

By: Senator(s) Tollison

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2763  
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-161-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROVIDER OF SERVICES UNDER THE MISSISSIPPI  
3 VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM SHALL BE CHOSEN BY THE DISTRICT  
4 USING A LIST OF VENDORS APPROVED THROUGH THE MISSISSIPPI ONLINE  
5 COURSE APPLICATION PROCESS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

9 37-161-3. (1) The Legislature finds and declares the  
10 following:

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

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

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



19 may help students in the state improve their academic achievement;  
20 and

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

75           (10) Enrollment in the Mississippi Virtual Public  
76 School \* \* \* shall be free of charge to students. The costs  
77 associated with the operations of the virtual school must be  
78 shared by the State Department of Education, subject to  
79 appropriation, and/or the local school districts. Once the State  
80 Department of Education appropriation and the local school  
81 district budgeted funds for Mississippi Virtual Public School have  
82 been expended and students choose to enroll in online courses, the  
83 costs of the online courses may be the responsibility of the  
84 students' parents or guardians.

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

