

By: Representative Scott

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 234

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 and may be cited as
9 "Vision 2020: An Education Blueprint for Two Thousand Twenty."

10 (2) The Legislature finds that:

11 (a) Because the State of Mississippi faces obstacles
12 such 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 prepared fully 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 which
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. Mississippi should have an aligned leadership
160 professional development continuum that attracts, develops and
161 supports educational leadership at the classroom, school and
162 district level. This leadership development continuum should
163 focus on creating: (i) learning-centered schools and school
164 systems; (ii) collaborative processes for staff learning and
165 continuous improvement; and (iii) accountability measures for
166 student achievement.



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

184 (h) Aligned public school with postsecondary and
185 workplace readiness programs and standards. An educational system
186 in the twenty-first century should be seen as a continuum from the
187 public school (prekindergarten through Grade 12 program) through
188 postsecondary education. In order to be successful in a global
189 competitive marketplace, learning should be an ongoing, lifelong
190 experience. Thus, the public schools and the state institutions
191 of higher learning in Mississippi should create a system of common



192 standards, expectations and accountability to enhance
193 opportunities for success and assure a seamless educational
194 process for Mississippi students.

195 (i) A universal prekindergarten system. Every eligible
196 student should be enrolled in a high quality, universal
197 prekindergarten system. The system should promote oral language
198 and preliteracy skills in order to reduce the deficit of these
199 foundational skills through proactive, early intervention. Local
200 school districts should create the supports and provide the
201 resources to assure a quality prekindergarten foundation is
202 available to all eligible students.

203 (4) In addition to the policy-oriented objectives set forth
204 in subsection (3) of this section, the rule established pursuant
205 to this section also must include at least the following
206 performance oriented objectives:

207 (a) All children entering the first grade will be ready
208 for the first grade;

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

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

214 (d) By the year 2018, the ten (10) counties with the
215 lowest college-attendance rates as of July 1, 2014, will increase
216 their college-attendance rate to the 2018 state average and the



217 college-attendance rate of the state will equal the
218 college-attendance rate of the member states of the Southern
219 Regional Education Board; and

220 (e) By the year 2020, the ten (10) counties with the
221 lowest college-attendance rates as of July 1, 2014, will increase
222 their college-attendance rate to the 2020 college-attendance rate
223 of the member states of the Southern Regional Education Board, and
224 the college-attendance rate of the state will exceed the
225 college-attendance rate of the member states of the Southern
226 Regional Education Board by five (5) percentage points.

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

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

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



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

251 The Legislature further finds that providing access to a
252 high-quality and affordable postsecondary education is a state
253 responsibility and that states are not maximizing their investment
254 in higher education. The Legislature recognizes the efforts of
255 the National Conference of State Legislatures' Blue Ribbon
256 Commission on Higher Education in producing a report to assist the
257 states in higher education policymaking. The Legislature
258 acknowledges that according to the commission report,
259 "Transforming Higher Education: National Imperative -- State
260 Responsibility," the United States is losing its competitive
261 advantage in a new, high-tech, highly mobile global economy and
262 that this lack of competitiveness is a matter of the highest
263 urgency for federal and state policymakers. The report goes on to
264 add that "higher education is both the problem and the solution"
265 because the nation has failed to focus on how higher education



266 energizes American competitiveness and revitalizes the states.
267 Pursuant to these findings, the commission made some specific
268 recommendations addressed to the states, which include the
269 following:

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

284 The Legislature declares that all of these recommendations
285 are useful in providing policy guidance and have been given
286 careful consideration in the development of this section.

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



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

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

297 (c) Higher education collaborates with public education
298 and other providers to offer education opportunities:

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

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

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

309 (e) Higher education creates a learning environment
310 that is student-friendly and which encourages and assists students
311 in the completion of degree requirements, certifications or skill
312 sets within a reasonable period of time.



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

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

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

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

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



337 (i) Programs that encourage healthy lifestyles are
338 essential for the vibrancy of the institutions of higher learning,
339 for the well-being of the communities they serve and for the state
340 as a whole.

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

346 (iii) While individuals must bear the primary
347 responsibility for their own health, it is imperative that the
348 institutions provide appropriate education and support focused on
349 enriching and expanding the short and longterm views and attitudes
350 toward physical activity, understanding the principles of wellness
351 and their application to a healthy lifestyle, understanding what
352 components are a necessary part of an all-round healthy lifestyle
353 and learning how to set and achieve realistic goals aimed at
354 establishing healthy habits for the benefit of long-term health
355 and well-being.

356 **SECTION 6.** (1) The State of Mississippi must create and
357 participate in a partnership across various education
358 organizations which recognizes the valuable contributions each
359 member of the group can make. In addition to public education in
360 Mississippi, and in addition to the State of Mississippi, key
361 members of this partnership must include the state institutions of



362 higher learning, community and junior colleges, the State Board
363 for Community and Junior Colleges and the Board of Trustees of
364 State Institutions of Higher Learning.

365 (2) The state institutions of higher learning and community
366 and junior colleges must serve as the cornerstone of efforts to
367 provide higher education services that meet the needs of state
368 citizens. To varying degrees, and depending upon their missions,
369 these institutions must serve the state in three (3) major ways:

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

373 (i) To produce college graduates who have the
374 knowledge, skills and desire to make valuable contributions to
375 society; and

376 (ii) To provide opportunities for citizens to
377 engage in lifelong learning to enhance their employability and
378 their overall quality of life.

379 (b) Public service. By providing an occupational home
380 for experts in a variety of fields and by serving as the
381 educational home for students. In these capacities, institutions
382 shall create a large and varied pool of high quality human
383 resources capable of making valuable contributions to business and
384 industry, local and state governments and communities. The
385 following are examples of the types of public service that higher
386 education institutions must offer:



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

390 (ii) Technical assistance to state and local
391 policymakers as they work to address challenges as diverse as
392 ensuring that Mississippi's citizens receive quality health care,
393 assisting in the development of a solid transportation
394 infrastructure and ensuring that public school teachers have
395 enriching professional development opportunities; and

396 (iii) Opportunities to learn and serve in local
397 communities, to teach civic responsibility and to encourage civic
398 engagement.

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

402 (i) Targeting cutting-edge research toward solving
403 pressing societal problems;

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

406 (iii) Creating jobs through development of new
407 products and services.

408 (3) In their role as state-level coordinating boards, the
409 State Board for Community Colleges and the Board of Trustees of
410 State Institutions of Higher Learning must function as important
411 partners with state policy leaders in providing higher education



412 that meets state needs. The boards shall provide service to the
413 state in the following ways:

414 (a) By developing a public policy agenda for various
415 aspects of higher education which is aligned with state goals and
416 objectives and by defining the role and responsibilities of each
417 coordinating board;

418 (b) By ensuring that institutional missions and goals
419 are aligned with relevant parts of the public policy agenda and
420 that institutions maximize the resources available to them to
421 fulfill their missions and make reasonable progress toward meeting
422 established state goals;

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

425 (d) By promoting system efficiencies through
426 collaboration and cooperation across institutions and through
427 focusing institutional missions as appropriate; and

428 (e) By conducting research, collecting data and
429 providing objective recommendations to aid elected state officials
430 in making policy decisions.

431 (4) Elected state-level policymakers shall serve the state
432 in the following ways:

433 (a) By establishing goals, objectives and priorities
434 for higher education based on a thoughtful, systematic
435 determination of state needs;



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

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

440 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
441 and after July 1, 2014.

