

By: Representative Bain

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1254

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE 2021 MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION TASK FORCE TO  
 2 REVIEW AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON EXISTING SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND  
 3 THE STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM IN ORDER TO REMOVE EXCESSIVE  
 4 REGULATIONS AND PROVIDE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN EVALUATING PUBLIC  
 5 SCHOOLS; TO PRESCRIBE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE; TO  
 6 DESCRIBE SPECIFIC TOPICS TO BE STUDIED BY THE TASK FORCE; TO  
 7 REQUIRE THE TASK FORCE TO MAKE A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND  
 8 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE BY DECEMBER 1, 2021; AND FOR  
 9 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created the 2021 Mississippi  
 12 Education Task Force to review and make recommendations on public  
 13 school regulations and certain education programs with the intent  
 14 of:

- 15 (a) Removing excessive and unnecessary regulations;
  - 16 (b) Improving avenues to innovation; and
  - 17 (c) Assessing the accuracy and effectiveness of the
- 18 state's accountability system to ensure all students receive a  
 19 quality education that meets their needs and prepares them for  
 20 life and success and to determine the reliability of the system in  
 21 evaluating Mississippi's public schools.



22           (2) The task force shall be composed of the following  
23 members:

24                   (a) The State Superintendent of Public Education or the  
25 superintendent's designee;

26                   (b) The Director of the Office of Educational  
27 Accountability;

28                   (c) Employees of the State Department of Education  
29 having specific knowledge and expertise in those areas to be  
30 studied by the task force, designated by the state superintendent;

31                   (d) The State Auditor or the Auditor's designee;

32                   (e) A local school superintendent designated by the  
33 Mississippi Association of School Superintendents;

34                   (f) A local school business administrator designated by  
35 the Mississippi Association of School Business Officials;

36                   (g) A member of the State Board of Education appointed  
37 by the chair of the board;

38                   (h) A school principal employed by a suburban school  
39 district and a school principal employed by a rural school  
40 district, as designated by the Mississippi Association of School  
41 Administrators; and

42                   (i) No less than three (3) teachers who have been  
43 recognized as a Teacher of the Year in their respective school  
44 districts, selected by the State Department of Education.

45           (3) The task force shall study and make recommendations on  
46 the following:



47 (a) Policies, rules, regulations and procedures  
48 established by the State Board of Education or the State  
49 Department of Education which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, were  
50 suspended or waived: the task force shall review the effect of  
51 the suspension or waiver of such policies, rules, regulations and  
52 procedures in order to determine whether the suspension or waiver  
53 should be implemented permanently.

54 (b) Policies, rules, regulations and procedures  
55 established by the State Board of Education or the State  
56 Department of Education which are suspended or waived for certain  
57 school districts that have attained an accountability rating of  
58 "A" or "B": the task force shall review the effect a suspension  
59 or waiver of such policies, rules, regulations and procedures has  
60 in those school districts in order to determine whether the  
61 suspension or waiver should be granted to all school districts.

62 (c) The districts of innovation program: the task  
63 force shall review the effectiveness of the program to determine  
64 if it is fulfilling its mission of enabling school districts to  
65 improve the educational performance of students and shall  
66 recommend whether changes to the program would remove barriers to  
67 participation. The review of the districts of innovation program  
68 must include:

69 (i) A determination of the waivers most often  
70 requested by school districts;



71 (ii) An analysis of how school districts are  
72 utilizing waivers under the program and best practices implemented  
73 by those districts; and

74 (iii) A determination as to whether districts of  
75 innovation should receive a unique accountability rating when  
76 using different assessments and whether the state should pursue  
77 federal waivers to attain necessary flexibility.

78 (d) The state school and school district accountability  
79 system: the task force shall study options available to states  
80 under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) regarding  
81 academic and nonacademic indicators and how such indicators may be  
82 calculated and weighted. The task force shall review whether  
83 changes to the state accountability system incorporating the use  
84 of indicators permissible under ESSA would provide a more  
85 transparent, accurate and effective rating system, including a  
86 determination as to whether the adoption of nonacademic  
87 indicators, such as student, teacher and parent satisfaction,  
88 would be beneficial to the state.

89 (e) ESSA flexibility: the task force should study  
90 opportunities available under ESSA for flexibility in testing and  
91 make recommendations on:

92 (i) Whether the state should apply to participate  
93 in the Innovative Assessment Development Authority to pilot  
94 locally developed innovative assessments in certain school  
95 districts, for possible future expansion statewide;



96 (ii) Whether the state should allow school  
97 districts to replace high school subject area tests with local  
98 chosen, nationally-recognized assessments; and

99 (iii) Whether the state should allow school  
100 districts to administer interim assessments throughout the year  
101 which would be combined into a final summative score.

102 (4) No later than thirty (30) days after the effective date  
103 of this act, the state superintendent shall convene the members of  
104 the task force for an organizational meeting at which the members  
105 shall select a chair and a vice chair from its membership. The  
106 vice chair also will serve as secretary and be responsible for  
107 keeping all records of the task force. A majority of the members  
108 of the task force constitutes a quorum. In the selection of its  
109 officers and the adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an  
110 affirmative vote of a majority of the task force is required. All  
111 members must be notified in writing of all meetings, and those  
112 notices must be mailed or provided through electronic  
113 communications at least fifteen (15) days before the date on which  
114 a meeting is to be held. Meetings of the task force will be held  
115 at the State Department of Education; however, if it is not  
116 feasible for the task force to hold an in-person meeting, the task  
117 force may convene utilizing an online meeting platform that is  
118 accessible for viewing by the public.

119 (5) The State Department of Education shall provide, using  
120 existing resources, administrative and clerical support to the



121 task force. The state superintendent shall designate appropriate  
122 staff to assist the task force in carrying out its duties.

123 (6) Subject to the availability of funding, members of the  
124 task force who are not state employees may be compensated at the  
125 per diem rate authorized by Section 25-3-69 and reimbursed in  
126 accordance with Section 25-3-41 for mileage and actual expenses  
127 incurred in the performance of their duties. However, task force  
128 members may not incur per diem, travel or other expenses unless  
129 previously authorized by vote, at a meeting of the task force,  
130 which action must be recorded in the official minutes of the  
131 meeting. Per diem and expense payments made pursuant to this  
132 subsection may be paid from any funds made available to the task  
133 force for that purpose.

134 (7) The task force shall make a report of its findings and  
135 recommendations, including any recommended legislation, to the  
136 Education Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate  
137 before December 1, 2021, at which time the task force will be  
138 dissolved.

139 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
140 and after its passage.

