

By: Senator(s) Blount

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2576

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-179-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
 2 TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF "INNOVATION" TO INCLUDE COMMUNITY
 3 SCHOOLS; TO DEFINE THE TERM COMMUNITY SCHOOL; TO PROVIDE FOR A
 4 THREE-YEAR PERIOD FOR A LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT
 5 TRANSITIONING TO A COMMUNITY SCHOOL BEFORE THE LOW-PERFORMING
 6 SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT IS ELIGIBLE FOR A STATE TAKEOVER; TO
 7 AMEND SECTION 37-179-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE
 8 GOALS OF A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-179-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
 11 amended as follows:

12 37-179-1. (1) For purposes of this chapter, the following
 13 terms shall have the meaning ascribed herein, unless the context
 14 clearly indicates otherwise:

15 (a) "District of innovation" means a district that has
 16 developed a plan of innovation in compliance with this section and
 17 has been approved by the State Board of Education to be exempted
 18 from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions
 19 to improve the educational performance of students within the
 20 district;



21 (b) "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to
22 existing instructional and administrative practices intended to
23 improve student learning and student performance of all students,
24 including community schools;

25 (c) "School of innovation" means a school that
26 voluntarily participates in a district of innovation plan to
27 improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local
28 school board policies, selected provisions of rules and
29 regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and
30 selected sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as permitted
31 under this section and Section 37-179-3;

32 (d) "Board" means the State Board of Education;

33 (e) "Department" means the State Department of
34 Education * * *;

35 (f) "Community school" means a traditional district
36 public school that partners with community-based organizations to
37 coordinate academic, social, physical health and mental health
38 services, to reduce barriers to learning and improve education
39 outcomes. Community schools include all four (4) of the
40 following:

41 (i) Integrated student supports coordinated by a
42 community school director, which may include, but are not limited
43 to: medical, dental, vision care, and mental health services, or
44 counselors to assist with housing, transportation, nutrition or
45 criminal justice issues;



46 (ii) Expanded and enriched learning time and
47 opportunities, including before-school, afterschool, weekend and
48 summer programs;

49 (iii) Active family and community engagement; and

50 (iv) Collaborative leadership and practices,
51 including a school-based leadership team, a community school
52 director and a communitywide leadership team;

53 (g) "Community school director" means a person who:

54 (i) Is a full-time staff member serving one (1)
55 eligible school;

56 (ii) Is responsible for the identification,
57 implementation and coordination of integrated student supports,
58 expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and
59 community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices;

60 (iii) Serves as a member of the school-based
61 leadership team;

62 (iv) Serves as the lead for the needs and assets
63 assessment and community school plan; and

64 (v) Coordinates the needs and assets assessment
65 and stakeholder-driven approach to problem-solving and continuous
66 improvement.

67 (2) The State Board of Education is authorized to approve
68 districts of innovation for the purposes of improving students'
69 educational performance. Districts of innovation shall be
70 provided flexibility from selected board regulations, Title 37,



71 Mississippi Code of 1972, and local school board policies for
72 school administrators, teachers and staff to meet the diverse
73 needs of students. A low-performing school or school district
74 managing the transition of multiple schools to the community
75 school model shall be provided a three-year transition before
76 becoming eligible for state takeover under the provisions of
77 Section 37-17-13. The initial approval of a district of
78 innovation shall be for a five-year period. Each renewal of a
79 district of innovation shall not exceed five (5) years and shall
80 comply with administrative regulations promulgated by the board
81 pursuant to subsection (4) of this section.

82 (3) The board shall promulgate administrative rules and
83 regulations to prescribe the conditions and procedures to be used
84 by a local school board to be approved as a district of innovation
85 and shall publish the same on or before December 31, * * * 2020.

86 (4) Administrative rules and regulations promulgated by the
87 board under subsection (3) of this section shall specify:

88 (a) The regulatory areas which may be exempted or
89 modified if approved by the board, except as provided in Section
90 37-179-3(2), and in addition to those areas identified in Section
91 37-179-3(3);

92 (b) The application, plan review, approval and
93 amendment process for a district;



94 (c) Timelines for initial approval as a district of
95 innovation, the renewal process and ongoing evaluative procedures
96 required of the district;

97 (d) Acceptable documentation of a critical mass of
98 parental, community, educator and business support and capacity to
99 effect a change;

100 (e) Evidence of teacher collaboration and shared
101 leadership within the district and the schools to be designated as
102 schools of innovation;

103 (f) The process of revocation of the designation of
104 district of innovation or school of innovation;

105 (g) Reporting and oversight responsibilities of the
106 district and the State Department of Education;

107 (h) The financial detail relating to budgets of schools
108 and evidence of sound fiscal management practices;

109 (i) Acceptable areas of emphasis for innovation;

110 (j) Acceptable documentation of job-embedded
111 professional development within the proposed innovation design;
112 and

113 (k) Other components deemed necessary to implement
114 this * * * chapter.

115 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-179-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
116 amended as follows:



117 37-179-3. (1) A district which is an applicant to be
118 designated as a district of innovation under Section 37-179-1
119 shall:

120 (a) Establish goals and performance targets for the
121 district of innovation proposal, which may include:

122 (i) Reducing achievement gaps among groups of
123 public school students by expanding learning experiences for
124 students who are identified as academically low-achieving;

125 (ii) Increasing pupil learning through the
126 implementation of high, rigorous standards for pupil performance;

127 (iii) Increasing student attendance rates as well
128 as reducing chronic absenteeism;

129 (iv) Decreasing rates of student suspensions and
130 expulsions;

131 (* * * v) Increasing the participation of students
132 in various curriculum components and instructional components
133 within selected schools to enhance at each grade level;

134 (* * * vi) Increasing the number of students who
135 are college and career-ready;

136 (* * * vii) Motivating students at different grade
137 levels by offering more curriculum choices and student learning
138 opportunities to parents and students within the district;

139 (b) Identify changes needed in the district and schools
140 to lead to better prepared students for success in life and work;



141 (c) Have a districtwide plan of innovation that
142 describes and justifies which schools and innovative practices
143 will be incorporated;

144 (d) Provide documentation of community, educator,
145 parental, and the local board's support of the proposed
146 innovations;

147 (e) Provide detailed information regarding the
148 rationale of requests for waivers from Title 37, Mississippi Code
149 of 1972, which relate to the elementary and secondary education of
150 public school students, and administrative regulations, and
151 exemptions for selected schools regarding waivers of local school
152 board policies;

153 (f) Document the fiscal and human resources the board
154 will provide throughout the term of the implementation of the
155 innovations within its plan; and

156 (g) Provide other materials as required by the
157 department in compliance with the board's administrative
158 regulations and application procedures.

159 (2) The district and all schools participating in a
160 district's innovation plan shall:

161 (a) Ensure the same health, safety, civil rights, and
162 disability rights requirements as are applied to all public
163 schools;

164 (b) Ensure students meet compulsory attendance
165 requirements under Sections 37-13-91 and 37-13-92;



166 (c) Ensure that high school course offerings meet or
167 exceed the minimum required under Sections 37-16-7 and 37-3-49,
168 for high school graduation or meet early graduation requirements
169 that may be enacted by the Mississippi Legislature;

170 (d) Ensure the student performance standards meet or
171 exceed those adopted by the State Board of Education as required
172 by Sections 37-3-49, 37-16-3 and 37-17-6, including compliance
173 with the statewide assessment system specified in Chapter 16,
174 Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972;

175 (e) Adhere to the same financial audits, audit
176 procedures, and audit requirements as are applied under Section
177 7-7-211(e);

178 (f) Require state and criminal background checks for
179 staff and volunteers as required of all public school employees
180 and volunteers within the public schools and specified in Section
181 37-9-17;

182 (g) Comply with open records and open meeting
183 requirements under Sections 25-41-1 et seq. and 25-61-1 et seq.;

184 (h) Comply with purchasing requirements and limitations
185 under Chapter 39, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972;

186 (i) Provide overall instructional time that is
187 equivalent to or greater than that required under Sections 37-1-11
188 and 37-13-67, but which may include on-site instruction, distance
189 learning, online courses, and work-based learning on
190 nontraditional school days or hours; and



191 (j) Provide data to the department as deemed necessary
192 to generate school and district reports.

193 (3) (a) Only schools that choose to be designated as
194 schools of innovation shall be included in a district's
195 application;

196 (b) As used in this paragraph, "eligible employees"
197 means employees that are regularly employed at the school and
198 those employees whose primary job duties will be affected by the
199 plan; and

200 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of
201 this subsection, a local school board may require a school that
202 has been identified as a persistently low-achieving school under
203 provisions of Section 37-17-6 to participate in the district's
204 plan of innovation.

205 (4) Notwithstanding any statutes to the contrary, the board
206 may approve the requests of districts of innovation to:

207 (a) Use capital outlay funds for operational costs;

208 (b) Hire persons for classified positions in
209 nontraditional school and district assignments who have bachelors
210 and advanced degrees from postsecondary education institutions
211 accredited by a regional accrediting association (Southern
212 Association of Colleges and Schools) or by an organization
213 affiliated with the National Commission on Accrediting;



214 (c) Employ teachers on extended employment contracts or
215 extra duty contracts and compensate them on a salary schedule
216 other than the single salary schedule;

217 (d) Extend the school days as is appropriate within the
218 district with compensation for the employees as determined
219 locally;

220 (e) Establish alternative education programs and
221 services that are delivered in nontraditional hours and which may
222 be jointly provided in cooperation with another school district or
223 consortia of districts;

224 (f) Establish online classes within the district for
225 delivering alternative classes in a blended environment to meet
226 high school graduation requirements;

227 (g) Use a flexible school calendar;

228 (h) Convert existing schools into schools of
229 innovation; * * *

230 (i) Modify the formula under Section 37-151-7 for
231 distributing support education funds for students in average daily
232 attendance in nontraditional programming time, including
233 alternative programs and virtual programs. Funds granted to a
234 district shall not exceed those that would have otherwise been
235 distributed based on average daily attendance during regular
236 instructional days * * *; and

237 (j) Allow community schools to seek and accept gifts,
238 grants, donations and funds from federal and state agencies,



239 private foundations, organizations, or individuals for purposes
240 related to its function as a community school.

241 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
242 and after July 1, 2020.

