

By: Representative Currie

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1155

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-3-2, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
 2 ESTABLISH AND PRESCRIBE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MISSISSIPPI
 3 BOARD FOR EDUCATOR STANDARDS AND LICENSURE (BESL); TO EMPOWER THE
 4 BESL TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS OF ALL EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS
 5 IN THE STATE AND ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR EDUCATOR LICENSURE AND
 6 RENEWAL; TO TRANSFER THE AUTHORITY AND PROGRAMS OF THE COMMISSION
 7 ON TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION AND
 8 LICENSURE AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE BESL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-3-2, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
 11 amended as follows:

12 37-3-2. Establishment of the Mississippi Board for Educator
 13 Standards and Licensure (BESL). (1) * * * There is established
 14 within the executive branch of the State of Mississippi the
 15 Mississippi Board for Educator Standards and Licensure (herein
 16 referred to as BESL).

17 (2) The purpose of the BESL shall be to evaluate the
 18 education profession at all levels of practice in order to improve
 19 educational outcomes in all regions of the state that will yield
 20 and sustain a high quality work force.



21 (3) The Mississippi Board for Educator Standards and
22 Licensure (BESL) has the authority and responsibility to carry out
23 the following duties:

24 (a) Establish and maintain standards for the review and
25 approval of all educator preparation programs (EPP), including,
26 public, nonpublic, nontraditional, and out-of-state providers.

27 (b) Establish and maintain standards for educator
28 licensure and renewal. Standards for EPP and educator licensure
29 shall reflect national standards and shall address, at a minimum,
30 the following:

31 (i) Performance of EPP graduates based on
32 established measures as determined by the BESL;

33 (ii) Classroom and pedagogical practices based on
34 scientifically based research, including effective early literacy
35 instruction (as defined in the Literacy Based Promotion Act) as
36 the foundation of all learning;

37 (iii) Emphasis on subject matter competency for
38 teacher education candidates;

39 (iv) Consistent and effective pre-service
40 instruction that is explicit and affords opportunity for practice
41 and feedback;

42 (v) Consistent and effective clinical and
43 practicum experiences;

44 (vi) Effective partnerships with local school
45 districts.



46 (c) Conduct systematic and consistent reviews to
47 evaluate and approve all educator preparation programs based on
48 standards and performance assessment of graduates and, when
49 indicated, withdraw approval of programs that do not meet
50 standards set by the BESL or whose graduates do not perform
51 according to criteria set by the board.

52 (d) Establish and develop guidelines for a purposeful
53 internship experience for pre-service candidates through a
54 seamless and effective system between teacher preparation,
55 district partnerships and classroom mentors.

56 (e) The BESL shall ensure a uniform and efficient
57 process for issuing, renewing, revoking, suspending, or refusing
58 to issue or renew educator licenses.

59 (f) Establish and maintain a consistent and transparent
60 data dashboard to include all aspects of educator preparation and
61 licensure; and produce The Annual Review of Mississippi Educator
62 Preparation Providers.

63 (g) Appoint and set the qualifications for the
64 positions of executive director and other senior staff that
65 support the BESL.

66 (h) Recruit, select, employ and evaluate the Executive
67 Director of the BESL; and implement procedures for the employment
68 of policy level staff subject to existing state employment policy.



69 (i) Adopt reasonable fees for the issuance, reissuance
70 and renewal of licenses as established by administrative
71 regulation as a part of BESL's fee-based operating budget.

72 (4) The Board for Educator Standards and Licensure
73 membership shall be composed of nine (9) members to represent a
74 cross-section of educator perspectives and roles and reflect the
75 geographic regions of the state. Members shall be appointed
76 according to the following structure and shall serve for
77 three-year staggered terms. The membership shall include the
78 following: three (3) educators representing K-12 education
79 appointed by the Governor, one (1) of which shall be for an
80 initial term of one (1) year one (1) of which shall be for an
81 initial term of two (2) years and one (1) of which shall for an
82 initial term of three (3) years; one (1) school district
83 superintendent appointed by the Governor for an initial term of
84 two (2) years; one (1) professional business leader appointed by
85 the Governor for an initial term of one (1) year; one (1) State
86 Department of Education representative appointed by the State
87 Board of Education for an initial term of three (3) years; and
88 three (3) Educator Preparation Program representatives to include
89 Deans and faculty members from public and nonpublic Mississippi
90 universities appointed by the Board of Trustees of State
91 Institution of Higher Learning for initial terms of two (2) years.
92 Subsequent appointments shall be made for a term of three (3)
93 years. The executive director shall serve as an ex officio,



94 nonvoting member of the BESL. New terms commence on June 30 of
95 each year. A member may serve up to two (2) consecutive terms.

96 (a) School-based personnel who serve on the BESL will
97 receive leave time without infringement on employment benefits and
98 necessary travel and expense reimbursement for all BESL-related
99 work as authorized by state law. Local schools shall be
100 reimbursed by the BESL for the cost of a substitute teacher if the
101 school is required to hire a substitute in order for a
102 school-based BESL member to carry out their BESL-related duties.

103 (b) All other members shall serve without compensation
104 but without infringement on their income or other benefits.
105 Necessary travel and expense reimbursement of these members shall
106 be paid by the BESL.

107 (c) A vacancy on the board shall be filled in the same
108 manner as the original appointment within sixty (60) days after
109 the vacancy occurs. A member shall continue to serve until
110 his/her successor is named. Any member who, through a change of
111 employment status or residence, or for other reasons, no longer
112 meets the criteria for the position to which he was appointed
113 shall be no longer eligible to serve in that position.

114 (d) A chairman shall be elected by and from the BESL
115 membership. A member shall be eligible to serve no more than
116 three (3) one-year terms in succession as chairman.

117 (e) The executive director shall keep records of all
118 proceedings. Minutes shall be posted on the BESL website.



119 Regular meetings shall be held at least quarterly; special
120 meetings may be called by the chair.

121 (5) To support an effective transition of this function, the
122 Mississippi Department of Education shall transfer all existing
123 documents and data systems, historical and current, and minutes
124 from the former Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education,
125 Certification and Licensure to the new BESL. On July 1, 2017, all
126 duties, responsibilities, authority, power, assets, liabilities,
127 contractual rights and obligations and property rights, whether
128 accruing or vesting in the former commission before or after July
129 1, 2017, are vested in the new BESL. All employees of the former
130 commission holding positions with the State Department of
131 Education on July 1, 2017, shall be transferred to and become
132 employees of the BESL. The Executive Director of the BESL shall
133 be authorized to combine or abolish employee positions as
134 necessary to carry out the provisions of this act, and the
135 executive director is authorized to reorganize such offices,
136 services, programs or other activities so as to achieve economy
137 and efficiency and if the executive director finds such action to
138 be in the public interest. Whenever the term "Commission on
139 Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure"
140 appears in the statutes or regulations of the State of
141 Mississippi, that term shall mean the "BESL."

142 * * *



143 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
144 and after July 1, 2017.

