

By: Representatives Sanford, Sykes, Hughes

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 103

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 INCREASE THE BASE SALARIES OF ASSISTANT TEACHERS BY THE AMOUNT OF
3 FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS BEGINNING WITH THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR
4 THROUGH THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR, TO A TOTAL OF FIFTEEN THOUSAND
5 DOLLARS IN ADDITION TO THE ONE PERCENT INCREASE TO THE BASE SALARY
6 ESTABLISHED FOR ASSISTANT TEACHERS FOR EACH ONE PERCENT THAT THE
7 SINE DIE GENERAL FUND REVENUE ESTIMATE GROWTH EXCEEDS FIVE
8 PERCENT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-21-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
11 amended as follows:

12 37-21-7. (1) This section shall be referred to as the
13 "Mississippi Elementary Schools Assistant Teacher Program," the
14 purpose of which shall be to provide an early childhood education
15 program that assists in the instruction of basic skills. The
16 State Board of Education is authorized, empowered and directed to
17 implement a statewide system of assistant teachers in kindergarten
18 classes and in the first, second and third grades. The assistant
19 teacher shall assist pupils in actual instruction under the strict
20 supervision of a licensed teacher.



21 (2) (a) Except as otherwise authorized under subsection
22 (7), each school district shall employ the total number of
23 assistant teachers funded under subsection (6) of this section.
24 The superintendent of each district shall assign the assistant
25 teachers to the kindergarten, first-, second- and third-grade
26 classes in the district in a manner that will promote the maximum
27 efficiency, as determined by the superintendent, in the
28 instruction of skills such as verbal and linguistic skills,
29 logical and mathematical skills, and social skills.

30 (b) If a licensed teacher to whom an assistant teacher
31 has been assigned is required to be absent from the classroom, the
32 assistant teacher may assume responsibility for the classroom in
33 lieu of a substitute teacher. However, no assistant teacher shall
34 assume sole responsibility of the classroom for more than three
35 (3) consecutive school days. Further, in no event shall any
36 assistant teacher be assigned to serve as a substitute teacher for
37 any teacher other than the licensed teacher to whom that assistant
38 teacher has been assigned.

39 (3) Assistant teachers shall have, at a minimum, a high
40 school diploma or a High School Equivalency Diploma equivalent,
41 and shall show demonstratable proficiency in reading and writing
42 skills. The State Department of Education shall develop a testing
43 procedure for assistant teacher applicants to be used in all
44 school districts in the state.



45 (4) (a) In order to receive funding, each school district
46 shall:

47 (i) Submit a plan on the implementation of a
48 reading improvement program to the State Department of Education;
49 and

50 (ii) Develop a plan of educational accountability
51 and assessment of performance, including pretests and posttests,
52 for reading in Grades 1 through 6.

53 (b) Additionally, each school district shall:

54 (i) Provide annually a mandatory preservice
55 orientation session, using an existing in-school service day, for
56 administrators and teachers on the effective use of assistant
57 teachers as part of a team in the classroom setting and on the
58 role of assistant teachers, with emphasis on program goals;

59 (ii) Hold periodic workshops for administrators
60 and teachers on the effective use and supervision of assistant
61 teachers;

62 (iii) Provide training annually on specific
63 instructional skills for assistant teachers;

64 (iv) Annually evaluate their program in accordance
65 with their educational accountability and assessment of
66 performance plan; and

67 (v) Designate the necessary personnel to supervise
68 and report on their program.

69 (5) The State Department of Education shall:



70 (a) Develop and assist in the implementation of a
71 statewide uniform training module, subject to the availability of
72 funds specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature, which
73 shall be used in all school districts for training administrators,
74 teachers and assistant teachers. The module shall provide for the
75 consolidated training of each assistant teacher and teacher to
76 whom the assistant teacher is assigned, working together as a
77 team, and shall require further periodic training for
78 administrators, teachers and assistant teachers regarding the role
79 of assistant teachers;

80 (b) Annually evaluate the program on the district and
81 state level. Subject to the availability of funds specifically
82 appropriated therefor by the Legislature, the department shall
83 develop: (i) uniform evaluation reports, to be performed by the
84 principal or assistant principal, to collect data for the annual
85 overall program evaluation conducted by the department; or (ii) a
86 program evaluation model that, at a minimum, addresses process
87 evaluation; and

88 (c) Promulgate rules, regulations and such other
89 standards deemed necessary to effectuate the purposes of this
90 section. Noncompliance with the provisions of this section and
91 any rules, regulations or standards adopted by the department may
92 result in a violation of compulsory accreditation standards as
93 established by the State Board of Education and the Commission on
94 School Accreditation.



95 (6) In addition to other funds allotted under the Minimum
96 Education or Adequate Education Program, each school district
97 shall be allotted sufficient funding for the purpose of employing
98 assistant teachers. No assistant teacher shall be paid less than
99 the amount he or she received in the prior school year. No school
100 district shall receive any funds under this section for any school
101 year during which the aggregate amount of the local contribution
102 to the salaries of assistant teachers by the district shall have
103 been reduced below such amount for the previous year.

104 For the * * * 2018-2019 school year * * *, the minimum salary
105 for assistant teachers shall be * * * Thirteen Thousand Dollars
106 (\$13,000.00).

107 For the 2019-2020 school year, the minimum salary for
108 assistant teachers shall be Thirteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars
109 (\$13,500.00).

110 For the 2020-2021 school year, the minimum salary for
111 assistant teachers shall be Fourteen Thousand Dollars
112 (\$14,000.00).

113 For the 2021-2022 school year, the minimum salary for
114 assistant teachers shall be Fourteen Thousand Five hundred Dollars
115 (\$14,500.00).

116 For the 2022-2023 school year and school years thereafter,
117 the minimum salary for assistant teachers shall be Fifteen
118 Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00).



119 In addition, for each one percent (1%) that the Sine Die
120 General Fund Revenue Estimate Growth exceeds five percent (5%) in
121 fiscal year * * * 2018, as certified by the Legislative Budget
122 Office to the State Board of Education and subject to the specific
123 appropriation therefor by the Legislature, the State Board of
124 Education shall revise the salary scale in the appropriate year to
125 provide an additional one percent (1%) across-the-board increase
126 in the base salaries for assistant teachers. The State Board of
127 Education shall revise the salaries prescribed above for assistant
128 teachers to conform to any adjustments made in prior fiscal years
129 due to revenue growth over and above five percent (5%). The
130 assistant teachers shall not be restricted to working only in the
131 grades for which the funds were allotted, but may be assigned to
132 other classes as provided in subsection (2)(a) of this section.

133 (7) (a) As an alternative to employing assistant teachers,
134 any school district may use the allotment provided under
135 subsection (6) of this section for the purpose of employing
136 licensed teachers for kindergarten, first-, second- and
137 third-grade classes; however, no school district shall be
138 authorized to use the allotment for assistant teachers for the
139 purpose of employing licensed teachers unless the district has
140 established that the employment of licensed teachers using such
141 funds will reduce the teacher: student ratio in the kindergarten,
142 first-, second- and third-grade classes. All state funds for



143 assistant teachers shall be applied to reducing teacher: student
144 ratio in Grades K-3.

145 It is the intent of the Legislature that no school district
146 shall dismiss any assistant teacher for the purpose of using the
147 assistant teacher allotment to employ licensed teachers. School
148 districts may rely only upon normal attrition to reduce the number
149 of assistant teachers employed in that district.

150 (b) Districts meeting the highest levels of
151 accreditation standards, as defined by the State Board of
152 Education, shall be exempted from the provisions of subsection (4)
153 of this section.

154 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
155 and after July 1, 2018.

