

By: Representatives Bennett, Arnold

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1037

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-161-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REQUIRE THAT PRIVATE PROVIDERS CHOSEN TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO
3 THE MISSISSIPPI VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM BE SELECTED THROUGH
4 THE MISSISSIPPI ONLINE LEARNING APPLICATION PROCESS; TO PROVIDE
5 AUTHORITY TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO HAVE FINAL
6 APPROVAL OF ALL COURSEWORK AND POLICY RELATED TO THE MISSISSIPPI
7 VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-161-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
10 amended as follows:

11 37-161-3. (1) The Legislature finds and declares the
12 following:

13 (a) Meeting the educational needs of children in our
14 state's schools is of the greatest importance to the future
15 welfare of the State of Mississippi;

16 (b) Closing the achievement gap between high-performing
17 students, including the achievement gap among at-risk students, is
18 a significant and present challenge;

19 (c) Providing a broader range of educational options to
20 parents and utilizing existing resources, along with technology,



21 may help students in the state improve their academic achievement;
22 and

23 (d) Many of the state's school districts currently lack
24 the capacity to provide other public school choices for students
25 whose schools are low performing.

26 (2) There is created the Mississippi Virtual Public School
27 Program, which is the responsibility of the State Department of
28 Education. It is the intent of the Legislature that the
29 Mississippi Virtual Public School established under this section
30 provides Mississippi families with an alternative choice to access
31 additional educational resources in an effort to improve academic
32 achievement. The Mississippi Virtual Public School must be
33 recognized as a public school and provide equitable treatment and
34 resources as are other public schools in the state. Private
35 providers, overseen by the State Department of Education, may be
36 selected by the State Board of Education to administer, manage or
37 operate virtual school programs in this state, including the total
38 operation of the Mississippi Virtual Public School Program. Any
39 private provider chosen to provide services under the provisions
40 of this subsection shall be chosen through * * * the Mississippi
41 Online Learning Application Process.

42 (3) Nothing in this section may be interpreted as precluding
43 the use of computer- and Internet-based instruction for students
44 in a virtual or remote setting utilizing the Mississippi Virtual
45 Public School.



46 (4) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
47 have the meanings respectively ascribed unless the context clearly
48 requires otherwise:

49 (a) "Mississippi Virtual Public School" means a public
50 school in which the state uses technology in order to deliver
51 instruction to students via the Internet in a virtual or remote
52 setting.

53 (b) "Sponsor" means the public school district is
54 responsible for the academic process for each student including,
55 but not limited to, enrollment, awarding of credit and monitoring
56 progress.

57 (5) (a) The State Board of Education shall establish the
58 Mississippi Virtual Public School beginning in school year
59 2006-2007.

60 (b) Students who enroll in the Mississippi Virtual
61 Public School may reside anywhere in the State of Mississippi.

62 (6) Subject to appropriation, the Mississippi Virtual Public
63 School shall provide to each student enrolled in the school all
64 necessary instructional materials. Subject to appropriation, the
65 sponsored school must ensure that each student is provided access
66 to the necessary technology, such as a computer and printer, and
67 to an Internet connection for school work purposes.

68 (7) The State * * * Department of Education shall have
69 approval authority for all coursework and policy of the
70 Mississippi Virtual Public School.



71 (8) Each teacher employed by or participating in the
72 delivery of instruction through the Mississippi Virtual Public
73 School must meet all qualifications for licensure in the State of
74 Mississippi.

75 (9) Any student who meets state residency requirements may
76 enroll in the Mississippi Virtual Public School.

77 (10) Enrollment in the Mississippi Virtual Public School
78 must be free of charge to students. The costs associated with the
79 operations of the virtual school must be shared by the State
80 Department of Education, subject to appropriation, and/or the
81 local school districts.

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

