

By: Representatives Scott, Burnett, Espy,
Gibbs, Harrison, Huddleston (30th),
Middleton, Thomas

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 917

1 AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS "VISION 2020: AN EDUCATION BLUEPRINT
2 FOR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY"; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
3 TO ADOPT A RULE THAT INCLUDES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES,
4 INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS; TO ESTABLISH GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
5 IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO CREATE AN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP TO
6 ACHIEVE STATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** (1) This act shall be known as and may be cited
9 as "Vision 2020: An Education Blueprint for Two Thousand Twenty."

10 (2) The Legislature finds that:

11 (a) Because the State of Mississippi faces such
12 obstacles as lower family income levels and lower parent education
13 levels, the state must do even more to compete with other states
14 to increase student achievement and ensure that high school
15 graduates are fully prepared for postsecondary education or
16 gainful employment;

17 (b) A clear plan that includes goals, objectives,
18 strategies, indicators and benchmarks is needed in order to keep
19 the state's education system on track for success; and

20 (c) In order to eliminate any confusion, these goals,
21 objectives, strategies, indicators and benchmarks for public
22 education should be set forth in one (1) rule that is promulgated
23 by the State Board of Education pursuant to this section and that
24 meets the requirements of this section.

25 (3) The purpose of this act is to require that this clear
26 plan be established as part of Vision 2020: An Education
27 Blueprint for Two Thousand Twenty.



28 **SECTION 2.** The following words and phrases have the meanings
29 ascribed in this section unless the context clearly indicates
30 otherwise:

31 (a) "Goals" means those long-term public purposes which
32 are the desired and expected end result and may include only those
33 items listed in Section 3.

34 (b) "Objectives" means the ends to be accomplished or
35 attained within a specified period of time for the purpose of
36 meeting the established goals.

37 (c) "Strategies" means specific activities carried out
38 by the public education system which are directed toward
39 accomplishing specific objectives.

40 **SECTION 3.** (1) The State Board of Education shall
41 promulgate a rule that includes the following:

42 (a) The goals set forth in this act and no other goals;

43 (b) At least those objectives set forth in this section
44 and specified periods of time for achieving those objectives and
45 any other objectives that may be included in the rule;

46 (c) Strategies for achieving the specific objectives;

47 (d) Indicators for measuring progress toward the goals
48 and objectives established in this section; and

49 (e) Benchmarks for determining when the goals and
50 objectives have been achieved.

51 (2) The rule must include the following list of exclusive
52 goals for the public education system in Mississippi:

53 (a) Academic achievement according to national and
54 international measures will exceed national and international
55 averages. These national and international measures should
56 include scores on assessments such as the National Assessment of
57 Educational Progress (NAEP), the ACT and the SAT;

58 (b) The public education system will prepare fully all
59 students for postsecondary education or gainful employment;



60 (c) All working-age adults will be functionally
61 literate;

62 (d) The public education system will maintain and
63 promote the health and safety of all students and will develop and
64 promote responsibility, citizenship and strong character in all
65 students; and

66 (e) The public education system will provide equitable
67 education opportunities to all students.

68 (3) The rule also must include at least the following
69 policy-oriented objectives:

70 (a) Rigorous twenty-first century curriculum and
71 engaging instruction for all students. All students in
72 Mississippi public schools should have access to and benefit from
73 a rigorous twenty-first century curriculum that develops
74 proficiency in core subjects, twenty-first century content,
75 learning skills and technology tools. These students also should
76 have that curriculum delivered through engaging, research-based
77 instructional strategies that develop deep understanding and the
78 ability to apply content to real-world situations;

79 (b) A twenty-first century accountability and
80 accreditation system. The prekindergarten through Grade 12
81 education system should have a public accrediting system that:
82 holds local school districts accountable for the student outcomes
83 that the state values; and provides the public with understandable
84 accountability data for judging the quality of local schools. The
85 outcomes on which the system is based should be rigorous and
86 should align with national and international standards such as the
87 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the ACT and
88 the SAT. The broad standards established for these outcomes
89 should include a focus on mastery of basic skills by all students,
90 closing the achievement gap among student subgroups, and high
91 levels of proficiency in a wide range of desired twenty-first
92 century measures and processes. The system for determining school



93 and district accreditation should include school and district
94 self-analysis and generate appropriate research-based strategies
95 for improvement. It also should allow opportunities to create
96 innovative approaches to instructional delivery and design. The
97 system will incorporate processes for encouraging innovation,
98 including financial support for successful initiatives and
99 recognition of those practices that can be brought to a district
100 or statewide scale. Although the primary goal of the
101 accreditation system is to drive school improvement, it also will
102 serve as a basis for rewards, sanctions and interventions.

103 (c) A statewide balanced assessment process that
104 includes an individualized student data management system. State,
105 district, school and classroom decisionmaking should be grounded
106 in twenty-first century balanced assessment processes that reflect
107 national and international rigorous performance standards and
108 examine student proficiency in twenty-first century content,
109 skills and technology tools. A balanced assessment system
110 includes statewide summative assessments, local benchmark
111 assessments and classroom assessments for learning. Mississippi's
112 assessment system also should include international benchmarking
113 processes that allow comparison of Mississippi's performance to
114 international performance. To effectively use assessment data,
115 principals and teachers should be provided ready access to results
116 through student digital data profiles that individually track
117 student performance and provide educators with diagnostic
118 information necessary to make appropriate instructional decisions
119 on behalf of students.

120 (d) A personnel allocation, licensure and funding
121 process that aligns with the needs of twenty-first century school
122 systems and is supported by a quality coordinated professional
123 development delivery system. Increased accountability demands, as
124 well as the focus on twenty-first century learning, require a
125 reexamination of traditional approaches to personnel allocation,



126 licensure and funding. Creating schools of the twenty-first
127 century requires new staffing roles and staffing patterns. It
128 also requires ongoing professional development activities focused
129 on enhancing student achievement and achieving specific goals of
130 the school and district strategic plans. Thus, schools should
131 have the ability to access, organize and deliver high quality
132 embedded professional development that provides staff with
133 in-depth sustained and supported learning. Effective school
134 improvement should be supported by a flexible school calendar that
135 allows opportunity for staff to collectively learn, plan and
136 implement curricular and instructional improvements on behalf of
137 the students they serve.

138 (e) School environments that promote safe, healthy and
139 responsible behavior and provide an integrated system of student
140 support services. Each school should create an environment
141 focused on student learning and one where students know they are
142 valued, respected and safe. Furthermore, the school should
143 incorporate programs and processes that instill healthy, safe and
144 responsible behaviors and prepare students for interactions with
145 individuals of diverse racial, ethnic and social backgrounds.
146 School and district processes should include a focus on developing
147 ethical and responsible character, personal dispositions that
148 promote personal wellness through planned daily physical activity
149 and healthy eating habits consistent with high nutritional
150 guidelines and multicultural experiences that develop an
151 appreciation of and respect for diversity. The school and school
152 district also should address the needs of students who arrive at
153 school with social, emotional and physical needs that require
154 specialized and diverse services. School districts should have
155 the capability to access, manage and deliver services to these
156 students in an organized integrated system that taps the resources
157 of both the school and the broader community.



158 (f) A leadership recruitment, development and support
159 continuum. Quality schools and school systems of the twenty-first
160 century cannot be created without high quality leaders. Thus,
161 Mississippi should have an aligned leadership professional
162 development continuum that attracts, develops and supports
163 educational leadership at the classroom, school and district
164 level. This leadership development continuum should focus on
165 creating: (i) learning-centered schools and school systems; (ii)
166 collaborative processes for staff learning and continuous
167 improvement; and (iii) accountability measures for student
168 achievement.

169 (g) Equitable access to twenty-first century technology
170 and education resources and school facilities conducive to
171 twenty-first century teaching and learning. A quality educational
172 system of the twenty-first century should have access to
173 technology tools and processes that enhance effective and
174 efficient operation. Administrators should have the digital
175 resources to monitor student performance, manage a variety of data
176 and communicate effectively. In the classroom, every teacher in
177 every school should be provided with the instructional resources
178 and educational technology necessary to deliver the Mississippi
179 content standard and objectives. Schools of the twenty-first
180 century require facilities that accommodate changing technologies,
181 twenty-first century instructional processes and twenty-first
182 century staffing needs and patterns. These school facilities
183 should mirror the best in green construction and must be
184 environmentally and educationally responsive to the communities in
185 which they are located.

186 (h) Aligned public school with postsecondary and
187 workplace readiness programs and standards. An educational system
188 in the twenty-first century should be seen as a continuum from the
189 public school (prekindergarten through Grade 12 program) through
190 postsecondary education. In order to be successful in a global



191 competitive marketplace, learning should be an ongoing, lifelong
192 experience. Thus, the public schools and the state institutions
193 of higher learning in Mississippi should create a system of common
194 standards, expectations and accountability. Creating such an
195 aligned system will enhance opportunities for success and assure a
196 seamless educational process for Mississippi students; and

197 (i) A universal prekindergarten system. Every eligible
198 student should be enrolled in a high quality, universal
199 prekindergarten system. The system promotes oral language and
200 preliteracy skills and reduces the deficit of these foundational
201 skills through proactive, early intervention. Research indicates
202 that universal prekindergarten systems improve graduation rates,
203 reduce grade level retentions and reduce the number of special
204 education placements. Therefore, local school districts should
205 create the supports and provide the resources to assure a quality
206 prekindergarten foundation is available to all eligible students.

207 (4) In addition to the policy-oriented objectives set forth
208 in subsection (3) of this section, the rule established pursuant
209 to this section also must include at least the following
210 performance oriented objectives:

211 (a) All children entering the first grade will be ready
212 for the first grade;

213 (b) The performance of students falling in the lowest
214 quartile on national and international measures of student
215 performance will improve by fifty percent (50%);

216 (c) Ninety percent (90%) of ninth graders will graduate
217 from high school;

218 (d) By the year 2013, the ten (10) counties with the
219 lowest college-attendance rates as of July 1, 2011, will increase
220 their college-attendance rate to the 2013 state average and the
221 college-attendance rate of the state will equal the
222 college-attendance rate of the member states of the Southern
223 Regional Education Board; and



224 (e) By the year 2020, the ten (10) counties with the
225 lowest college-attendance rates as of July 1, 2011, will increase
226 their college-attendance rate to the 2020 college-attendance rate
227 of the member states of the Southern Regional Education Board, and
228 the college-attendance rate of the state will exceed the
229 college-attendance rate of the member states of the Southern
230 Regional Education Board by five (5) percentage points.

231 **SECTION 4.** (1) It is the intent of the Legislature in
232 enacting this section to establish state goals for public higher
233 education which benefit the citizens of the State of Mississippi.

234 (2) It is further the intent of the Legislature that this
235 section be read and implemented in conjunction with the
236 accountability system established in Section 5 of this act.

237 (3) The Legislature finds that postsecondary education is
238 vital to the future of Mississippi. For the state to realize its
239 considerable potential in the twenty-first century, it must have a
240 system for the delivery of postsecondary education which is
241 competitive in the changing national and global environment, is
242 affordable for the state and its citizenry and has the capacity to
243 deliver the programs and services necessary to meet regional and
244 statewide needs.

245 The Legislature further finds that it is vitally important
246 for young people entering the workforce to have the education and
247 skills to succeed in today's high-technology, knowledge-based
248 economy. It is equally important for working-age adults who are
249 the majority of the current and potential workforce also to
250 possess the requisite education and skills to compete successfully
251 in the workplace and to have the opportunity to continue learning
252 throughout their lives. The future of the state rests not only on
253 how well its youth are educated, but also on how well it educates
254 its entire population of any age.

255 The Legislature further finds that providing access to a
256 high-quality and affordable postsecondary education is a state



257 responsibility and that states are not maximizing their investment
258 in higher education. The Legislature recognizes the efforts of
259 the National Conference of State Legislatures' Blue Ribbon
260 Commission on Higher Education in producing a report to assist the
261 states in higher education policymaking. According to the
262 commission report, "Transforming Higher Education: National
263 Imperative -- State Responsibility," the United States is losing
264 its competitive advantage in a new, high-tech, highly mobile
265 global economy. This lack of competitiveness is a matter of the
266 highest urgency for federal and state policymakers and higher
267 education is at the center of this discussion. The report goes on
268 to add that "higher education is both the problem and the
269 solution" because the nation has failed to focus on how higher
270 education energizes American competitiveness and revitalizes the
271 states." Pursuant to these findings, the commission made some
272 specific recommendations addressed to the states, which include
273 the following:

- 274 (a) Define clear state goals;
- 275 (b) Identify your state's strengths and weaknesses;
- 276 (c) Know your state demographic trends for the next ten
277 (10) to thirty (30) years;
- 278 (d) Identify a place or structure to sustain the public
279 policy agenda;
- 280 (e) Hold institutions accountable for their
281 performance;
- 282 (f) Rethink funding formulas and student aid;
- 283 (g) Make a commitment to access, success and
284 innovation;
- 285 (h) Encourage partnerships;
- 286 (i) Give special attention to adult learners; and
- 287 (j) Focus on productivity.



288 All of these recommendations are useful in providing policy
289 guidance and have been given careful consideration in the
290 development of this section.

291 **SECTION 5.** In recognition of its importance to the citizens
292 of Mississippi, the Legislature establishes the following goals
293 for public higher education in the state:

294 (a) The ultimate goal of public education is to enhance
295 the quality of life for citizens of the State of Mississippi.

296 (b) The overall focus of public education is on
297 developing and maintaining a process of lifelong learning which is
298 as seamless as possible at all levels, encourages citizens of all
299 ages to increase their knowledge and skills and provides ample
300 opportunities for them to participate in public higher education.

301 (c) Higher education collaborates with public education
302 and other providers to offer education opportunities:

303 (i) To individuals of all ages and socioeconomic
304 backgrounds in all areas of the state; and

305 (ii) To overcome financial barriers to
306 participation for both traditional and nontraditional students.

307 (d) Higher education seeks to enhance state efforts to
308 diversify and expand the economy by focusing available resources
309 on programs and courses which best serve students, provide the
310 greatest opportunity for job creation and retention and are most
311 supportive of emerging high-technology and knowledge-based
312 businesses and industries.

313 (e) Higher education creates a learning environment
314 that is student-friendly and that encourages and assists students
315 in the completion of degree requirements, certifications or skill
316 sets within a reasonable period of time.

317 (f) The learning environment expands participation for
318 the increasingly diverse student population and responds to the
319 needs of the current workforce and other nontraditional students.



320 (g) Through the establishment of innovative curricula
321 and assessment efforts, state institutions of higher learning
322 ensure that students graduate from nationally recognized and
323 accredited programs and meet or exceed national and international
324 standards for performance in their chosen fields as evidenced
325 through placement and professional licensure examinations.

326 (h) Higher education promotes academic research and
327 innovation to achieve measurable growth in Mississippi's
328 knowledge-based economic sector.

329 (i) State institutions of higher learning emphasize
330 productivity and strive to exceed the performance and productivity
331 levels of peer institutions. In return, and within the
332 constraints of fiscal responsibility, the state seeks to invest in
333 institutions so that they may adequately compensate faculty,
334 classified employees and other employees at a competitive level to
335 attract and retain high quality personnel.

336 (j) State institutions of higher learning are committed
337 to a shared responsibility with faculty, staff, students and their
338 communities to provide access to the knowledge and to promote
339 acquisition of the skills and abilities necessary to establish and
340 maintain physical fitness and wellness.

341 (i) Programs that encourage healthy lifestyles are
342 essential for the vibrancy of the institutions of higher learning,
343 for the well-being of the communities they serve and for the state
344 as a whole.

345 (ii) Increasing the fitness levels of adults on
346 college and university campuses is critically important for the
347 people of Mississippi, not only for disease prevention, but also,
348 and perhaps most importantly, to enhance the overall quality of
349 life.

350 (iii) While individuals must bear the primary
351 responsibility for their own health, it is imperative that the
352 institutions provide appropriate education and support focused on



353 enriching and expanding the short and longterm views and attitudes
354 toward physical activity, understanding the principles of wellness
355 and their application to a healthy lifestyle, understanding what
356 components are a necessary part of an all-round healthy lifestyle
357 and learning how to set and achieve realistic goals aimed at
358 establishing healthy habits for the benefit of long-term health
359 and well-being.

360 **SECTION 6.** (1) If public institutions of higher learning
361 are to provide services that meet the needs of state citizens,
362 then Mississippi must create and participate in a partnership
363 across various education organizations that recognizes the
364 valuable contributions each member of the group can make. In
365 addition to public education in Mississippi, and in addition to
366 the State of Mississippi, key members of this partnership include
367 the state institutions of higher learning, community and junior
368 colleges, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges and
369 the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

370 (2) The state institutions of higher learning and community
371 and junior colleges are the cornerstone of efforts to provide
372 higher education services that meet the needs of state citizens.
373 To varying degrees, and depending upon their missions, these
374 institutions serve the state in three (3) major ways:

375 (a) Instruction. By providing direct instruction to
376 students along with the student services necessary to support the
377 instructional mission. These services have two (2) primary goals:

378 (i) To produce college graduates who have the
379 knowledge, skills and desire to make valuable contributions to
380 society; and

381 (ii) To provide opportunities for citizens to
382 engage in lifelong learning to enhance their employability and
383 their overall quality of life.

384 (b) Public service. By providing an occupational home
385 for experts in a variety of fields and by serving as the



386 educational home for students. In these capacities, institutions
387 create a large and varied pool of high quality human resources
388 capable of making valuable contributions to business and industry,
389 local and state governments and communities. The following are
390 examples of the types of public service that higher education
391 institutions have to offer:

392 (i) Workforce development, primarily through
393 community and junior colleges, to meet the immediate and long-term
394 needs of employers and employees;

395 (ii) Technical assistance to state and local
396 policymakers as they work to address challenges as diverse as
397 ensuring that Mississippi's citizens receive quality health care,
398 assisting in the development of a solid transportation
399 infrastructure and ensuring that public schoolteachers have
400 enriching professional development opportunities; and

401 (iii) Opportunities to learn and serve in local
402 communities, to teach civic responsibility and to encourage civic
403 engagement.

404 (c) Research. By conducting research at state
405 institutions of higher learning, to enhance the quality of life in
406 Mississippi in the following ways:

407 (i) Targeting cutting-edge research toward solving
408 pressing societal problems;

409 (ii) Promoting economic development by raising the
410 level of education and specialization among the population; and

411 (iii) Creating jobs through development of new
412 products and services.

413 (3) In their role as state-level coordinating boards, the
414 State Board for Community Colleges the Board of Trustees of State
415 Institutions of Higher Learning function as important partners
416 with state policy leaders in providing higher education that meets
417 state needs. The boards provide service to the state in the
418 following ways:



419 (a) By developing a public policy agenda for various
420 aspects of higher education that is aligned with state goals and
421 objectives and the role and responsibilities of each coordinating
422 board;

423 (b) By ensuring that institutional missions and goals
424 are aligned with relevant parts of the public policy agenda and
425 that institutions maximize the resources available to them to
426 fulfill their missions and make reasonable progress toward meeting
427 established state goals;

428 (c) By evaluating and reporting on progress in
429 implementing the public policy agenda;

430 (d) By promoting system efficiencies through
431 collaboration and cooperation across institutions and through
432 focusing institutional missions as appropriate; and

433 (e) By conducting research, collecting data and
434 providing objective recommendations to aid elected state officials
435 in making policy decisions.

436 (4) Elected state officials represent the citizens of
437 Mississippi and are critical partners in providing quality higher
438 education. In this context, these state-level policymakers serve
439 the state in the following ways:

440 (a) By establishing goals, objectives and priorities
441 for higher education based on a thoughtful, systematic
442 determination of state needs;

443 (b) By providing resources necessary to address state
444 goals, objectives and priorities for higher education; and

445 (c) By providing incentives for and removing barriers
446 to the achievement of state goals, objectives and priorities.

447 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
448 and after July 1, 2011.

