

By: Senator(s) Wiggins

To: Education;  
Accountability, Efficiency,  
Transparency

SENATE BILL NO. 2533

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-179-1 AND 37-179-3, MISSISSIPPI  
2 CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO APPROVE  
3 THE CREATION OF DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION; TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS  
4 RELATED TO "DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION"; TO LIMIT THE INITIAL  
5 APPROVAL AND SUBSEQUENT RENEWALS OF DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION TO  
6 FIVE-YEAR PERIODS; TO DIRECT THE BOARD TO PROMULGATE  
7 ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS TO PRESCRIBE THE CONDITIONS  
8 AND PROCEDURES TO BE USED BY LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO BE APPROVED AS  
9 A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION; TO SPECIFY THE CRITERIA TO BE ADDRESSED  
10 BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS; TO PRESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS  
11 FOR A DISTRICT TO BE A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION APPLICANT; TO  
12 PRESCRIBE THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS WITH WHICH SCHOOLS OF  
13 INNOVATION WITHIN DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION MUST COMPLY; TO IDENTIFY  
14 AREAS IN WHICH DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION MAY REQUEST APPROVAL OF  
15 PRACTICES THAT ARE DIFFERENT THAN CURRENT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS;  
16 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

20 37-179-1. (1) For purposes of this chapter, the following  
21 terms shall have the meaning ascribed herein, unless the context  
22 clearly indicates otherwise:

23 (a) "District of innovation" means a district that has  
24 developed a plan of innovation in compliance with this section and  
25 has been approved by the State Board of Education to be exempted



26 from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions  
27 to improve the educational performance of students within the  
28 district \* \* \*.

29 (b) "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to  
30 existing instructional and administrative practices intended to  
31 improve student learning and student performance of all students,  
32 including community schools \* \* \*.

33 (c) "School of innovation" means a school that  
34 voluntarily participates in a district of innovation plan to  
35 improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local  
36 school board policies, selected provisions of rules and  
37 regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and  
38 selected sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as permitted  
39 under this section and Section \* \* \* 37-179-3.

40 (d) "Board" means the State Board of Education \* \* \*.

41 (e) "Department" means the State Department of  
42 Education.

43 (f) "Community school" means a traditional district  
44 public school that partners with community-based organizations to  
45 coordinate academic, social, physical health and mental health  
46 services, to reduce barriers to learning, and improve education  
47 outcomes. Community schools include all five (5) of the  
48 following:



49                   (i) Integrated student supports coordinated by a  
50 community school director, which may include, but are not limited  
51 to:

52                   1. Medical, dental, vision care and mental  
53 health services; or

54                   2. Counselors to assist with housing,  
55 transportation, nutrition, or criminal justice issues;

56                   (ii) Expanded and enriched learning time and  
57 opportunities, including before school, after school, weekend and  
58 summer programs, which provide additional academic instruction,  
59 individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and  
60 learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and  
61 community problem-solving, and which may include, but are not  
62 limited to:

63                   1. Art, music, drama and creative writing;

64                   2. Hands-on experience with engineering or  
65 science;

66                   3. Tutoring and homework help; and

67                   4. Recreational programs that enhance and are  
68 consistent with the school's curriculum;

69                   (iii) Active family and community engagement which  
70 brings students' families and the community into the school as  
71 partners in children's education and makes the school a  
72 neighborhood hub, providing adults with educational opportunities  
73 they want, including, but not limited to:



- 74                   1. English as a second language class;  
75                   2. Citizenship preparation;  
76                   3. Computer skills;  
77                   4. Art;  
78                   5. GED classes; or  
79                   6. Other programs that bring community  
80 members into the building for meetings or events;

81                   (iv) Include, as a meaningful part of its  
82 curriculum, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics  
83 (STEM) program component commensurate and appropriate to the grade  
84 level of the school; and

85                   (v) Collaborative leadership and practices, which  
86 build a culture of professional learning, collective trust and  
87 shared responsibility using strategies which shall, at a minimum,  
88 include:

- 89                   1. A school-based leadership team;  
90                   2. A community school director; and  
91                   3. A community-wide leadership team, which

92 may include, but not be limited to:

- 93                   A. Other leadership and governance  
94 teams;  
95                   B. Teacher learning communities; and  
96                   C. Other staff to manage the multiple,  
97 complex, joint work of school and community organizations.

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



99                   (i) Is a full-time staff member serving one (1)  
100 eligible school;  
101                   (ii) Is responsible for the identification,  
102 implementation and coordination of integrated student supports,  
103 expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and  
104 community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices;  
105                   (iii) Serves as a member of the school-based  
106 leadership team;  
107                   (iv) Serves as the lead for the needs and assets  
108 assessment and community school plan; and  
109                   (v) Coordinates the needs and assets assessment  
110 and stakeholder-driven approach to problem-solving and continuous  
111 improvement.

112           (2) The State Board of Education is authorized to approve  
113 districts of innovation for the purposes of improving students'  
114 educational performance. Districts of innovation shall be  
115 provided flexibility from selected board regulations, Title 37,  
116 Mississippi Code of 1972, and local school board policies for  
117 school administrators, teachers and staff to meet the diverse  
118 needs of students. The initial approval of a district of  
119 innovation shall be for a five-year period. Each renewal of a  
120 district of innovation shall not exceed five (5) years and shall  
121 comply with administrative regulations promulgated by the board  
122 pursuant to subsection (4) of this section.



123           (3) The board shall promulgate administrative rules and  
124 regulations to prescribe the conditions and procedures to be used  
125 by a local school board to be approved as a district of innovation  
126 and shall publish the same on or before December 31, 2015.

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

129                   (a) The regulatory areas which may be exempted or  
130 modified if approved by the board, except as provided in Section  
131 37-179-3(2), and in addition to those areas identified in Section  
132 37-179-3(3);

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

135                   (c) Timelines for initial approval as a district of  
136 innovation, the renewal process and ongoing evaluative procedures  
137 required of the district;

138                   (d) Acceptable documentation of a critical mass of  
139 parental, community, educator and business support and capacity to  
140 effect a change;

141                   (e) Evidence of teacher collaboration and shared  
142 leadership within the district and the schools to be designated as  
143 schools of innovation;

144                   (f) The process of revocation of the designation of  
145 district of innovation or school of innovation;

146                   (g) Reporting and oversight responsibilities of the  
147 district and the State Department of Education;



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

150 (i) Acceptable areas of emphasis for innovation;

151 (j) Acceptable documentation of job-embedded  
152 professional development within the proposed innovation design;  
153 and

154 (k) Other components deemed necessary to implement this  
155 section and Section 37-179-3.

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

158 37-179-3. (1) A district which is an applicant to be  
159 designated as a district of innovation under Section 37-179-1  
160 shall:

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

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

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

168 (iii) Increasing student attendance rates as well  
169 as reducing chronic absenteeism;

170 (iv) Decreasing rates of student suspensions and  
171 expulsions;



172 ( \* \* \*y) Increasing the participation of students  
173 in various curriculum components and instructional components  
174 within selected schools to enhance at each grade level;

175 ( \* \* \*vi) Increasing the number of students who  
176 are college and career-ready and who have access to  
177 dual-enrollment courses;

178 (vii) Increasing student college preparation to  
179 enter secondary education in the areas of science, technology,  
180 engineering and mathematics;

181 ( \* \* \*viii) Motivating students at different  
182 grade levels by offering more curriculum choices and student  
183 learning opportunities to parents and students within the  
184 district; and

185 (ix) Offering of increased advanced placement (AP)  
186 opportunities.

187 (b) Make public its goals and performance targets and,  
188 after five (5) years, share the performance target results with  
189 members of the Mississippi House and Senate Education Committees,  
190 as well as with the general public;

191 ( \* \* \*c) Identify changes needed from a comprehensive  
192 needs and assets assessment in the district and schools to lead to  
193 better prepared students for success in college, career and  
194 life \* \* \*;





195 ( \* \* \*d) Have a districtwide plan of innovation that  
196 describes and justifies which schools and innovative practices  
197 will be incorporated;

198 ( \* \* \*e) Provide documentation of community, educator,  
199 parental, and the local board's support of the proposed  
200 innovations;

201 ( \* \* \*f) Provide detailed information regarding the  
202 rationale of requests for waivers from Title 37, Mississippi Code  
203 of 1972, which relate to the elementary and secondary education of  
204 public school students, and administrative regulations, and  
205 exemptions for selected schools regarding waivers of local school  
206 board policies;

207 ( \* \* \*g) Document the fiscal and human resources the  
208 board will provide throughout the term of the implementation of  
209 the innovations within its plan; and

210 ( \* \* \*h) Provide other materials as required by the  
211 department in compliance with the board's administrative  
212 regulations and application procedures.

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

215 (a) Ensure the same health, safety, civil rights, and  
216 disability rights requirements as are applied to all public  
217 schools;

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



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

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

229 (e) Adhere to the same financial audits, audit  
230 procedures, and audit requirements as are applied under Section  
231 7-7-211(e);

232 (f) Require state and criminal background checks for  
233 staff and volunteers as required of all public school employees  
234 and volunteers within the public schools and specified in Section  
235 37-9-17;

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

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

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



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

247 (3) (a) Only schools that choose to be designated as  
248 schools of innovation shall be included in a district's  
249 application;

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

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

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

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

262 (b) Hire persons for classified positions in  
263 nontraditional school and district assignments who have bachelors  
264 and advanced degrees from postsecondary education institutions  
265 accredited by a regional accrediting association (Southern  
266 Association of Colleges and Schools) or by an organization  
267 affiliated with the National Commission on Accrediting;



268 (c) Employ teachers on extended employment contracts or  
269 extra duty contracts and compensate them on a salary schedule  
270 other than the single salary schedule;

271 (d) Extend the school days as is appropriate within the  
272 district with compensation for the employees as determined  
273 locally;

274 (e) Establish alternative education programs and  
275 services that are delivered in nontraditional hours and which may  
276 be jointly provided in cooperation with another school district or  
277 consortia of districts;

278 (f) Establish online classes within the district for  
279 delivering alternative classes in a blended environment to meet  
280 high school graduation requirements;

281 (g) Use a flexible school calendar;

282 (h) Convert existing schools into schools of  
283 innovation; \* \* \*

284 (i) Modify the formula under Section 37-151-7 for  
285 distributing support education funds for students in average daily  
286 attendance in nontraditional programming time, including  
287 alternative programs and virtual programs. Funds granted to a  
288 district shall not exceed those that would have otherwise been  
289 distributed based on average daily attendance during regular  
290 instructional days \* \* \*; and

291 (j) Allow community schools to seek and accept grants,  
292 donations, and funds from federal and state agencies, private



293 foundations, organizations, or individuals for purposes related to  
294 its function as a community school.

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

