencing satisfactory completion of nationally administered examinations of achievement, such as the Educational Testing Service's teacher testing examinations; and

(iv) Any other document required by the State Board of Education.

(b) Standard License - Nontraditional Teaching Route.

Beginning January 1, 2004, an individual who has a passing score on the Praxis I Basic Skills and Praxis II Specialty Area Test in the requested area of endorsement may apply for the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) program to teach students in Grades 7 through 12 if the individual meets the requirements of this paragraph (b). The State Board of Education shall adopt rules requiring that teacher preparation institutions which provide the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) program for the preparation of nontraditional teachers shall meet the standards and comply with the provisions of this paragraph.
(i) The Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) shall include an intensive eight-week, nine-semester-hour summer program or a curriculum of study in which the student matriculates in the fall or spring semester, which shall include, but not be limited to, instruction in education, effective teaching strategies, classroom management, state curriculum requirements, planning and instruction, instructional methods and pedagogy, using test results to improve instruction, and a one (1) semester three-hour supervised internship to be completed while the teacher is employed as a full-time teacher intern in a local school district. The TMI shall be implemented on a pilot program basis, with courses to be offered at up to four (4) locations in the state, with one (1) TMI site to be located in each of the three (3) Mississippi Supreme Court districts.

(ii) The school sponsoring the teacher intern shall enter into a written agreement with the institution providing the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) program, under terms and conditions as agreed upon by the contracting parties, providing that the school district shall provide teacher interns seeking a nontraditional provisional teaching license with a one-year classroom teaching experience. The teacher intern shall successfully complete the one (1) semester three-hour intensive internship in the school district during the semester immediately following successful completion of the TMI and prior to the end of the one-year classroom teaching experience.

(iii) Upon completion of the nine-semester-hour TMI or the fall or spring semester option, the individual shall submit his transcript to the commission for provisional licensure of the intern teacher, and the intern teacher shall be issued a provisional teaching license by the commission, which will allow the individual to legally serve as a teacher while the person completes a nontraditional teacher preparation internship program.
(iv) During the semester of internship in the school district, the teacher preparation institution shall monitor the performance of the intern teacher. The school district that employs the provisional teacher shall supervise the provisional teacher during the teacher's intern year of employment under a nontraditional provisional license, and shall, in consultation with the teacher intern's mentor at the school district of employment, submit to the commission a comprehensive evaluation of the teacher's performance sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of the nontraditional provisional license. If the comprehensive evaluation establishes that the provisional teacher intern's performance fails to meet the standards of the approved nontraditional teacher preparation internship program, the individual shall not be approved for a standard license.

(v) An individual issued a provisional teaching license under this nontraditional route shall successfully complete, at a minimum, a one-year beginning teacher mentoring and induction program administered by the employing school district with the assistance of the State Department of Education.

(vi) Upon successful completion of the TMI and the internship provisional license period, applicants for a Standard License - Nontraditional Route shall submit to the commission a transcript of successful completion of the twelve (12) semester hours required in the internship program, and the employing school district shall submit to the commission a recommendation for standard licensure of the intern. If the school district recommends licensure, the applicant shall be issued a Standard License - Nontraditional Route which shall be valid for a five-year period and be renewable.

(vii) At the discretion of the teacher preparation institution, the individual shall be allowed to credit the twelve (12) semester hours earned in the nontraditional teacher
internship program toward the graduate hours required for a Master of Arts in Teacher (MAT) Degree.

(viii) The local school district in which the nontraditional teacher intern or provisional licensee is employed shall compensate such teacher interns at Step 1 of the required salary level during the period of time such individual is completing teacher internship requirements and shall compensate such Standard License - Nontraditional Route teachers at Step 3 of the required salary level when they complete license requirements.

Implementation of the TMI program provided for under this paragraph (b) shall be contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated specifically for such purpose by the Legislature. Such implementation of the TMI program may not be deemed to prohibit the State Board of Education from developing and implementing additional alternative route teacher licensure programs, as deemed appropriate by the board. The emergency certification program in effect prior to July 1, 2002, shall remain in effect.

The State Department of Education shall compile and report, in consultation with the commission, information relating to nontraditional teacher preparation internship programs, including the number of programs available and geographic areas in which they are available, the number of individuals who apply for and possess a nontraditional conditional license, the subject areas in which individuals who possess nontraditional conditional licenses are teaching and where they are teaching, and shall submit its findings and recommendations to the legislative committees on education by December 1, 2004.

A Standard License - Approved Program Route shall be issued for a five-year period, and may be renewed. Recognizing teaching as a profession, a hiring preference shall be granted to persons holding a Standard License - Approved Program Route or Standard
License - Nontraditional Teaching Route over persons holding any other license.

(c) Special License - Expert Citizen. In order to allow a school district to offer specialized or technical courses, the State Department of Education, in accordance with rules and regulations established by the State Board of Education, may grant a one-year expert citizen-teacher license to local business or other professional personnel to teach in a public school or nonpublic school accredited or approved by the state. Such person may begin teaching upon his employment by the local school board and licensure by the Mississippi Department of Education. The board shall adopt rules and regulations to administer the expert citizen-teacher license. A Special License - Expert Citizen may be renewed in accordance with the established rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.

(d) Special License - Nonrenewable. The State Board of Education is authorized to establish rules and regulations to allow those educators not meeting requirements in subsection (6)(a), (b) or (c) to be licensed for a period of not more than three (3) years, except by special approval of the State Board of Education.

(e) Nonlicensed Teaching Personnel. A nonlicensed person may teach for a maximum of three (3) periods per teaching day in a public school or a nonpublic school accredited/approved by the state. Such person shall submit to the department a transcript or record of his education and experience which substantiates his preparation for the subject to be taught and shall meet other qualifications specified by the commission and approved by the State Board of Education. In no case shall any local school board hire nonlicensed personnel as authorized under this paragraph in excess of five percent (5%) of the total number of licensed personnel in any single school.
(f) **Special License - Transitional Bilingual Education.**

Beginning July 1, 2003, the commission shall grant special licenses to teachers of transitional bilingual education who possess such qualifications as are prescribed in this section. Teachers of transitional bilingual education shall be compensated by local school boards at not less than one (1) step on the regular salary schedule applicable to permanent teachers licensed under this section. The commission shall grant special licenses to teachers of transitional bilingual education who present the commission with satisfactory evidence that they (i) possess a speaking and reading ability in a language, other than English, in which bilingual education is offered and communicative skills in English; (ii) are in good health and sound moral character; (iii) possess a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree in teacher education from an accredited institution of higher education; (iv) meet such requirements as to courses of study, semester hours therein, experience and training as may be required by the commission; and (v) are legally present in the United States and possess legal authorization for employment. A teacher of transitional bilingual education serving under a special license shall be under an exemption from standard licensure if he achieves the requisite qualifications therefor. Two (2) years of service by a teacher of transitional bilingual education under such an exemption shall be credited to the teacher in acquiring a Standard Educator License. Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to prohibit a local school board from employing a teacher licensed in an appropriate field as approved by the State Department of Education to teach in a program in transitional bilingual education.

(g) In the event any school district meets Level 4 or 5 accreditation standards, the State Board of Education, in its discretion, may exempt such school district from any restrictions
in paragraph (e) relating to the employment of nonlicensed
teaching personnel.

(h) **Highly Qualified Teachers.** Beginning July 1, 2006,
any teacher from any state meeting the federal definition of
highly qualified, as described in the No Child Left Behind Act,
must be granted a standard five-year license by the State
Department of Education.

(7) **Administrator License.** The State Board of Education is
authorized to establish rules and regulations and to administer
the licensure process of the school administrators in the State of
Mississippi. There will be four (4) categories of administrator
licensure with exceptions only through special approval of the
State Board of Education.

(a) **Administrator License - Nonpracticing.** Those
educators holding administrative endorsement but having no
administrative experience or not serving in an administrative

(b) **Administrator License - Entry Level.** Those
educators holding administrative endorsement and having met the
department's qualifications to be eligible for employment in a
Mississippi school district. Administrator License - Entry Level
shall be issued for a five-year period and shall be nonrenewable.

(c) **Standard Administrator License - Career Level.** An
administrator who has met all the requirements of the department
for standard administrator licensure.

(d) **Administrator License - Nontraditional Route.** The
board may establish a nontraditional route for licensing
administrative personnel. Such nontraditional route for
administrative licensure shall be available for persons holding,
but not limited to, a master of business administration degree, a
master of public administration degree, a master of public
planning and policy degree or a doctor of jurisprudence degree
from an accredited college or university, with five (5) years of
administrative or supervisory experience. Successful completion of the requirements of alternate route licensure for administrators shall qualify the person for a standard administrator license.

The State Department of Education shall compile and report, in consultation with the commission, information relating to nontraditional administrator preparation internship programs, including the number of programs available and geographic areas in which they are available, the number of individuals who apply for and possess a nontraditional conditional license and where they are employed, and shall submit its findings and recommendations to the legislative committees on education by December 1, 2004.

Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year, individuals seeking school administrator licensure under paragraph (b), (c) or (d) shall successfully complete a training program and an assessment process prescribed by the State Board of Education. Applicants seeking school administrator licensure prior to June 30, 1997, and completing all requirements for provisional or standard administrator certification and who have never practiced, shall be exempt from taking the Mississippi Assessment Battery Phase I. Applicants seeking school administrator licensure during the period beginning July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998, shall participate in the Mississippi Assessment Battery, and upon request of the applicant, the department shall reimburse the applicant for the cost of the assessment process required. After June 30, 1998, all applicants for school administrator licensure shall meet all requirements prescribed by the department under paragraph (b), (c) or (d), and the cost of the assessment process required shall be paid by the applicant.

(8) **Reciprocity.** (a) The department shall grant a standard license to any individual who possesses a valid standard license from another state.
(b) The department shall grant a nonrenewable special license to any individual who possesses a credential which is less than a standard license or certification from another state. Such special license shall be valid for the current school year plus one (1) additional school year to expire on June 30 of the second year, not to exceed a total period of twenty-four (24) months, during which time the applicant shall be required to complete the requirements for a standard license in Mississippi.

(9) Renewal and Reinstatement of Licenses. The State Board of Education is authorized to establish rules and regulations for the renewal and reinstatement of educator and administrator licenses. Effective May 15, 1997, the valid standard license held by an educator shall be extended five (5) years beyond the expiration date of the license in order to afford the educator adequate time to fulfill new renewal requirements established pursuant to this subsection. An educator completing a master of education, educational specialist or doctor of education degree in May 1997 for the purpose of upgrading the educator's license to a higher class shall be given this extension of five (5) years plus five (5) additional years for completion of a higher degree.

(10) All controversies involving the issuance, revocation, suspension or any change whatsoever in the licensure of an educator required to hold a license shall be initially heard in a hearing de novo, by the commission or by a subcommittee established by the commission and composed of commission members for the purpose of holding hearings. Any complaint seeking the denial of issuance, revocation or suspension of a license shall be by sworn affidavit filed with the Commission of Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development. The decision thereon by the commission or its subcommittee shall be final, unless the aggrieved party shall appeal to the State Board of Education, within ten (10) days, of the decision of the committee or its subcommittee. An appeal to
the State Board of Education shall be on the record previously
made before the commission or its subcommittee unless otherwise
provided by rules and regulations adopted by the board. The State
Board of Education in its authority may reverse, or remand with
instructions, the decision of the committee or its subcommittee.
The decision of the State Board of Education shall be final.
(11) The State Board of Education, acting through the
commission, may deny an application for any teacher or
administrator license for one or more of the following:
(a) Lack of qualifications which are prescribed by law
or regulations adopted by the State Board of Education;
(b) The applicant has a physical, emotional or mental
disability that renders the applicant unfit to perform the duties
authorized by the license, as certified by a licensed psychologist
or psychiatrist;
(c) The applicant is actively addicted to or actively
dependent on alcohol or other habit-forming drugs or is a habitual
user of narcotics, barbiturates, amphetamines, hallucinogens or
other drugs having similar effect, at the time of application for
a license;
(d) Revocation of an applicant's certificate or license
by another state;
(e) Fraud or deceit committed by the applicant in
securing or attempting to secure such certification and license;
(f) Failing or refusing to furnish reasonable evidence
of identification;
(g) The applicant has been convicted, has pled guilty
or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a felony, as defined by
federal or state law; or
(h) The applicant has been convicted, has pled guilty
or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a sex offense as defined
by federal or state law.
(12) The State Board of Education, acting on the recommendation of the commission, may revoke or suspend any teacher or administrator license for specified periods of time for one or more of the following:

(a) Breach of contract or abandonment of employment may result in the suspension of the license for one (1) school year as provided in Section 37-9-57;

(b) Obtaining a license by fraudulent means shall result in immediate suspension and continued suspension for one year after correction is made;

(c) Suspension or revocation of a certificate or license by another state shall result in immediate suspension or revocation and shall continue until records in the prior state have been cleared;

(d) The license holder has been convicted, has pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a felony, as defined by federal or state law;

(e) The license holder has been convicted, has pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a sex offense, as defined by federal or state law; or

(f) The license holder knowingly and willfully committing any of the acts affecting validity of mandatory uniform test results as provided in Section 37-16-4(1).

(13) (a) Dismissal or suspension of a licensed employee by a local school board pursuant to Section 37-9-59 may result in the suspension or revocation of a license for a length of time which shall be determined by the commission and based upon the severity of the offense.

(b) Any offense committed or attempted in any other state shall result in the same penalty as if committed or attempted in this state.

(c) A person may voluntarily surrender a license. The surrender of such license may result in the commission
recommending any of the above penalties without the necessity of a hearing. However, any such license which has voluntarily been surrendered by a licensed employee may only be reinstated by a majority vote of all members of the commission present at the meeting called for such purpose.

(14) A person whose license has been suspended on any grounds except criminal grounds may petition for reinstatement of the license after one (1) year from the date of suspension, or after one-half (1/2) of the suspended time has lapsed, whichever is greater. A license suspended or revoked on the criminal grounds may be reinstated upon petition to the commission filed after expiration of the sentence and parole or probationary period imposed upon conviction. A revoked, suspended or surrendered license may be reinstated upon satisfactory showing of evidence of rehabilitation. The commission shall require all who petition for reinstatement to furnish evidence satisfactory to the commission of good character, good mental, emotional and physical health and such other evidence as the commission may deem necessary to establish the petitioner's rehabilitation and fitness to perform the duties authorized by the license.

(15) Reporting procedures and hearing procedures for dealing with infractions under this section shall be promulgated by the commission, subject to the approval of the State Board of Education. The revocation or suspension of a license shall be effected at the time indicated on the notice of suspension or revocation. The commission shall immediately notify the superintendent of the school district or school board where the teacher or administrator is employed of any disciplinary action and also notify the teacher or administrator of such revocation or suspension and shall maintain records of action taken. The State Board of Education may reverse or remand with instructions any decision of the commission regarding a petition for reinstatement.
of a license, and any such decision of the State Board of
Education shall be final.

(16) An appeal from the action of the State Board of
Education in denying an application, revoking or suspending a
license or otherwise disciplining any person under the provisions
of this section shall be filed in the Chancery Court of the First
Judicial District of Hinds County on the record made, including a
verbatim transcript of the testimony at the hearing. The appeal
shall be filed within thirty (30) days after notification of the
action of the board is mailed or served and the proceedings in
chancery court shall be conducted as other matters coming before
the court. The appeal shall be perfected upon filing notice of
the appeal and by the prepayment of all costs, including the cost
of preparation of the record of the proceedings by the State Board
of Education, and the filing of a bond in the sum of Two Hundred
Dollars ($200.00) conditioned that if the action of the board be
affirmed by the chancery court, the applicant or license holder
shall pay the costs of the appeal and the action of the chancery
court.

(17) All such programs, rules, regulations, standards and
criteria recommended or authorized by the commission shall become
effective upon approval by the State Board of Education as
designated by appropriate orders entered upon the minutes thereof.

(18) The granting of a license shall not be deemed a
property right nor a guarantee of employment in any public school
district. A license is a privilege indicating minimal eligibility
for teaching in the public schools of Mississippi. This section
shall in no way alter or abridge the authority of local school
districts to require greater qualifications or standards of
performance as a prerequisite of initial or continued employment
in such districts.

(19) In addition to the reasons specified in subsections
(12) and (13) of this section, the board shall be authorized to
suspend the license of any licensee for being out of compliance with an order for support, as defined in Section 93-11-153. The procedure for suspension of a license for being out of compliance with an order for support, and the procedure for the reissuance or reinstatement of a license suspended for that purpose, and the payment of any fees for the reissuance or reinstatement of a license suspended for that purpose, shall be governed by Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, as the case may be. Actions taken by the board in suspending a license when required by Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163 are not actions from which an appeal may be taken under this section. Any appeal of a license suspension that is required by Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163 shall be taken in accordance with the appeal procedure specified in Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, as the case may be, rather than the procedure specified in this section. If there is any conflict between any provision of Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163 and any provision of this chapter, the provisions of Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, as the case may be, shall control.

SECTION 7. Section 37-61-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-61-33. (1) There is created within the State Treasury a special fund to be designated the "Education Enhancement Fund" into which shall be deposited all the revenues collected pursuant to Sections 27-65-75(7) and (8) and 27-67-31(a) and (b).

(2) Of the amount deposited into the Education Enhancement Fund, Sixteen Million Dollars ($16,000,000.00) shall be appropriated each fiscal year to the State Department of Education to be distributed to all school districts. Such money shall be distributed to all school districts in the proportion that the average daily attendance of each school district bears to the average daily attendance of all school districts within the state for the following purposes:
(a) Purchasing, erecting, repairing, equipping,
remodeling and enlarging school buildings and related facilities,
including gymnasiums, auditoriums, lunchrooms, vocational training
buildings, libraries, teachers' homes, school barns,
transportation vehicles (which shall include new and used
transportation vehicles) and garages for transportation vehicles,
and purchasing land therefor.
(b) Establishing and equipping school athletic fields
and necessary facilities connected therewith, and purchasing land
therefor.
(c) Providing necessary water, light, heating, air
conditioning and sewerage facilities for school buildings, and
purchasing land therefor.
(d) As a pledge to pay all or a portion of the debt
service on debt issued by the school district under Sections
through 37-7-359, 37-41-89 through 37-41-99, 37-7-301, 37-7-302
and 37-41-81, or debt issued by boards of supervisors for
agricultural high schools pursuant to Section 37-27-65, if such
pledge is accomplished pursuant to a written contract or
resolution approved and spread upon the minutes of an official
meeting of the district's school board or board of supervisors.
The annual grant to such district in any subsequent year during
the term of the resolution or contract shall not be reduced below
an amount equal to the district's grant amount for the year in
which the contract or resolution was adopted. The intent of this
provision is to allow school districts to irrevocably pledge a
certain, constant stream of revenue as security for long-term
obligations issued under the code sections enumerated in this
paragraph or as otherwise allowed by law. It is the intent of the
Legislature that the provisions of this paragraph shall be
cumulative and supplemental to any existing funding programs or
other authority conferred upon school districts or school boards.
Debt of a district secured by a pledge of sales tax revenue pursuant to this paragraph shall not be subject to any debt limitation contained in the foregoing enumerated code sections.

(3) The remainder of the money deposited into the Education Enhancement Fund shall be appropriated as follows:

(a) To the State Department of Education as follows:

(i) Sixteen and sixty-one one-hundredths percent (16.61%) to the cost of the adequate education program determined under Section 37-151-7; of the funds generated by the percentage set forth in this section for the support of the adequate education program, one and one hundred seventy-eight one-thousandths percent (1.178%) of the funds shall be appropriated to be used by the State Department of Education for the purchase of textbooks to be loaned under Sections 37-43-1 through 37-43-59 to approved nonpublic schools, as described in Section 37-43-1. The funds to be distributed to each nonpublic school shall be in the proportion that the average daily attendance of each nonpublic school bears to the total average daily attendance of all nonpublic schools;

(ii) Seven and ninety-seven one-hundredths percent (7.97%) to assist the funding of transportation operations and maintenance pursuant to Section 37-19-23; and

(iii) Nine and sixty-one one-hundredths percent (9.61%) for classroom supplies, instructional materials and equipment, including computers and computer software, to be distributed to all school districts in the proportion that the average daily attendance of each school district bears to the average daily attendance of all school districts within the state. Classroom supply funds shall not be expended for administrative purposes. Local school districts shall allocate classroom supply funds equally among all classroom teachers in the school district.

For purposes of this subparagraph, "teacher" means any employee of the school board of a school district who is required by law to...
obtain a teacher's license from the State Department of Education and who is assigned to an instructional area of work as defined by the department, but shall not include a federally funded teacher. Two (2) or more teachers may agree to pool their classroom supply funds for the benefit of a school within the district. It is the intent of the Legislature that all classroom teachers shall be involved in the development of a spending plan that addresses individual classroom needs and supports the overall goals of the school regarding supplies, instructional materials, equipment, computers or computer software under the provisions of this subparagraph, including the type, quantity and quality of such supplies, materials and equipment. This plan shall be submitted in writing to the school principal for approval. Classroom supply funds allocated under this subparagraph shall supplement, not replace, other local and state funds available for the same purposes. School districts need not fully expend the funds received under this subparagraph in the year in which they are received, but such funds may be carried forward for expenditure in any succeeding school year. Any individual teacher or group of teachers with an approved spending plan that has not been fully funded need not expend the funds allocated under this subparagraph in the year in which such funds are received. Such funds may be carried forward for expenditure in any subsequent school year in which the plan is fully funded. However, beginning July 1, 2006, any funds allocated under this subparagraph which are not reserved in an approved spending plan but remain unspent on March 31 of the fiscal year in which the funds were allotted must be utilized by the school where the teacher is employed for instructional supply and equipment purposes. The State Board of Education shall develop and promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of this subparagraph consistent with the above criteria, with particular emphasis on allowing the individual teachers to expend funds as they deem appropriate.
(b) Twenty-two and nine one-hundredths percent (22.09%) to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning for the purpose of supporting institutions of higher learning; and

c) Fourteen and forty-one one-hundredths percent (14.41%) to the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges for the purpose of providing support to community and junior colleges.

(4) The amount remaining in the Education Enhancement Fund after funds are distributed as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section shall be disbursed as follows:

(a) Twenty-five Million Dollars ($25,000,000.00) shall be deposited into the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund created pursuant to Section 27-103-203(1), until the balance in such fund reaches the maximum balance of seven and one-half percent (7-1/2%) of the General Fund appropriations in the appropriate fiscal year. After the maximum balance in the Working Cash-Stabilization Reserve Fund is reached, such money shall remain in the Education Enhancement Fund to be appropriated in the manner provided for in paragraph (b) of this subsection.

(b) The remainder shall be appropriated for other educational needs.

(5) None of the funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (3)(a) of this section shall be used to reduce the state's General Fund appropriation for the categories listed in an amount below the following amounts:

(a) For subsection (3)(a)(ii) of this section, Thirty-six Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars ($36,700,000.00);

(b) For the aggregate of minimum program allotments in the 1997 fiscal year, formerly provided for in Chapter 19, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, excluding those funds for transportation as provided for in subsection (5)(a) in this section.
SECTION 8. Section 37-7-301.1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-7-301.1. The school board of a school district may adopt any orders, resolutions or ordinances with respect to school district affairs, property and finances which are not inconsistent with the Mississippi Constitution of 1890, the Mississippi Code of 1972, or any other statute or law of the State of Mississippi. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the powers granted to the school boards in this section are complete without the existence of or reference to any specific authority granted in any other statute or law of the State of Mississippi. Unless such actions are specifically authorized by another statute or law of the State of Mississippi, this section shall not authorize a school board to: (a) levy taxes of any kind or increase the levy of any authorized tax; (b) issue bonds of any kind; or (c) enter into collective bargaining agreements.

SECTION 9. Section 37-13-80, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-13-80. (1) There is created the Office of Dropout Prevention within the State Department of Education. The office shall be responsible for the administration of a statewide dropout prevention program and the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement.

(2) The State Superintendent of Public Education shall appoint a director for the Office of Dropout Prevention, who shall meet all qualifications established by the State Superintendent of Public Education and the State Personnel Board. The director shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Office of Dropout Prevention and any other regulations or policies that may be adopted by the State Board of Education. The director shall report to the Legislature on the activities and programs of the office by January 1 of each year beginning in 2009.
(3) Each school district shall implement a dropout prevention program approved by the Office of Dropout Prevention of the State Department of Education by the 2008-2009 school year.

(4) (a) School attendance officers, working with school district officials, shall gather accurate data on youth in juvenile detention centers to properly track students.

(b) The Office of Dropout Prevention in the Department of Education shall establish the procedure for the tracking of students who enter and leave detention centers on a statewide basis.

(5) Each school district's dropout prevention plan shall address how students will transition to the home school district.

(6) It is the intent of the Legislature that, through the statewide dropout prevention program and the dropout prevention programs implemented by each school district, the graduation rate for cohort classes will be increased to not less than eighty-five percent (85%) by the 2018-2019 school year. The Office of Dropout Prevention shall establish graduation rate benchmarks for each two-year period from the 2008-2009 school year through the 2018-2019 school year, which shall serve as guidelines for increasing the graduation rate for cohort classes on a systematic basis to eighty-five percent (85%) by the 2018-2019 school year.

SECTION 10. Section 37-13-81, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-13-81. There is created the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement within the Office of Dropout Prevention of the State Department of Education. The office shall be responsible for the administration of a statewide system of enforcement of the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law (Section 37-13-91) and for the supervision of school attendance officers throughout the state.

SECTION 11. Section 37-13-83, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:
37-13-83. The State Superintendent of Public Education shall appoint a director for the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement, who shall meet all qualifications established for school attendance officer supervisors and any additional qualifications that may be established by the State Superintendent of Public Education or State Personnel Board. The director shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement in conformity with the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law and any other regulations or policies that may be adopted by the State Board of Education. The director shall report directly to the Director of the Office of Dropout Prevention.

**SECTION 12.** Section 37-9-18, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-9-18. (1) The superintendent of schools shall furnish to the school board a financial statement of receipts and disbursements, by funds, on or before the last working day of the following month covering the prior month. The school board shall be authorized to investigate and audit all financial records of the superintendent of schools at any and all times.

(2) The State Auditor, in his discretion, shall audit the financial records of school districts. The State Auditor shall give reasonable notice to school districts regarding the times during which he will perform such audits. In any fiscal year in which the State Auditor is not scheduled to perform an audit, the school board shall cause all the financial records of the superintendent of schools to be audited by a certified public accountant licensed to practice accounting in the State of Mississippi. If the school board so elects by resolution adopted each year, the audit shall be performed by the State Auditor.

Contracts for the audit of public school districts shall be let by the school board in the manner prescribed by the State Auditor.

The audit shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted
auditing standards and generally accepted accounting principles, and the report presented thereon shall be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. If the State Auditor's opinion on the general purpose financial statements is a disclaimer, as that term is defined by generally accepted auditing standards, or if the State Auditor determines the existence of serious financial conditions in the district, the State Auditor shall immediately notify the State Board of Education. Upon receiving the notice, the State Superintendent of Public Education shall direct the school district to immediately cease all expenditures until a financial advisor is appointed by the state superintendent. However, if the disclaimer is a result of conditions caused by Hurricane Katrina 2005 and applies to fiscal years 2005 and/or 2006, then the Superintendent of Education may appoint a financial advisor, and may direct the school district to immediately cease all expenditures until a financial advisor is appointed. The financial advisor shall be an agent of the State Board of Education and shall be a certified public accountant or a qualified business officer. The financial advisor shall, with the approval of the State Board of Education:

(a) Approve or disapprove all expenditures and all financial obligations of the district;

(b) Ensure compliance with any statutes and State Board of Education rules or regulations concerning expenditures by school districts;

(c) Review salaries and the number of all district personnel and make recommendations to the local school board of any needed adjustments. Should such recommendations necessitate the reduction in local salary supplement, such recommended reductions shall be only to the extent which will result in the salaries being comparable to districts similarly situated, as determined by the State Board of Education. The local school board, in considering either a reduction in personnel or a
reduction in local supplements, shall not be required to comply
with the time limitations prescribed in Sections 37-9-15 and
37-9-105 and, further, shall not be required to comply with
Sections 37-19-11 and 37-19-7(1) in regard to reducing local
supplements and the number of personnel;

(d) Work with the school district's business office to
correct all inappropriate accounting procedures and/or uses of
school district funds and to prepare the school district's budget
for the next fiscal year; and

(e) Report frequently to the State Board of Education
on the corrective actions being taken and the progress being made
in the school district. The financial advisor shall serve until
such time as corrective action and progress is being made in such
school district as determined by the State Board of Education with
the concurrence of the State Auditor, or until such time as an
interim conservator is assigned to such district by the State
Board of Education under Section 37-17-6. The school district
shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the use of
the financial advisor. If the audit report reflects a failure by
the school district to meet accreditation standards, the State
Board of Education shall proceed under Section 37-17-6.

(3) (a) When conducting an audit of a public school
district, the Auditor shall test to insure that the school
district is complying with the requirements of Section
37-61-33(3)(a)(iii) relating to classroom supply funds. The audit
must include a report of all classroom supply funds carried over
from previous years. Based upon the audit report, the State
Auditor shall compile a report on the compliance or noncompliance
by all school districts with the requirements of Section
37-61-33(3)(a)(iii), which report must be submitted to the
Chairmen of the Education and Appropriations Committees of the
House of Representatives and Senate.
(b) When conducting an audit of a public school district, the State Auditor shall test to insure correct and appropriate coding at the function level. The audit must include a report showing correct and appropriate functional level expenditure codes in expenditures by the school district. Compliance standards for this audit provision shall be established by the Office of the State Auditor. Based upon the audit report, the State Auditor shall compile a report on the compliance or noncompliance by all public school districts with correct and appropriate coding at the function level, which report must be submitted to the Chairmen of the Education and Appropriations Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate.

(4) In the event the State Auditor does not perform the audit examination, then the audit report of the school district shall be reviewed by the State Auditor for compliance with applicable state laws before final payment is made on the audit by the school board. All financial records, books, vouchers, cancelled checks and other financial records required by law to be kept and maintained in the case of municipalities shall be faithfully kept and maintained in the office of the superintendent of schools under the same provisions and penalties provided by law in the case of municipal officials.

SECTION 13. Section 37-15-38, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

37-15-38. (1) A local school board, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges may establish a dual enrollment system under which students in the school district who meet the prescribed criteria of this section may be enrolled in a postsecondary institution in Mississippi while they are still in school.

(2) **Student eligibility.** Before credits earned by a qualified high school student from a community or junior college
or state institutions of higher learning may be transferred to the
student's home school district, the student must be properly
enrolled in a dual enrollment program.

(3) **Admission criteria for dual enrollment in community and
junior college or university programs.** The boards of trustees of
the community and junior college districts and the Board of
Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning may recommend
admission criteria for dual enrollment programs under which high
school students may enroll at a community or junior college or
university while they are still attending high school and enrolled
in high school courses. Students may be admitted to enroll in
community or junior college courses under the dual enrollment
programs if they meet that individual institution's stated
admission requirements.

(4) **Tuition and cost responsibility.** Tuition and costs for
university-level courses and community and junior college courses
offered under a dual enrollment program may be paid for by the
postsecondary institution, the local school district, the parents
or legal guardians of the student, or by grants, foundations or
other private or public sources. Payment for tuition and any
other costs must be made directly to the credit-granting
institution.

(5) **Transportation responsibility.** Any transportation
required by a student to participate in the dual enrollment
program is the responsibility of the parent, custodian or legal
guardian of the student. However, transportation costs may be
paid from any available public or private sources.

(6) **School district average daily attendance credit.** When
dually enrolled, the student may be counted, for adequate
education program funding purposes, in the average daily
attendance of the public school district in which the student
attends high school.
High school student transcript transfer requirements.

Grades and college credits earned by students admitted to a dual enrollment program must be recorded on the college transcript at the university or community or junior college where the student attends classes. The transcript of the university or community or junior college course work may be released to another institution or applied toward college graduation requirements.

Determining factor of prerequisites for enrollment in dual credit courses. Each university and community or junior college participating in a dual enrollment program shall determine course prerequisites for enrolling and receiving dual credit.

Process for determining articulation of curriculum between high school, university, and community and junior college courses. Postsecondary curricula for eligible courses currently offered through Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks must meet the prescribed competencies requirements. Eligible courses not offered in Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks must meet the standards established at the postsecondary level. Postsecondary level developmental courses may not be considered as meeting the requirements of the dual enrollment program. Dual credit memorandum of understandings must be established between each postsecondary institution and the school district implementing a dual credit program.

Ineligible courses for dual credit programs. Any course that is required for subject area testing as a requirement for graduation from a public school in Mississippi is not eligible for dual credit.

Eligible courses for dual credit programs. Courses eligible for dual credit include, but are not necessarily limited to, foreign languages, advanced math courses, advanced science courses, performing arts, advanced business and technology, and career and technical courses. These courses and any additional courses considered for dual credit must receive unconditional
approval from the superintendent of the local school district and the chief academic officer at the participating community or junior college or university. A university or community or junior college shall make the final decision on what courses are eligible for semester hour credits. The local school superintendent shall make the final decision on the transfer of college or university courses credited to the student's high school transcript.

(12) **High school Carnegie unit equivalency.** One (1) three-hour university or community or junior college course is equal to one-half (1/2) high school Carnegie unit. A full Carnegie unit may be awarded for a three-hour university or college course upon approval of the local superintendent. Partial credit agreements for postsecondary courses that are less than three (3) hours may be developed between a local school district and the participating postsecondary institution.

(13) **Course alignment.** Once alignment is achieved between university courses, community and junior college courses and the State Board of Education approved high school courses, the universities, community and junior colleges and high schools shall review their respective policies and assess the place of dual credit courses within the context of their traditional offerings.

(14) **Maximum dual credits allowed.** It is the intent of the dual enrollment program to make it possible for every student who desires to earn a semester's worth of college credit in high school to do so. A qualified dually enrolled high school student must be allowed to earn an unlimited number of college or university credits for dual credit as long as a B average is earned on the first two (2) approved dual credit courses. If a B average is not maintained after the completion of the student's first two (2) dual credit courses, the student may not continue in the dual credit program.

(15) **Dual credit program allowances.** A student may be granted credit delivered through the following means:
(a) Examination preparation taught at a high school by a qualified teacher. A student may receive credit at the secondary level after completion of an approved course and passing the standard examination, such as an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course through which a high school student is allowed CLEP credit by making a three (3) or higher on the end-of-course examination.

(b) School-based courses taught at a high school or designated postsecondary site by a qualified teacher who is an employee of the school district and approved as an instructor by the collaborating college or university.

(c) College or university-based courses taught at a college, university or high school by an instructor employed by the college or university and approved by the collaborating school district.

(d) On-line courses, including eligible courses offered by the Mississippi Virtual Public School or any postsecondary institution.

(16) **Qualifications of dual credit instructors.** A dual credit academic instructor must have, at a minimum, a master's degree with at least eighteen (18) graduate semester hours in the instructor's field of expertise. University and community and junior college personnel have the sole authority in the selection of dual credit instructors.

A dual credit career and technical education instructor must meet the requirements set forth by the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges in the qualifications manual for postsecondary career and technical personnel. University and community and junior college personnel have the sole authority in the selection of dual credit instructors.

(17) **Guidance on local agreements.** The Chief Academic Officer of the State Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Chief Academic Officer of the State Board
for Community and Junior Colleges, working collaboratively, shall
develop a template to be used by the individual community and
junior colleges and institutions of higher learning for consistent
implementation of the dual enrollment program throughout the State
of Mississippi.

reenacted as follows:

37-15-39. (1) The purpose of this section is to ensure that
each student has a sufficient education for success after high
school and that all students have equal access to a substantive
and rigorous curriculum that is designed to challenge their minds
and enhance their knowledge skill.

(2) The following words and phrases have the meanings
ascribed in this section unless the context clearly requires
otherwise:

(a) "Advanced placement course" means any high school
level preparatory course for a college advanced placement test
that incorporates all topics specified by recognized advanced
placement authorities on standards for a given subject area and
is approved by recognized advanced placement authorities.

(b) "Dual enrollment course" means a postsecondary
level course offered by a state institution of higher learning or
community or junior colleges, which, upon successful completion,
qualifies for academic credit in both the postsecondary
institution and public high school.

(c) "Pre-advanced placement course" means a middle,
junior high or high school level course that specifically prepares
students to enroll and participate in an advanced placement
course.

(d) "Vertical team" means a group of educators from
different grade levels in a given discipline working cooperatively
to develop and implement a vertically aligned program aimed at
helping students from diverse backgrounds acquire the academic
skills necessary for success in the advanced placement program and other challenging course work.

(e) "High concentration of low-income students" means, when used with respect to a public school or school district, a public school or school district that serves a student population with fifty percent (50%) or more being low-income individuals ages five (5) through seventeen (17) years from a low-income family on the basis of: data on children eligible for the free or reduced-price lunches under the National School Lunch Act; data on children in families receiving assistance under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act; data on children eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; or an alternate method of identifying such children which combines or extrapolates that data.

(3) The State Board of Education shall establish clear, specific and challenging training guidelines that require teachers of advanced placement courses and teachers of pre-advanced placement courses to obtain a recognized advanced placement authority endorsed training. A teacher of an advanced placement or pre-advanced placement course, or both, must obtain the appropriate training.

(4) (a) In order to ensure that each student has a sufficient education for success after high school and that all students have equal access to a substantive and rigorous curriculum that is designed to challenge their minds and enhance their knowledge skill, school districts shall offer pre-advanced placement courses to prepare students for advanced placement course work.

(b) Subject to appropriation, funding shall be made available for the 2007-2008 school year so that all sophomores in Mississippi's public schools may take an examination that measures the students' ability to succeed in an advanced placement course.

The State Department of Education shall seek federal funding
through the Advanced Placement Incentive Grant Program and other
available funding for this purpose. Funding efforts must be
focused with an intent to carry out advanced placement and
pre-advanced placement activities in school districts targeted as
serving a high concentration of low-income students.

(c) The State Department of Education must approve all
classes designated as pre-advanced placement courses. The
department shall develop rules necessary for the implementation of
advanced placement courses.

(5) Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, all school
districts must offer at least one (1) advanced placement course in
each of the four (4) core areas of math, English, science and
social studies, for a total offering of no less than four (4)
advanced placement courses. The use of the state's on-line
Advanced Placement Instructional Program is an appropriate
alternative for the delivery of advanced placement courses.

Any public high school offering the International
Baccalaureate Diploma Program is exempt from the requirements of
this subsection. However, the school may participate in teacher
training and program funding on the same basis as any high school
offering advanced placement courses.

SECTION 15. Section 37-3-97, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
reenacted as follows:

37-3-97. The State Department of Education and the Board of
Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall prepare
jointly an annual report for the Legislature and Governor to be
submitted before December 1 of each year beginning in 2006. The
report shall be a compilation of existing data that may be used to
create a rating system that measures the performance of the
teacher education programs in the state.

SECTION 16. Section 37-7-346, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
reenacted as follows:
37-7-346. The State Department of Education and the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) shall prepare jointly a report, to be submitted before December 15, 2006, for consideration of the Legislature and Governor, detailing the plans that shall be enacted by State Board of Education policy of how RESAs will work in partnership with the State Department of Education to increase their function as a local provider of educational services and purchasing consortia as provided in Section 37-7-345(6). These services must be prescribed by policies and standards of the State Department of Education and must include, but not necessarily be limited to, professional development, instructional materials, educational technology, curriculum development, alternative educational programs, purchasing cooperatives, insurance cooperatives, business manager services, auditing and accounting services, school safety/risk prevention, data processing and student records, communications/public information, employee background checks, grants management, printing/publications and internships.

SECTION 17. Section 43-1-65, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

43-1-65. The Department of Human Services shall establish the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System by requiring the Office for Children and Youth of the Department of Human Services, the lead agency for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), to develop and implement a pilot voluntary Quality Rating System (QRS). The purpose of the pilot system will be to improve the quality of all licensed early care and education and after school programs. The system is to be phased in over the next five (5) years beginning July 1, 2006, subject to appropriation. The QRS criteria will be the basis, at minimum, for the QRS, and shall address the following components: administrative policy, professional development, learning environment, and parental involvement and evaluation.
In addition, the Office for Children and Youth shall develop and administer funds, based on appropriation, to create a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) statewide system in collaboration with community and junior colleges, universities, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, state agencies and/or nonprofit community entities. The CCR&R agencies shall provide training specific to the QRS criteria to enable early care and education program quality to improve as measured by the QRS system; and offer parent education information and training on what a quality early care and education program comprises and how to identify one. This program shall begin July 1, 2006, subject to appropriation.

SECTION 18. Section 43-1-67, Mississippi Code of 1972, is reenacted as follows:

43-1-67. The Office for Children and Youth of the Department of Human Services shall conduct a needs assessment to determine the need for an incentive program, which would allow participating early care and education programs in the Quality Rating System (QRS) access to funds to provide incentives to teachers/directors that make educational advancements that are listed in the QRS criteria. If determined to be feasible and depending on the availability of funds, guidelines for such an incentive program shall be developed by the Office for Children and Youth.

SECTION 19. Chapter 504, Laws of 2006, is amended as follows:

Section 19. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2006 **.*.

SECTION 20. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.