

By: Representatives Deweese, Aguirre, Barnett, Bell (21st), Byrd, Felsher, Ford (54th), Ford (73rd), McCarty, McLean, Powell, Scoggin, Shanks, Steverson, Yancey, Crawford

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 754

1 AN ACT TO CREATE NEW SECTION 37-173-16, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
2 1972, TO PROVIDE THE STEPS SCHOOLS MUST TAKE FOR THE EDUCATION AND
3 CARE OF STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA AND OTHER RELATED DISORDERS; TO
4 PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL REQUIRE SCHOOL
5 DISTRICTS TO CONDUCT TWO HOURS OF AWARENESS TRAINING FOR DYSLEXIA
6 AND OTHER RELATED DISORDERS TO ALL LICENSED EDUCATORS AND
7 PARAPROFESSIONALS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSTRUCTION; TO AMEND SECTION
8 37-173-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DELETE CERTAIN PROVISIONS
9 RELATING TO SCHOOL'S DETERMINATION OF STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA; AND
10 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

12 **SECTION 1.** The following shall be codified as Section
13 37-173-16, Mississippi Code of 1972:

14 37-173-16. (1) Each local school district shall make an
15 initial determination of whether a student diagnosed with dyslexia
16 meets the eligibility criteria under the Individuals with
17 Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to have an Individualized
18 Education Program developed and to receive services. If a
19 student's diagnosis of dyslexia does not result in an IDEA
20 eligibility determination then the district must proceed with
21 their process for determining if the student is eligible for a 504
22 Plan under the Rehabilitation Act based on the presumption that



23 proficiency in spelling, reading and writing are essential for the
24 student to achieve appropriate educational progress. Each local
25 school district shall develop interventions and strategies to
26 address the needs of those students diagnosed with dyslexia which
27 provide the necessary accommodations to enable the student to
28 achieve appropriate educational progress. The interventions and
29 strategies developed shall include, but not be limited to, the use
30 of the 3-Tier Instructional Model and the utilization of
31 provisions of the IDEA and 504 Plan to address those needs.

32 (2) The State Department of Education shall require that
33 local school districts conduct two (2) hours of in-service
34 training in dyslexia and related disorder training every three (3)
35 years for all licensed educators and paraprofessionals responsible
36 for instruction in each district. The State Department of
37 Education shall be responsible for development of the content of
38 the training. The training shall include the indicators and
39 characteristics, the screening processes, evidence-based
40 interventions and accommodations for students with dyslexia and
41 other related disorders.

42 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-173-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
43 amended as follows:

44 37-173-9. (1) (a) The parent or legal guardian is not
45 required to accept the offer of enrolling in another public school
46 in lieu of requesting a Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship
47 to a nonpublic school. However, if the parent or legal guardian



48 chooses the public school option, the student may continue
49 attending a public school chosen by the parent or legal guardian
50 until the student completes Grade 12.

51 (b) If the parent or legal guardian chooses a public
52 school within the district, the school district shall provide
53 transportation to the public school selected by the parent or
54 legal guardian. However, if the parent or legal guardian chooses
55 a public school in another district, the parent or legal guardian
56 is responsible to provide transportation to the school of choice.

57 * * *

58 * * * These provisions do not prohibit a parent or legal
59 guardian of a student diagnosed with dyslexia, at any time, from
60 choosing the option of a Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship
61 which would allow the student to attend another public school or
62 nonpublic special purpose school.

63 (* * *2) If the parent or legal guardian chooses the
64 nonpublic school option and the student is accepted by the
65 nonpublic school pending the availability of a space for the
66 student, the parent or legal guardian of the student must notify
67 the department thirty (30) days before the first scholarship
68 payment and before entering the nonpublic school in order to be
69 eligible for the scholarship when a space becomes available for
70 the student in the nonpublic school.

71 (* * *3) The parent or legal guardian of a student may
72 choose, as an alternative, to enroll the student in and transport



73 the student to a public school in an adjacent school district
74 which has available space and has a program with dyslexia services
75 that provide daily dyslexia therapy sessions delivered by a
76 department licensed dyslexia therapist, and that school district
77 shall accept the student and report the student for purposes of
78 the district's funding under the Mississippi Adequate Education
79 Program.

80 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
81 and after July 1, 2021.

