

By: Senator(s) Burton

To: Education;  
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2831

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
 2 TO CONTRACT WITH A SOLE SOURCE VENDOR FOR A HOME-BASED EDUCATIONAL  
 3 TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS FOR  
 4 PRESCHOOL CHILDREN TO BE NAMED THE "MISSISSIPPI UPSTART" PROGRAM;  
 5 TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS; TO PROVIDE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE  
 6 PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTICIPATION IN THE  
 7 MISSISSIPPI UPSTART PROGRAM UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS; TO PROVIDE  
 8 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN THE  
 9 MISSISSIPPI UPSTART PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURCHASE OF  
 10 EQUIPMENT FOR THE PROGRAM THROUGH COOPERATIVE PURCHASING  
 11 CONTRACTS; TO PROVIDE FOR AUDIT OF THE PROGRAM AND REPORTS; TO  
 12 AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND  
 13 IMPLEMENT FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE PUBLIC  
 14 SCHOOL DISTRICTS UNDER CERTAIN STANDARDS AND RECOGNITION AND  
 15 INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM; AND FOR  
 16 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

18 **SECTION 1. Definitions.** (1) As used in this act:

19 (a) "Contractor" means Waterford Institute, a  
 20 not-for-profit, sole source provider of educational technology  
 21 services.

22 (b) "Low income" means an income below two hundred  
 23 percent (200%) of the federal poverty guideline.

24 (c) "Preschool children" means children who are:

- 25 (i) Age four (4) or five (5); and
- 26 (ii) Have not entered kindergarten.

27 (d) "MISSISSIPPI UPSTART" means the project established  
 28 under this act that uses a home-based educational technology  
 29 program to develop school readiness skills of preschool children.

30 (e) "Technology" includes, but is not limited to,  
 31 computers, software, telecommunications, cable television,  
 32 interactive video, film, low-power television, satellite  
 33 communications, microwave communications, technology-based



34 equipment installation and maintenance, and the training of staff  
35 in the use of such technology-based instruction.

36 **SECTION 2. Project to develop school readiness skills of**  
37 **preschool children.** (1) MISSISSIPPI UPSTART, a project that uses  
38 a home-based educational technology program to develop school  
39 readiness skills of preschool children, is established within the  
40 public education system.

41 (2) MISSISSIPPI UPSTART is created to:

42 (a) Evaluate the effectiveness of giving preschool  
43 children access, at home, to interactive individualized  
44 instruction delivered by computers and the Internet to prepare  
45 them academically for success in school; and

46 (b) Test the feasibility of scaling a home-based  
47 curriculum in reading, math, and science delivered by computers  
48 and the Internet to all preschool children in Mississippi.

49 (3) The State Board of Education shall contract with the  
50 Waterford Institute which is determined to be a sole source  
51 educational technology provider for the delivery of a home-based  
52 educational technology program for preschool children that meets  
53 the requirements of subsection (4) of this section.

54 (4) A home-based educational technology program for  
55 preschool children shall meet the following standards:

56 (a) The contractor shall provide computer-assisted  
57 instruction for preschool children on a home computer connected by  
58 the Internet to a centralized file storage facility;

59 (b) The contractor shall:

60 (i) Provide technical support to families for the  
61 installation and operation of the instructional software; and

62 (ii) Provide for the installation of computer and  
63 Internet access in homes of low-income families that cannot afford  
64 the equipment and service;

65 (c) The contractor shall have the capability of doing  
66 the following through the Internet:



67 (i) Communicating with parents;  
68 (ii) Updating the instructional software;  
69 (iii) Validating user access;  
70 (iv) Collecting usage data;  
71 (v) Storing research data; and  
72 (vi) Producing reports for parents, schools, and  
73 the Legislature;

74 (d) The program shall include the following components:

75 (i) Computer-assisted, individualized instruction  
76 in reading, mathematics, and science;

77 (ii) A multisensory reading tutoring program; and  
78 (iii) A validated computer adaptive reading test  
79 that does not require the presence of trained adults to administer  
80 and is an accurate indicator of reading readiness of children who  
81 cannot read;

82 (e) The contractor shall have the capability to quickly  
83 and efficiently modify, improve, and support the product;

84 (f) The contractor shall work in cooperation with  
85 school district personnel who will provide administrative and  
86 technical support of the home-based educational technology program  
87 as provided in Section 4 of this act;

88 (g) The contractor shall solicit families to  
89 participate in the program as provided in Section 4 of this act;  
90 and

91 (h) In implementing the home-based educational  
92 technology program, the contractor shall seek the advise and  
93 expertise of early childhood education professionals within the  
94 Mississippi System of Higher Education on issues such as:

95 (i) Soliciting families to participate in the  
96 program;

97 (ii) Providing training to families; and  
98 (iii) Motivating families to regularly use the  
99 instructional software.



100 (5) The contract shall provide funding for a home-based  
101 educational technology program for preschool children for one (1)  
102 year with an option to extend the contract for additional years or  
103 to expand the program to a greater number of preschool children,  
104 subject to the appropriation of money by the Legislature for  
105 MISSISSIPPI UPSTART.

106 **SECTION 3. School district participation in MISSISSIPPI**

107 **UPSTART.** (1) A school district may participate in MISSISSIPPI  
108 UPSTART if the local school board agrees to work in cooperation  
109 with the contractor to provide administrative and technical  
110 support for the project.

111 (2) Family participants in MISSISSIPPI UPSTART shall be  
112 solicited from school districts that participate in MISSISSIPPI  
113 UPSTART.

114 (3) A school district that participates in MISSISSIPPI  
115 UPSTART shall:

116 (a) Receive funding for:

117 (i) Paraprofessional and technical support staff;

118 and

119 (ii) Travel, materials, and meeting costs of the

120 program;

121 (b) Participate in program training by the contractor;

122 and

123 (c) Agree to adopt standardized policies and procedures

124 in implementing the project.

125 **SECTION 4. Family participation in MISSISSIPPI UPSTART.** (1)

126 The contractor shall solicit families to participate in  
127 MISSISSIPPI UPSTART through a public information campaign and  
128 referrals from participating school districts.

129 (2) (a) Preschool children who participate in MISSISSIPPI  
130 UPSTART shall:

131 (i) Be from families with diverse socioeconomic

132 and ethnic backgrounds; and



133 (ii) Reside in different regions of the state in  
134 both urban and rural areas.

135 (b) At least thirty percent (30%) of the preschool  
136 children who participate in MISSISSIPPI UPSTART shall be from  
137 low-income families.

138 (3) A low-income family that cannot afford a computer and  
139 Internet service to operate the instructional software may obtain  
140 a computer and peripheral equipment on loan and receive free  
141 Internet service for the duration of the family's participation in  
142 the project.

143 (4) The contractor shall make the home-based educational  
144 technology program available to families at an agreed upon cost if  
145 the number of families who would like to participate in  
146 MISSISSIPPI UPSTART exceeds the number of participants funded by  
147 the legislative appropriation.

148 **SECTION 5. Purchase of equipment and service through**  
149 **cooperative purchasing contracts.** The State Board of Education or  
150 a school district may purchase computers, peripheral equipment,  
151 and Internet service for low-income families who cannot afford  
152 them through cooperative purchasing contracts administered by the  
153 Department of Finance and Administration.

154 **SECTION 6. Audit and evaluation.** (1) The State Auditor  
155 shall:

156 (a) Conduct an annual audit of the contractor's use of  
157 funds for MISSISSIPPI UPSTART; or

158 (b) Contract with an independent certified public  
159 accountant to conduct an annual audit.

160 (2) The State Board of Education shall:

161 (a) Require by contract that the contractor will open  
162 its books and records relating to its expenditure of funds  
163 pursuant to the contract to the State Auditor or the State  
164 Auditor's designee; and



165 (b) Reimburse the State Auditor for the actual and  
166 necessary costs of the audit.

167 (3) Of the monies appropriated by the Legislature for  
168 MISSISSIPPI UPSTART, excluding funds used to provide computers,  
169 peripheral equipment, and Internet service to families, no more  
170 than five percent (5%) may be used for the audit of the program.

171 **SECTION 7. Annual report.** (1) The State Board of  
172 Education shall make a report on MISSISSIPPI UPSTART to the House  
173 of Representatives and State Senate Education Committees by  
174 November 30 each year.

175 (2) The report shall:

176 (a) Address the extent to which MISSISSIPPI UPSTART is  
177 accomplishing the purposes for which it was established as  
178 specified in Section 2 of this act; and

179 (b) Include the following information:

180 (i) The number of families:

181 1. Volunteering to participate in the  
182 program;

183 2. Selected to participate in the program;

184 3. Requesting computers; and

185 4. Furnished computers;

186 (ii) The frequency of use of the instructional  
187 software;

188 (iii) Obstacles encountered with software usage,  
189 hardware, or providing technical assistance to families;

190 (iv) Student performance on prekindergarten and  
191 post-kindergarten assessments conducted by school districts and  
192 charter schools for students who participated in the home-based  
193 educational technology program and those who did not participate  
194 in the program; and

195 (v) As available, the evaluation of the program  
196 conducted pursuant to Section 2 of this act.



197           **SECTION 8. Financial literacy education.** (1) As used in  
198 this section, "financial and economic literacy passport" means a  
199 document that tracks mastery of financial and economic literacy  
200 concepts and completion of financial and economic activities,  
201 including the following:

202           (a) Basic budgeting;

203           (b) Saving and financial investments;

204           (c) Banking and financial services, including balancing  
205 a checkbook or a bank account;

206           (d) Career management, including earning an income;

207           (e) Rights and responsibilities of renting or buying a  
208 home;

209           (f) Retirement planning;

210           (g) Loans and borrowing money, including interest,  
211 credit card debt, predatory lending, and payday loans;

212           (h) Insurance;

213           (i) Federal, state, and local taxes;

214           (j) Charitable giving;

215           (k) Online commerce;

216           (l) Identity fraud and theft;

217           (m) Negative financial consequences of gambling;

218           (n) Bankruptcy;

219           (o) Free markets and prices;

220           (p) Supply and demand;

221           (q) Monetary and fiscal policy;

222           (r) Effective business plan creation, including using  
223 economic analysis in creating a plan;

224           (s) Scarcity and choices;

225           (t) Opportunity cost and tradeoffs;

226           (u) Productivity;

227           (v) Entrepreneurism; and

228           (w) Economic reasoning.

229           (2) The State Board of Education shall:



230 (a) In cooperation with interested private and  
231 nonprofit entities:

232 (i) Develop a financial and economic literacy  
233 passport that students may elect to complete;

234 (ii) Develop methods of encouraging parent  
235 and educator involvement in completion of the financial and  
236 economic literacy passport; and

237 (iii) Develop and implement appropriate  
238 recognition and incentives for students who complete the financial  
239 and economic literacy passport, including:

240 1. A financial and economic literacy  
241 endorsement on the student's diploma of graduation;

242 2. A specific designation on the  
243 student's official transcript; and

244 3. Any incentives offered by community  
245 partners;

246 (b) More fully integrate existing and new financial and  
247 economic literacy education into instruction in Kindergarten  
248 through Twelfth Grade by:

249 (i) Coordinating financial and economic literacy  
250 instruction with existing instruction in other core curriculum  
251 areas such as mathematics and social studies;

252 (ii) Using curriculum mapping;

253 (iii) Creating training materials and staff  
254 development programs that:

255 1. Highlight areas of potential coordination  
256 between financial and economic literacy education and other core  
257 curriculum concepts; and

258 2. Demonstrate specific examples of  
259 financial and economic literacy concepts as a way of teaching  
260 other core curriculum concepts; and





261 (iv) Using appropriate financial and economic  
262 literacy assessments to improve financial and economic literacy  
263 education and, if necessary, developing assessments;

264 (c) Work with interested private and nonprofit entities  
265 to:

266 (i) Coordinate school use of existing financial  
267 and economic literacy education resources; and

268 (ii) Develop simple, clear, and consistent  
269 messaging to reinforce and link existing financial literacy  
270 resources; and

271 (iii) Coordinate the efforts of school, work,  
272 private, nonprofit, and other financial education providers in  
273 implementing methods of appropriately communicating to teachers,  
274 students, and parents key financial and economic literacy  
275 messages; and

276 (d) In accordance with the Mississippi Administrative  
277 Procedures Act, make rules to develop guidelines and methods for  
278 school districts and charter schools to more fully integrate  
279 financial and economic literacy education into other core  
280 curriculum courses.

281 (3) The State Superintendent of Education shall annually  
282 report to the Education Committees of each house of the  
283 Legislature by November of each year on the successes and areas of  
284 needed improvement in financial and economic literacy education  
285 provided pursuant to this section.

286 **SECTION 9.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
287 and after July 1, 2011.

