

By: Representatives McCarty, Crawford,
Summers

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 884

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE "ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI SCHOLARSHIP
2 PROGRAM" FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING AND MAKING SCHOLARSHIPS
3 AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS WHO BECOME ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
4 PROGRAM FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH DUAL-CREDIT AND DUAL-ENROLLMENT
5 OPTION, CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSES THAT LEAD TO
6 INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION AND OVERLOAD COURSES; TO ESTABLISH THE
7 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR EACH SUBSIDIARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, TO
8 PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAMS SHALL BE RESPECTIVELY ADMINISTERED BY
9 THE MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD AND THE STATE BOARD OF
10 EDUCATION; TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-71-7 AND 37-71-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE
11 OF 1972, TO CLARIFY PROVISIONS OF THE "MISSISSIPPI LEARN TO EARN
12 ACT" PERTAINING TO APPLICATION PROCEDURES IN A MANNER CONSISTENT
13 WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI SCHOLARSHIP
14 PROGRAM"; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

16 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known, and may be cited as the
17 "Accelerate Mississippi Scholarship Program."

18 **SECTION 2.** There is created the Accelerate Mississippi
19 Scholarship Program, which such program shall consist of:

20 (a) The Accelerate College Scholarship Program provided
21 for under Section 3 of this act;

22 (b) The Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship Program
23 provided for under Section 4 of this act; and



24 (c) The Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Program
25 provided for under Section 6 of this act.

26 **SECTION 3.** (1) Dual-credit courses at a Mississippi public
27 community or junior college shall be funded by the Accelerate
28 College Scholarship Fund, which shall be administered by the
29 Mississippi Community College Board. The board shall develop
30 rules and regulations to implement the program for participating
31 public community and junior colleges that provide dual-credit and
32 dual-enrollment opportunities to students in Grades 9 through 12
33 who meet certain qualifications. The Mississippi Community
34 College Board shall create a platform for interested students to
35 apply online for the scholarships. Funding from approved
36 scholarships shall be awarded to the credit of the public
37 community or junior college providing the dual-credit instruction.
38 Public community and junior colleges shall be the sole provider of
39 dual credit for students participating in the program. Funding
40 for this program will be administered through a special fund
41 established at the Mississippi Community College Board.

42 (2) Subject to appropriation, for the 2022-2023 academic
43 year, each academic dual-credit student scholarship shall be
44 funded at One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) per semester hour of
45 credit, and for each academic year thereafter, the public
46 community and junior colleges shall adjust the per semester credit
47 hour rate based on system-wide actual tuition costs.



48 (3) All eligible public high school students shall be
49 approved for participation in the Accelerate College Scholarship
50 Program, subject to the following criteria:

51 (a) All dual-credit standards including, but not
52 limited to, academic and eligibility requirements, course
53 requirements, faculty and institutional qualifications and
54 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
55 Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation criteria as provided in the
56 Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual-enrollment and
57 Accelerated Programs, jointly adopted by the Board of Trustees of
58 State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi
59 Community College Board, or a subsequent document, must be adhered
60 to.

61 (b) Students participating in the program must reside
62 within the State of Mississippi.

63 (c) Students participating in the program are
64 responsible for books, supplies and transportation costs.

65 (4) Scholarship funds shall be dispersed on a first-come,
66 first-served basis with minimum funding for each student being
67 sufficient to take at least one (1) semester course per academic
68 year.

69 (5) If a student fails to successfully complete a course
70 paid for by the Accelerate College Scholarship Program, the
71 student must pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one
72 (1) like course before being eligible for additional course



73 participation. Repeated and remedial courses or examinations are
74 not eligible for funding through the program.

75 **SECTION 4.** (1) Career technical education and workforce
76 training courses at a Mississippi public community or junior
77 college shall be funded by the Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship
78 Fund, which shall be administered by the Mississippi Community
79 College Board. The board shall develop rules and regulations to
80 implement the program for participating public community and
81 junior colleges that provide dual-credit and dual-enrollment
82 opportunities to students in Grades 9 through 12 who meet certain
83 qualifications. The Mississippi Community College Board shall
84 create a platform for interested students to apply online for the
85 scholarships. Funding from approved scholarships shall be awarded
86 to the credit of the public community or junior college providing
87 the dual-credit instruction. Public community and junior colleges
88 shall be the sole provider of dual credit for students
89 participating in the program. Funding for this program will be
90 administered through a special fund established at the Mississippi
91 Community College Board.

92 (2) Subject to appropriation, each career and technical
93 dual-credit student scholarship shall be funded at Two Hundred
94 Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) per semester hour of credit beginning in
95 the 2022-2023 academic year.



96 (3) All eligible public high school students shall be
97 approved for participation in the Accelerate Opportunity
98 Scholarship Program, subject to the following criteria:

99 (a) All dual-credit standards including, but not
100 limited to, career and technical eligibility requirements, course
101 requirements, faculty and institutional qualifications and
102 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
103 Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation criteria as provided in the
104 Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual-enrollment and
105 Accelerated Programs, jointly adopted by the Board of Trustees of
106 State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi
107 Community College Board, or a subsequent document, must be adhered
108 to.

109 (b) In addition, eligible courses must:

110 (i) Lead to an industry-recognized certificate,
111 license or degree as approved by the Mississippi Office of
112 Workforce Development;

113 (ii) Be courses that are not otherwise available
114 at the student's high school; and

115 (iii) Allow high school-aged students to
116 participate.

117 (c) Laboratories designed for providing instruction in
118 career and technical courses must meet community and junior
119 colleges' standards of quality.



120 (d) Students participating in the program must reside
121 within the State of Mississippi.

122 (e) Students participating in the program are
123 responsible for books, tools, supplies and transportation costs.

124 (4) Scholarship funds shall be dispersed on a first-come,
125 first-served basis with minimum funding for each student being
126 sufficient to take at least one (1) semester course per academic
127 year.

128 (5) If a student fails to successfully complete a course
129 paid for by the Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship Program, the
130 student must pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one
131 (1) like course before being eligible for additional course
132 participation. Repeated and remedial courses or examinations are
133 not eligible for funding through the program.

134 **SECTION 5.** Public school personnel shall assist parents in
135 the process of enrolling students in such courses. Each
136 participating student's high school transcript at the public
137 school at which the student is enrolled shall include the credits
138 earned and grades received by the student for any dual-credit
139 courses taken pursuant to this section. For an eligible course to
140 be transcribed as meeting the requirements of a core subject as
141 identified in administrative rule, the course must meet the
142 approved content standards for the applicable subject and grade
143 level.



144 **SECTION 6.** (1) Accelerate Graduation courses for
145 Mississippi public school students shall be funded by the
146 Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Fund, which shall be
147 administered by the State Board of Education. The State Board of
148 Education shall create a platform for interested students to apply
149 online for the scholarships and to enroll in courses. Funding
150 from approved scholarships shall be awarded to the credit of
151 participating educational providers. Funding for this program
152 will be administered through a special fund at the State Board of
153 Education.

154 (2) All eligible public school students in Grades 7 through
155 12 who reside in the state of Mississippi shall be approved for
156 participation in the Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Program.
157 Students participating in the program are responsible for books,
158 tools, supplies and transportation costs.

159 (3) Scholarship funds shall be dispersed on a first-come,
160 first-served basis and may be used for:

- 161 (a) Overload courses;
- 162 (b) Challenge courses;
- 163 (c) Learn to Earn courses, including apprenticeships,
164 internships, and alternative learning courses;
- 165 (d) College entrance examinations;
- 166 (e) Preliminary college entrance examinations;
- 167 (f) Career technical certificate and licensing
168 examinations that lead to an industry-recognized certificate,



169 license or degree as approved by the Mississippi Office of
170 Workforce Development;

171 (g) Postsecondary credit-bearing examinations,
172 including advanced placement (AP); international baccalaureate
173 (IB); Cambridge International; and college-level examination
174 program (CLEP).

175 (4) Each local school board shall set forth criteria by
176 which a student may take an overload course. A student must take
177 and successfully be completing a full credit load within a given
178 school year to be eligible for funding of an overload course. An
179 overload course must be taken for high school credit to be
180 eligible for funding. The scholarship distribution for an
181 overload course may not exceed Two Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars
182 (\$225.00) per overload course. To qualify as an eligible overload
183 course for the program, the course must:

184 (a) Be offered by an accredited provider; and

185 (b) Be taught by an individual certified to teach the
186 grade and subject area of the course in Mississippi.

187 (5) Each local school board shall set forth criteria by
188 which a student may challenge a course. If a student successfully
189 meets the criteria set forth by the board of the public school,
190 then the student shall be counted as having completed all required
191 coursework for that course. The public school shall be funded for
192 such students based upon either actual hours of attendance or the
193 course that the student has successfully passed, whichever is more



194 advantageous to the public school, up to the maximum of one (1)
195 full-time student.

196 (6) The State Department of Education shall maintain a list
197 of eligible college entrance examinations and preliminary college
198 entrance examinations and costs, provided that a student may not
199 use funds provided under this section to take the same examination
200 more than once. Eligible costs include the cost of the
201 examination, proctor fees, and administrative fees. Eligible
202 examinations include the SAT, PSAT, ACT and other similar
203 examinations identified by the department.

204 (7) Accelerate Graduation Scholarships may not be used to
205 pay an amount that exceeds the price to the student of such
206 courses and examinations pursuant to the limitations stated in
207 this section. These monies shall not supplant existing program
208 funds. No later than December 1, 2022, the State Department of
209 Education shall annually report to the Education Committees of the
210 Senate and the House of Representatives details regarding the
211 number of students benefiting from assistance with the cost of
212 overload courses, challenge courses, Learn to Earn courses and
213 examinations. The report shall include the number of credits
214 awarded and amounts paid pursuant to this section during the
215 previous school year. The report also shall be provided to the
216 other members of the Legislature upon request and posted on the
217 department's website for the general public to view.



218 (8) Public schools, shall be reimbursed, as applicable, up
219 to the stated limits, within one hundred twenty-five (125) days of
220 receiving the necessary data upon which reimbursements may be paid
221 for overload courses, challenge courses and Learn to Earn courses.
222 The submission method and timelines of reimbursement data shall be
223 determined by the State Board of Education. Payments will be made
224 only for activity occurring and reported within each fiscal year.

225 (9) Average daily attendance shall be counted as normal for
226 students participating in dual-credit courses pursuant to this
227 section.

228 (10) If a student fails to successfully complete a course
229 paid for by the Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Program, the
230 student must pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one
231 (1) like course before being eligible for additional course
232 participation. Repeated and remedial courses or examinations are
233 not eligible for funding through the program.

234 (11) If a student fails to take an examination paid for by
235 the Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Program, the student must
236 pay for and pass the test before being eligible for additional
237 participation in the program.

238 (12) Public school personnel shall assist parents in the
239 process of enrolling students in overload, challenge and Learn to
240 Earn courses. Each participating student's high school transcript
241 at the public school at which the student is enrolled shall
242 include the credits earned and grades received by the student for



243 these courses taken pursuant to this section. For an eligible
244 course to be transcribed as meeting the requirements of a core
245 subject as identified in administrative rule, the course must meet
246 the approved content standards for the applicable subject and
247 grade level.

248 **SECTION 7.** The State Board of Education shall promulgate
249 rules to implement the provisions of this chapter so as to
250 maximize participation in the Accelerate Mississippi Scholarship
251 Program.

252 **SECTION 8.** Public schools shall establish timelines and
253 requirements for participation in the Accelerate Mississippi
254 Scholarship Program, including implementing procedures for the
255 appropriate transcription of credits, reporting of program
256 participation and financial transaction requirements. Public
257 schools shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that any student
258 who considers participating in the program also considers the
259 challenges and time necessary to succeed in the program, and
260 schools shall make reasonable efforts to include guidance on how
261 the student's participation in the program contributes to
262 prospective college and career pathways. Such efforts shall be
263 performed prior to a student's participation in the program and
264 throughout the student's involvement in the program.

265 **SECTION 9.** Section 37-71-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
266 amended as follows:

267 37-71-7. * * *



268 (* * *1) Each local school board * * * shall adopt an
269 Extended Learning Opportunities policy to include alternative
270 educational opportunities for course credit that recognizes
271 learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom
272 through apprenticeships, internships or pre-apprenticeships, and
273 grants elective credit for those alternative learning
274 opportunities. * * * The policy shall:

275 (a) Provide for an application process for entities to
276 submit proposals for alternative educational opportunities that
277 will qualify for elective course credit;

278 (b) Define which entities are eligible to submit
279 applications for alternative educational opportunities, which such
280 entities shall include, but not be limited to:

281 (i) Nonprofit organizations;

282 (ii) Businesses with established locations in the
283 state;

284 (iii) Trade associations;

285 (iv) Parents of students involved in programs that
286 may otherwise qualify for alternative educational opportunities;

287 (v) Teachers involved in programs outside of the
288 traditional classroom; and

289 (vi) School personnel involved in programs outside
290 of the traditional classroom * * *;

291 (c) Provide for the criteria used to evaluate the
292 alternative educational opportunity;



293 (d) Describe any communication and collaboration needed
294 with local school districts to implement alternative educational
295 opportunities * * *;

296 (e) Place requirements on the entity such as background
297 checks for key personnel and minimum accountability standards; and

298 (f) Provide a process for student credit transfer.

299 (* * *2) The local school board is authorized to approve or
300 deny an application for an alternative educational opportunity.

301 * * *

302 (* * *3) The State Department of Education shall have the
303 authority to audit approved alternative educational programs at
304 any time. If the audit results in findings that an approved
305 program is not meeting the provisions of this chapter * * *, then
306 the local school board shall disqualify the program immediately.

307 **SECTION 10.** Section 37-71-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
308 amended as follows:

309 37-71-9. * * *

310 * * * The State Department of Education shall provide an
311 annual report detailing the progress that has been made in each
312 school district in providing alternative courses, programs and
313 opportunities or apprenticeships. The report shall be provided to
314 the Chairmen of the Senate and House Education Committees no later
315 than December 1 of each year, beginning December 1, * * * 2022.
316 The report also shall be provided to the other members of the



317 Legislature upon request and posted on the department's website
318 for the general public to view.

319 **SECTION 11.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
320 and after July 1, 2022.

