

By: Senator(s) Parks

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2674

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 of Education;

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

93 (i) Whether the state should apply to participate
94 in the Innovative Assessment Development Authority to pilot



95 locally developed innovative assessments in certain school
96 districts, for possible future expansion statewide;

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

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

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



120 (5) The State Department of Education shall provide, using
121 existing resources, administrative and clerical support to the
122 task force. The State Superintendent of Education shall designate
123 appropriate staff to assist the task force in carrying out its
124 duties.

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

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

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

