

By: Representatives Calvert, Smith,  
Lancaster, McLean, Creekmore IV, Roberson,  
Clark, Paden, Mickens, Cockerham, Brown  
(70th)

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 770  
(As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS ACT"; TO  
2 PREVENT AND REDUCE TRAUMA-RELATED AFTER EFFECTS THROUGH THE  
3 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROACHES TO STUDENT LEARNING  
4 THAT RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA AND INTEGRATES  
5 RESEARCH-BASED KNOWLEDGE INTO EDUCATION-BASED POLICIES, LEARNING,  
6 PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE  
7 DEFINITIONS; TO PRESCRIBE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF TRAINING; TO  
8 REQUIRE EACH LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD OR APPROPRIATE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
9 EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL, CHARTER SCHOOL AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOL ACCREDITED  
10 BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO SUBMIT A STATE PLAN AND TO  
11 PROVIDE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES AND  
12 REGULATIONS PROMULGATED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; TO CREATE  
13 THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP  
14 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND  
15 TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

17 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known, and may be cited as the  
18 "Trauma-Informed Schools Act."

19 **SECTION 2. Findings.** (1) With the rise in school shootings  
20 and violence in the United States, national research is confirming  
21 that anxiety and stress levels of children and teenagers are  
22 increasing at an alarming rate in public and private schools. A  
23 child's exposure and reaction to trauma can interfere with brain  
24 development, learning and behavior, all of which have a potential



25 impact on a child's academic success as well as the overall school  
26 experience.

27 (2) By understanding and responding to trauma, school  
28 administrators, teachers, staff and students can help reduce its  
29 negative impact, support critical learning, and create a more  
30 positive school experience. Trauma-informed discipline policies  
31 and behavioral interventions can better meet the educational needs  
32 of students who have experienced trauma.

33 (3) Policy must be implemented that better equips teachers  
34 and other school employees to help children who have experienced  
35 trauma, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), succeed by  
36 implementing mandatory training for select professional school  
37 staff.

38 (4) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include all forms  
39 of maltreatment, abuse, neglect and other potentially traumatic  
40 experiences that occur to people younger than eighteen (18) years  
41 of age. An ACE score is a tally of different types of abuse,  
42 neglect and other hallmarks of a challenging childhood. The  
43 higher the ACE score, the more childhood trauma the child has  
44 experienced. The more childhood trauma, the higher the risk of  
45 self-destructive behavior, chronic health conditions, emotional  
46 and behavioral dysfunction and premature death, according to the  
47 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

48 (5) There are no evidence-based training programs on adverse  
49 childhood experiences for school leaders and teachers in



50 Mississippi. ACEs are stressful or traumatic events experienced  
51 by people under eighteen (18) years of age, and include, but are  
52 not limited to: physical abuse, sexual abuse, poverty, neglect,  
53 neighborhood violence, natural or other disasters, hunger,  
54 bullying, family violence, emotional abuse and psychological  
55 abuse.

56 (6) The State of Mississippi lacks authorization for local  
57 education agencies (LEAs) to develop their own ACEs training  
58 program to make available to school personnel.

59 **SECTION 3. Purpose.** The purposes of this act are to:

60 (a) Develop an evidence-based strategy to address  
61 adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), as defined in Section 4 of  
62 this act, that are adopted through policies by public, charter and  
63 nonpublic schools accredited by the State Department of Education,  
64 which seek to:

65 (i) Balance accountability with an understanding  
66 of traumatic behavior;

67 (ii) Teach school and classroom rules while  
68 reinforcing that violence and abusive behavior are not allowed,  
69 nor tolerated at school or school-related activities;

70 (iii) Create consistent rules and consequences;

71 and

72 (iv) Model respectful, nonviolent relationships.

73 (b) Develop guidelines on trauma-informed schools,  
74 based on professional input from licensed school social workers,



75 who participate in in-home case management, certified trauma  
76 specialists, and by the State Department of Education, that LEAs  
77 must use to develop related policy.

78 **SECTION 4. Definitions.** As used in this act, the following  
79 terms shall have the meanings ascribed in this section, unless  
80 context of use clearly requires otherwise:

81 (a) "Adverse Childhood Experiences" (ACEs) mean  
82 stressful or traumatic events experienced by minor children,  
83 including, but not limited to: physical abuse, sexual abuse,  
84 illness, death of an immediate family member, poverty, neglect,  
85 neighborhood violence, natural or other disasters, hunger,  
86 bullying, family violence, emotional abuse and psychological  
87 abuse.

88 (b) "Elementary school" means any school within the  
89 definition of the term under the Elementary and Secondary  
90 Education Act of 1965 (20 USCS Section 7801(18)).

91 (c) "Local school district" means a Mississippi public  
92 school district governed by a local school board, charter school  
93 governing board, or board of a nonpublic school accredited by the  
94 State Department of Education.

95 (d) "Charter school" means a school operating under the  
96 authority of the "Mississippi Charter School Act of 2013," as  
97 defined in Section 37-28-5.

98 (e) "Trauma-informed schools" means a strength-based  
99 framework, grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to



100 the impact of trauma that emphasizes physical, psychological and  
101 emotional safety for everyone, and that creates opportunities for  
102 survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

103 (f) "Positive behavior supports" means a systematic  
104 approach to embed evidence-based practices and data-driven  
105 decision making to improve school climate and culture, including  
106 systemic and individualized strategies to achieve improved  
107 academic and social outcomes, and increase learning for all  
108 students.

109 (g) "School" mean any entity that is a public school,  
110 charter school or nonpublic school accredited by the State  
111 Department of Education that provides early childhood, elementary  
112 or secondary education programs of instruction, which are under  
113 the jurisdiction of a local education agency, governing board, or  
114 other board of trustees, and receive financial assistance from the  
115 state and federal government.

116 (h) "Secondary school" means any school within the  
117 definition of the term under the Elementary and Secondary  
118 Education Act of 1965 (20 USCS Section 7801(38)).

119 (i) "Board" means the State Board of Education acting  
120 through the State Superintendent of Public Education.

121 **SECTION 5. Minimum standards.** Not later than one hundred  
122 eighty (180) days after July 1, 2020, the State Board of Education  
123 shall promulgate rules and regulations establishing the minimum  
124 standards of training of school personnel in trauma-informed



125 education for all public, charter and nonpublic schools accredited  
126 by the State Department of Education providing instruction for  
127 students in kindergarten through Grade 12. The standards shall  
128 include:

129 (a) Techniques to identify and assess signs of ACEs and  
130 the resulting trauma among students in kindergarten through Grade  
131 12;

132 (b) Approaches to utilize triangulated, hierarchical  
133 support systems;

134 (c) Development of school-wide policies related to  
135 positive behavior supports, restorative justice and resiliency;

136 **SECTION 6. State plan and reporting requirement and**

137 **enforcement.** (1) Not later than two (2) weeks after the  
138 promulgation of the rules and regulations required under the  
139 provisions of Section 5 of this act are formally adopted following  
140 compliance with the Mississippi Administrative Procedures Act, and  
141 every year thereafter, the local school board or appropriate  
142 governing board of each public school, charter school and  
143 nonpublic school accredited by the State Department of Education  
144 providing instruction for students in kindergarten through Grade  
145 12 shall submit a plan to the State Superintendent of Public  
146 Education that provides:

147 (a) Assurances that the school district, charter school  
148 or accredited nonpublic school has in effect:



149 (i) Policies and procedures that meet the minimum  
150 standards with respect to state-approved trauma-informed education  
151 mandatory training, established by regulations promulgated by the  
152 State Board of Education;

153 (ii) Mechanisms to ensure the recording of the  
154 occurrence of the trauma-informed education mandatory training;  
155 and

156 (iii) Mechanisms to effectively monitor and  
157 enforce the minimum standards.

158 (b) A description of the state policies and procedures,  
159 including a description of the state-approved trauma-informed  
160 education trainings programs in the state.

161 (2) Annually, each local school board or appropriate  
162 governing board of each public school, charter school and  
163 nonpublic school accredited by the State Department of Education  
164 shall prepare and submit to the State Board of Education, the  
165 number of school personnel participating, the number of trainings  
166 facilitated, dates of the trainings and location of the  
167 state-approved trauma-informed education mandatory trainings.

168 **SECTION 7.** (1) There is created the Mississippi School  
169 Safety and Security Committee. The Mississippi School Safety and  
170 Security Committee is a working group, the purposes of which are  
171 to develop recommendations that promote early identification,  
172 referral, coordination and access to quality mental health



173 services for students and to have as an additional focus on the  
174 safety of the students and educators in the classroom.

175 (2) The Mississippi School Safety and Security Committee  
176 shall develop a guide for public schools, charter schools and any  
177 nonpublic school accredited by the State Department of Education  
178 on how to become a trauma-informed school and a website about the  
179 Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative which includes information for  
180 parents or guardians, public schools, charter schools and any  
181 nonpublic school accredited by the State Department of Education.

182 (3) The School Safety and Security Committee shall provide  
183 criteria for the use of federal funds to support trauma-informed  
184 practices in schools.

185 (4) The School Safety and Security Committee is comprised of  
186 the following persons:

187 (a) A chairperson elected by majority vote of the  
188 committee;

189 (b) An individual from a state institution of higher  
190 learning who is a subject matter expert in trauma-informed  
191 approaches, appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education;

192 (c) A school principal with experience in behavioral  
193 matters, appointed by the Mississippi Association of School  
194 Administrators;

195 (d) A school nurse with experience in behavioral health  
196 matters, appointed by the Mississippi Association of Educators;





197                   (e) A school director with experience in school safety  
198 and security matters or behavioral health matters, appointed by  
199 the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents;

200                   (f) A social and emotional learning coordinator;

201                   (g) A child psychologist who specializes in mental,  
202 social and emotional development of children, appointed by the  
203 Mississippi Psychological Association; and

204                   (h) A licensed clinical social worker.

205                   **SECTION 8.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
206 and after July 1, 2020.

