HOUSE BILL NO. 201

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

By: Representative Scott

To: Education; Appropriations

REGULAR SESSION 2019

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO BE KNOWN AS "A BETTER CHANCE" OR THE "ABC
PROGRAM" FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING PREKINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTION
THROUGHOUT THE STATE VIA THE INTERNET; TO REQUIRE THE PROGRAM TO
INCLUDE CERTAIN COMPONENTS, INCLUDING THE DAILY DELIVERY OF
REAL-TIME INSTRUCTION BY A LICENSED PREKINDERGARTEN TEACHER; TO
REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS
REGULARLY PARTICIPATING IN THE ABC PROGRAM AND TO REPORT TO THE
HOUSE AND SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEES ON THE PROGRAM BEFORE
JANUARY 1, 2021; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The State Department of Education shall
establish and implement a program to be known as "A Better Chance"
or the "ABC Program," the purpose of which is to make
prekindergarten instruction available to all children and their
families or caregivers throughout the state. The ABC Program will
be in addition to the voluntary prekindergarten program
established by the State Department of Education under Section
37-21-51. Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, the ABC
Program of instruction must be delivered via the Internet and must
consist of daily age-appropriate instruction and activities,
including downloadable educational materials, for children and
their parents based on the comprehensive early learning standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

(2) The ABC Program must include a daily period of real-time instruction during which a licensed prekindergarten teacher delivers instruction via the Internet. The department shall determine the duration of the period of real-time instruction. In order to afford parents and caregivers the greatest opportunity to avail children of the prekindergarten instruction, the daily lessons and activities presented during the real-time period of instruction must be scheduled for no less than three (3) different times each school day. At all other times, the period of instruction must be available on the ABC Program's webpage for replay.

(3) The department shall develop a method to determine the number of children throughout the state who regularly participate in the ABC Program and to assess the progress being made by those children. Before January 1, 2021, the department shall submit a report to the Education Committees of the House and Senate on the success of the ABC Program.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2019.