

By: Representative Scott

To: Education; Universities
and Colleges

HOUSE BILL NO. 455

1 AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS "VISION 2020: AN EDUCATION BLUEPRINT
2 FOR THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI"; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF
3 EDUCATION TO ADOPT A RULE THAT INCLUDES GOALS, OBJECTIVES,
4 STRATEGIES, INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS; TO ESTABLISH GOALS FOR
5 HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO CREATE AN
6 EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE STATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES; AND
7 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** (1) This act shall be known and may be cited as
10 "Vision 2020: An Education Blueprint for the State of
11 Mississippi."

12 (2) The Legislature finds that:

13 (a) Because the State of Mississippi faces obstacles
14 such as lower family income levels and lower parent education
15 levels, the state must do even more to compete with other states
16 to increase student achievement and ensure that high school
17 graduates are prepared fully for postsecondary education or
18 gainful employment;



19 (b) A clear plan that includes goals, objectives,
20 strategies, indicators and benchmarks is needed in order to keep
21 the state's education system on track for success; and

22 (c) In order to eliminate any confusion, these goals,
23 objectives, strategies, indicators and benchmarks for public
24 education should be set forth in one (1) rule that is promulgated
25 by the State Board of Education pursuant to this act and which
26 meets the requirements of this act.

27 (3) The purpose of this act is to require that this clear
28 plan be established as part of Vision 2020: An Education
29 Blueprint for Two Thousand Twenty.

30 **SECTION 2.** The following words and phrases have the meanings
31 ascribed in this section unless the context clearly indicates
32 otherwise:

33 (a) "Goals" means those long-term public purposes which
34 are the desired and expected end result and may include only those
35 items listed in Section 3.

36 (b) "Objectives" means the ends to be accomplished or
37 attained within a specified period of time for the purpose of
38 meeting the established goals.

39 (c) "Strategies" means specific activities carried out
40 by the public education system which are directed toward
41 accomplishing specific objectives.

42 **SECTION 3.** (1) The State Board of Education shall
43 promulgate a rule that includes the following:



44 (a) The goals set forth in this act and no other goals;
45 (b) At least those objectives set forth in this section
46 and specified periods of time for achieving those objectives and
47 any other objectives that may be included in the rule;
48 (c) Strategies for achieving the specific objectives;
49 (d) Indicators for measuring progress toward the goals
50 and objectives established in this section; and
51 (e) Benchmarks for determining when the goals and
52 objectives have been achieved.

53 (2) The rule must include the following list of exclusive
54 goals for the public education system in Mississippi:

55 (a) Academic achievement according to national and
56 international measures will exceed national and international
57 averages. These national and international measures should
58 include scores on assessments such as the National Assessment of
59 Educational Progress (NAEP), the ACT and the SAT;

60 (b) The public education system will prepare fully all
61 students for postsecondary education or gainful employment;

62 (c) All working-age adults will be functionally
63 literate;

64 (d) The public education system will maintain and
65 promote the health and safety of all students and will develop and
66 promote responsibility, citizenship and strong character in all
67 students; and



68 (e) The public education system will provide equitable
69 education opportunities to all students.

70 (3) The rule also must include at least the following
71 policy-oriented objectives:

72 (a) Rigorous twenty-first century curriculum and
73 engaging instruction for all students. All students in
74 Mississippi public schools should have access to and benefit from
75 a rigorous twenty-first century curriculum that develops
76 proficiency in core subjects, twenty-first century content,
77 learning skills and technology tools. These students also should
78 have that curriculum delivered through engaging, research-based
79 instructional strategies that develop deep understanding and the
80 ability to apply content to real-world situations.

81 (b) A twenty-first century accountability and
82 accreditation system. The pre-kindergarten through Grade 12
83 education system should have a public accrediting system that:
84 holds local school districts accountable for the student outcomes
85 that the state values; and provides the public with understandable
86 accountability data for judging the quality of local schools. The
87 outcomes on which the system is based should be rigorous and
88 should align with national and international standards such as the
89 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the ACT and
90 the SAT. The broad standards established for these outcomes
91 should include a focus on mastery of basic skills by all students,
92 closing the achievement gap among student subgroups, and high



93 levels of proficiency in a wide range of desired twenty-first
94 century measures and processes. The system for determining school
95 and district accreditation should include school and district
96 self-analysis and generate appropriate research-based strategies
97 for improvement. It also should allow opportunities to create
98 innovative approaches to instructional delivery and design. The
99 system will incorporate processes for encouraging innovation,
100 including financial support for successful initiatives and
101 recognition of those practices that can be brought to a district
102 or statewide scale. Although the primary goal of the
103 accreditation system is to drive school improvement, it also will
104 serve as a basis for rewards, sanctions and interventions.

105 (c) A statewide balanced assessment process that
106 includes an individualized student data management system. State,
107 district, school and classroom decision-making should be grounded
108 in twenty-first century balanced assessment processes that reflect
109 national and international rigorous performance standards and
110 examine student proficiency in twenty-first century content,
111 skills and technology tools. A balanced assessment system
112 includes statewide summative assessments, local benchmark
113 assessments and classroom assessments for learning. Mississippi's
114 assessment system also should include international benchmarking
115 processes that allow comparison of Mississippi's performance to
116 international performance. To effectively use assessment data,
117 principals and teachers should be provided ready access to results



118 through student digital data profiles that individually track
119 student performance and provide educators with diagnostic
120 information necessary to make appropriate instructional decisions
121 on behalf of students.

122 (d) A personnel allocation, licensure and funding
123 process that aligns with the needs of twenty-first century school
124 systems and is supported by a quality coordinated professional
125 development delivery system. Increased accountability demands, as
126 well as the focus on twenty-first century learning, require a
127 reexamination of traditional approaches to personnel allocation,
128 licensure and funding. Creating schools of the twenty-first
129 century requires new staffing roles and staffing patterns. It
130 also requires ongoing professional development activities focused
131 on enhancing student achievement and achieving specific goals of
132 the school and district strategic plans. Thus, schools should
133 have the ability to access, organize and deliver high quality
134 embedded professional development that provides staff with
135 in-depth sustained and supported learning. Effective school
136 improvement should be supported by a flexible school calendar that
137 allows opportunity for staff to collectively learn, plan and
138 implement curricular and instructional improvements on behalf of
139 the students they serve.

140 (e) School environments that promote safe, healthy and
141 responsible behavior and provide an integrated system of student
142 support services. Each school should create an environment



143 focused on student learning and one where students know they are
144 valued, respected and safe. Furthermore, the school should
145 incorporate programs and processes that instill healthy, safe and
146 responsible behaviors and prepare students for interactions with
147 individuals of diverse racial, ethnic and social backgrounds.
148 School and district processes should include a focus on developing
149 ethical and responsible character, personal dispositions that
150 promote personal wellness through planned daily physical activity
151 and healthy eating habits consistent with high nutritional
152 guidelines and multicultural experiences that develop an
153 appreciation of and respect for diversity. The school and school
154 district also should address the needs of students who arrive at
155 school with social, emotional and physical needs that require
156 specialized and diverse services. School districts should have
157 the capability to access, manage and deliver services to these
158 students in an organized integrated system that taps the resources
159 of both the school and the broader community.

160 (f) A leadership recruitment, development and support
161 continuum. Mississippi should have an aligned leadership
162 professional development continuum that attracts, develops and
163 supports educational leadership at the classroom, school and
164 district level. This leadership development continuum should
165 focus on creating: (i) learning-centered schools and school
166 systems; (ii) collaborative processes for staff learning and



167 continuous improvement; and (iii) accountability measures for
168 student achievement.

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

186 (h) Aligned public school with postsecondary and
187 workplace readiness programs and standards. An educational system
188 in the twenty-first century should be seen as a continuum from the
189 public school (pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 program) through
190 postsecondary education. In order to be successful in a global
191 competitive marketplace, learning should be an ongoing, lifelong



192 experience. Thus, the public schools and the state institutions
193 of higher learning in Mississippi should create a system of common
194 standards, expectations and accountability to enhance
195 opportunities for success and assure a seamless educational
196 process for Mississippi students.

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

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

209 (a) All children entering the first grade will be ready
210 for the first grade;

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

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



216 (d) By a specific date designated in the rule, the ten
217 (10) counties with the lowest college-attendance rates as of July
218 1, 2018, will increase their college-attendance rate to the state
219 average for the specified date, and the college-attendance rate of
220 the state will equal the college-attendance rate of the member
221 states of the Southern Regional Education Board; and

222 (e) By a specific subsequent date designated in the
223 rule, the ten (10) counties with the lowest college-attendance
224 rates as of July 1, 2018, will increase their college-attendance
225 rate to the college-attendance rate of the member states of the
226 Southern Regional Education Board for that date, and the
227 college-attendance rate of the state will exceed the
228 college-attendance rate of the member states of the Southern
229 Regional Education Board by five (5) percentage points.

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

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

236 (3) The Legislature finds that postsecondary education is
237 vital to the future of Mississippi. For the state to realize its
238 considerable potential in the twenty-first century, it must have a
239 system for the delivery of postsecondary education which is
240 competitive in the changing national and global environment, is



241 affordable for the state and its citizenry and has the capacity to
242 deliver the programs and services necessary to meet regional and
243 statewide needs.

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

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



266 urgency for federal and state policymakers. The report goes on to
267 add that "higher education is both the problem and the solution"
268 because the nation has failed to focus on how higher education
269 energizes American competitiveness and revitalizes the states.
270 Pursuant to these findings, the commission made some specific
271 recommendations addressed to the states, which include the
272 following:

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

287 The Legislature declares that all of these recommendations
288 are useful in providing policy guidance and have been given
289 careful consideration in the development of this act.



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

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

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

300 (c) Higher education collaborates with public education
301 and other providers to offer education opportunities:

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

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

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

312 (e) Higher education creates a learning environment
313 that is student-friendly and which encourages and assists students



314 in the completion of degree requirements, certifications or skill
315 sets within a reasonable period of time.

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

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

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

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

335 (j) State institutions of higher learning are committed
336 to a shared responsibility with faculty, staff, students and their
337 communities to provide access to the knowledge and to promote



338 acquisition of the skills and abilities necessary to establish and
339 maintain physical fitness and wellness.

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

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

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

359 **SECTION 6.** (1) The State of Mississippi shall create and
360 participate in a partnership across various education
361 organizations which recognizes the valuable contributions each
362 member of the group can make. In addition to public education in



363 Mississippi, and in addition to the State of Mississippi, key
364 members of this partnership must include the state institutions of
365 higher learning, community and junior colleges, the Mississippi
366 Community College Board and the Board of Trustees of State
367 Institutions of Higher Learning.

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

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

376 (i) To produce college graduates who have the
377 knowledge, skills and desire to make valuable contributions to
378 society; and

379 (ii) To provide opportunities for citizens to
380 engage in lifelong learning to enhance their employability and
381 their overall quality of life.

382 (b) Public service. By providing an occupational home
383 for experts in a variety of fields and by serving as the
384 educational home for students. In these capacities, institutions
385 shall create a large and varied pool of high quality human
386 resources capable of making valuable contributions to business and
387 industry, local and state governments and communities. The



388 following are examples of the types of public service that higher
389 education institutions must offer:

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

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

399 (iii) Opportunities to learn and serve in local
400 communities, to teach civic responsibility and to encourage civic
401 engagement.

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

405 (i) Targeting cutting-edge research toward solving
406 pressing societal problems;

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

409 (iii) Creating jobs through development of new
410 products and services.

411 (3) In their role as state-level coordinating boards, the
412 Mississippi Community College Board and the Board of Trustees of



413 State Institutions of Higher Learning must function as important
414 partners with state policy leaders in providing higher education
415 that meets state needs. The boards shall provide service to the
416 state in the following ways:

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

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

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

428 (d) By promoting system efficiencies through
429 collaboration and cooperation across institutions and through
430 focusing institutional missions as appropriate; and

431 (e) By conducting research, collecting data and
432 providing objective recommendations to aid elected state officials
433 in making policy decisions.

434 (4) Elected state-level policymakers shall serve the state
435 in the following ways:



436 (a) By establishing goals, objectives and priorities
437 for higher education based on a thoughtful, systematic
438 determination of state needs;

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

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

443 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
444 and after July 1, 2018.

