

By: Representative Barker

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 831

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-175-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
 2 TO INCLUDE STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR ENROLLMENT IN KINDERGARTEN AS
 3 ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS OF A MISSISSIPPI SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPY
 4 SCHOLARSHIP; TO AMEND SECTION 37-175-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
 5 TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF CERTAIN TIMES USED TO DETERMINE THE
 6 ELIGIBILITY RULING NECESSARY FOR RECEIPT OF A MISSISSIPPI
 7 SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPY SCHOLARSHIP; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-175-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
 10 amended as follows:

11 37-175-5. (1) Parents or legal guardians may exercise the
 12 option to remove their child from a traditional public school
 13 setting to be enrolled in a nonpublic school which meets the
 14 standards for appropriate specific instruction designed to meet
 15 the unique learning needs of young students with a speech-language
 16 impairment. The objectives of such school shall be:

17 (a) To emphasize the importance of early intervention;

18 and

19 (b) To provide intensive high-quality speech-language
 20 pathology services.



21 (2) The parent or legal guardian of a public school student
22 with a speech-language impairment may request and receive from the
23 state a Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship for the
24 child to enroll in and attend a nonpublic school in accordance
25 with this section if:

26 (a) The student has spent the previous school year in
27 attendance at a Mississippi public school or any other state
28 accredited nonpublic special purpose school in the state that is
29 organized to provide and emphasizes instruction in speech-language
30 therapy and intervention as the primary purpose of the school, or
31 is eligible for enrollment in a kindergarten program; or

32 (b) The parent or legal guardian has obtained
33 acceptance for admission of the student to a nonpublic school that
34 is eligible for the program under Section 37-175-19 and has
35 requested from the department a scholarship within thirty (30)
36 days before the date of the first scholarship payment. The
37 request must be through a communication directly to the department
38 in a manner that creates a written or electronic record of the
39 request and the date of receipt of the request. The State
40 Department of Education must notify the district of the parent's
41 or legal guardian's intent upon receipt of the parent's or legal
42 guardian's request.

43 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-175-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
44 amended as follows:



45 37-175-1. As used in this chapter, the following words and
46 phrases shall have the meanings ascribed in this section unless
47 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

48 (a) "Board" means the State Board of Education.

49 (b) "Department" means the State Department of
50 Education.

51 (c) "Speech-language impairment," as defined under
52 IDEA, means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired
53 articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment, that
54 adversely affects a child's educational performance, which
55 include:

56 (i) Articulation disorders: difficulties
57 producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the
58 point that listeners cannot understand what is being said;

59 (ii) Fluency disorders: problems in which the
60 flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, repetitions,
61 prolonged sounds and syllables or avoided, and where there may be
62 silent blocks or inappropriate inhalation, exhalation or phonation
63 patterns;

64 (iii) Resonance or voice disorders: problems with
65 abnormal pitch, volume, resonance or quality of the voice, which
66 may also cause pain or discomfort when speaking;

67 (iv) Receptive language disorders: difficulties
68 understanding or processing language; and



69 (v) Expressive language disorders: difficulty
70 putting words together, limited vocabulary or inability to use
71 language in a socially appropriate manner.

72 (d) "Speech-language therapy" means an appropriate
73 specialized speech-language instructional program that is
74 delivered by a speech-language pathologist which is scientific and
75 research-based. These components shall be taught using
76 instructional approaches that include explicit, direct instruction
77 which is systematic, sequential and cumulative, individualized to
78 meet the specific learning needs of each individual student.

79 (e) "Speech-language pathologist" means a professional
80 who has met the requirements and acquired a Certificate of
81 Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing
82 Association, or who has completed training in a department
83 approved American Speech-Language-Hearing Association based
84 speech-language pathology training program attaining a AA license
85 in speech-language pathology.

86 (f) "Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship
87 for Students with Speech-Language Impairments Program" means a
88 scholarship to provide the option to provide a scholarship to a
89 nonpublic school of choice, for students in kindergarten through
90 Grade 6 or its equivalent with an eligibility ruling of a
91 speech-language impairment in order to receive comprehensive
92 multimodality speech-language therapy delivered by holders of an
93 appropriate license and clinical certification in speech-language



94 pathology issued by the department and the American
95 Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

96 (g) "School" means any state accredited nonpublic
97 special purpose school that is organized to provide and emphasizes
98 instruction in speech-language therapy and intervention as the
99 primary purpose of the school and provides a specific learning
100 environment that provides comprehensive speech-language therapy
101 instruction delivered by speech-language pathologists licensed by
102 the department providing highly qualified education and
103 intervention services to children with an an * * * eligibility ruling
104 of speech-language impairment.

105 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
106 and after July 1, 2014.

