

By: Senator(s) DeBar

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2427

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ACCELERATE MISSISSIPPI SCHOLARSHIP
2 PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL CONSIST OF THE
3 ACCELERATE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, THE ACCELERATE OPPORTUNITY
4 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, AND THE ACCELERATE GRADUATION SCHOLARSHIP
5 PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT DUAL CREDIT COURSES AT EACH COMMUNITY
6 COLLEGE OR JUNIOR COLLEGE SHALL BE FUNDED BY THE ACCELERATE
7 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO SET THE FUNDING REQUIREMENT OF
8 EACH PROGRAM; TO ALLOW ALL ELIGIBLE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND
9 HOMESCHOOLED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BE APPROVED FOR PARTICIPATION
10 IN THE ACCELERATE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND THE ACCELERATE
11 OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS TO
12 BE DISPERSED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS WITH EACH STUDENT
13 RECEIVING ENOUGH FUNDS TO PAY FOR AT LEAST ONE SEMESTER COURSE PER
14 ACADEMIC YEAR; TO PROVIDE THAT CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND
15 WORKFORCE TRAINING COURSES AT EACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR JUNIOR
16 COLLEGE SHALL BE FUNDED BY THE ACCELERATE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP
17 PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT AT THE END OF EACH FISCAL YEAR, ANY
18 UNEXPENDED FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE LEGISLATURE FOR THE PROGRAMS
19 SHALL NOT LAPSE INTO THE STATE GENERAL FUND BUT SHALL CARRY OVER
20 AND BE AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURE IN THE SUCCEEDING FISCAL YEAR; TO
21 ALLOW PARENTS OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS TO ENROLL THEIR CHILD IN
22 ANY ELIGIBLE COURSE, WITH OR WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC
23 SCHOOL IN WHICH THE STUDENT IS ENROLLED; TO PROVIDE THAT THE
24 ACCELERATE GRADUATION COURSES FOR MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SCHOOL
25 STUDENTS SHALL BE FUNDED BY THE ACCELERATE GRADUATION SCHOLARSHIP
26 FUND; TO PROVIDE FOR THE PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE
27 PROGRAM; TO SET THE FUNDING REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM; TO
28 REQUIRE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PROMULGATE RULES TO IMPLEMENT
29 THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-71-7 AND 37-71-9,
30 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CONFORM TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS
31 ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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



33 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
34 "Accelerate Mississippi Scholarship Program."

35 **SECTION 2.** There is created the Accelerate Mississippi
36 Scholarship Program. The program shall consist of the Accelerate
37 College Scholarship Program provided for under Section 3 of this
38 act, the Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship Program provided for
39 under Section 4 of this act, and the Accelerate Graduation
40 Scholarship Program provided for under Section 6 of this act.

41 **SECTION 3.** (1) A special fund, to be designated the
42 "Accelerate College Scholarship Fund," is created within the State
43 Treasury. The fund shall be maintained by the State Treasurer as
44 a separate and special fund, separate and apart from the General
45 Fund of the state. Dual credit courses at each Mississippi
46 community college or junior college shall be funded by the
47 Accelerate College Scholarship Fund, which shall be administered
48 by the Mississippi Community College Board. The board shall
49 develop rules and regulations to implement the program for
50 participating community and junior colleges that provide dual
51 credit and dual enrollment opportunities to students in ninth
52 through twelfth grade who meet certain qualifications. The
53 Mississippi Community College Board shall create a platform for
54 interested students to apply online for the scholarships and to
55 enroll in courses. Funding from approved scholarships shall be
56 awarded to the credit of the community or junior college providing
57 the dual credit instruction.



58 (2) Subject to appropriation, for the 2022-2023 academic
59 year, each academic dual credit student scholarship shall be
60 funded at One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) per semester hour of
61 credit, and for each academic year thereafter, the community and
62 junior colleges shall adjust the per semester credit hour rate
63 based on system-wide actual tuition costs.

64 (3) All eligible public, private and homeschooled high
65 school students shall be approved for participation in the
66 Accelerate College Scholarship Program, subject to the following
67 criteria:

68 (a) All dual credit standards including, but not
69 limited to, academic and eligibility requirements, course
70 requirements, faculty and institutional qualifications and
71 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
72 Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation criteria as provided in the
73 Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and
74 Accelerated Programs, jointly adopted by the Board of Trustees of
75 State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi
76 Community College Board, or a subsequent document, shall be
77 adhered to.

78 (b) Students participating in the program must reside
79 within the State of Mississippi.

80 (c) Students participating in the program shall be
81 responsible for books, supplies and transportation costs.



82 (d) Students participating in the program may enroll in
83 any course for which they are academically eligible at any
84 participating community college or junior college in the state.

85 (e) Scholarship funds shall be dispersed on a
86 first-come, first-served basis and the dispersed scholarship funds
87 shall fund at least one semester course per academic year for each
88 student.

89 (4) If a student fails to successfully complete a course
90 paid for by the Accelerate College Scholarship Program, the
91 student must pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one
92 (1) like course before being eligible for additional course
93 participation. Repeated and remedial courses or examinations are
94 not eligible for funding through the program.

95 **SECTION 4.** (1) A special fund, to be designated the
96 "Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship Fund," is created within the
97 State Treasury. The fund shall be maintained by the State
98 Treasurer as a separate and special fund, separate and apart from
99 the General Fund of the state. Career technical education and
100 workforce training courses at a Mississippi community college or
101 junior college shall be funded by the Accelerate Opportunity
102 Scholarship Fund, which shall be administered by the Mississippi
103 Community College Board. The board shall develop rules and
104 regulations to implement the program for participating community
105 and junior colleges that provide dual credit and dual enrollment
106 opportunities to students in ninth through twelfth grade who meet



107 certain qualifications. The Mississippi Community College Board
108 shall create a platform for interested students to apply online
109 for the scholarships and to enroll in courses. Funding from
110 approved scholarships shall be awarded to the credit of the
111 community or junior college providing the dual credit instruction.

112 (2) Subject to appropriation, each career and technical dual
113 credit student scholarship shall be funded at Two Hundred Fifty
114 Dollars (\$250.00) per semester hour of credit beginning in the
115 2022-2023 academic year.

116 (3) All eligible public, private and homeschooled high
117 school students shall be approved for participation in the
118 Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship Program, subject to the
119 following criteria:

120 (a) All dual credit standards including, but not
121 limited to, Career and Technical Eligibility Requirements, Course
122 Requirements, Faculty and Institutional Qualifications and
123 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
124 Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation criteria as provided in the
125 Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and
126 Accelerated Programs, jointly adopted by the Board of Trustees of
127 State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi
128 Community College Board, or a subsequent document, shall be
129 adhered to.

130 (b) In addition, eligible courses shall:



131 (i) Lead to an industry-recognized certificate,
132 license or degree;

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

135 (iii) Allow high school-aged students to
136 participate.

137 (c) Laboratories designed for providing instruction in
138 career and technical courses shall meet community and junior
139 colleges' standards of quality.

140 (d) Students participating in the program must reside
141 within the State of Mississippi.

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

144 (f) Students participating in the program may enroll in
145 any course for which they are academically eligible at any
146 participating community college or junior college.

147 (4) Scholarship funds shall be dispersed on a first-come,
148 first-served basis and the dispersed scholarship funds shall fund
149 at least one semester course per academic year for each student.

150 (5) If a student fails to successfully complete a course
151 paid for by the Accelerate Opportunity Scholarship Program, the
152 student must pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one
153 (1) like course before being eligible for additional course
154 participation. Repeated and remedial courses or examinations are
155 not eligible for funding through the program.



156 **SECTION 5.** (1) The Legislature may appropriate funds
157 annually to implement, administer and make awards under the
158 programs provided for in Sections 3 and 4 of this act. The
159 Mississippi Community College Board may seek, accept and expend
160 funds from any source, including private business, industry,
161 foundations and other groups as well as any federal or other
162 governmental funding available for this purpose.

163 (2) Unexpended amounts remaining in the fund at the end of a
164 fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any
165 interest earned or investment earnings or interest earned on
166 amounts in the fund shall be deposited to the credit of the fund.

167 (3) Parents of participating students may enroll their child
168 in any eligible course, with or without the permission of the
169 public school in which the student is enrolled. Public school
170 personnel shall assist parents in the process of enrolling
171 students in such courses. Each participating student's high
172 school transcript at the public school at which the student is
173 enrolled shall include the credits earned and grades received by
174 the student for any dual credit courses taken pursuant to this
175 section. For an eligible course to be transcribed as meeting the
176 requirements of a core subject as identified in administrative
177 rule, the course must meet the approved content standards for the
178 applicable subject and grade level.

179 **SECTION 6.** (1) A special fund, to be designated the
180 "Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Fund," is created within the



181 State Treasury. The fund shall be maintained by the State
182 Treasurer as a separate and special fund, separate and apart from
183 the General Fund of the state. Accelerate Graduation courses for
184 Mississippi public school students shall be funded by the
185 Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Fund, which shall be
186 administered by the Mississippi Board of Education. The
187 Mississippi Board of Education shall create a platform for
188 interested students to apply online for the scholarships and to
189 enroll in courses. Funding from approved scholarships shall be
190 awarded to the credit of participating educational or testing
191 providers.

192 (2) All eligible public school students in seventh through
193 twelfth grade who reside in the state of Mississippi shall be
194 approved for participation in the Accelerate Graduation
195 Scholarship Program. Students participating in the program are
196 responsible for books, tools, supplies and transportation costs.

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

- 199 (a) Overload courses;
- 200 (b) Challenge courses;
- 201 (c) Learn to Earn courses, including apprenticeships,
202 internships, and alternative learning courses;
- 203 (d) College entrance examinations;
- 204 (e) Preliminary college entrance examinations;



205 (f) Career technical certificate and licensing
206 examinations that lead to an industry-recognized certificate,
207 license or degree;

208 (g) Post-secondary credit-bearing examinations,
209 including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate
210 (IB), and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

211 (4) Each local school board shall set forth criteria by
212 which a student may take an overload course. A student must take
213 and successfully be completing a full credit load within a given
214 school year to be eligible for funding of an overload course. An
215 overload course must be taken for high school credit to be
216 eligible for funding. The scholarship distribution for an
217 overload course may not exceed Two Hundred Twenty-five Dollars
218 (\$225.00) per overload course. To qualify as an eligible overload
219 course for the program, the course must:

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

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

223 (5) Each local school board shall set forth criteria by
224 which a student may challenge a course. If a student successfully
225 meets the criteria set forth by the board of the public school,
226 then the student shall be counted as having completed all required
227 coursework for that course. The public school shall be funded for
228 such students based upon either actual hours of attendance or the
229 course that the student has successfully passed, whichever is more



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

232 (6) The Mississippi Department of Education shall maintain a
233 list of eligible college entrance examinations and preliminary
234 college entrance examinations and costs, provided that a student
235 may not use funds provided under this section to take the same
236 examination more than once. Eligible costs shall include the cost
237 of the examination, proctor fees and administrative fees.
238 Eligible examinations include the SAT, the PSAT, the ACT and other
239 similar examinations identified by the department.

240 (7) Accelerate Graduation Scholarships may not be used to
241 pay an amount that exceeds the price to the student of such
242 courses and examinations pursuant to the limitations stated in
243 this section. These moneys shall not supplant existing program
244 funds. No later than December 1, 2022, and each subsequent
245 December 1 thereafter, the Mississippi Department of Education
246 shall report to the education committees of the Senate and the
247 House of Representatives the details regarding the number of
248 students benefiting from assistance with the cost of overload
249 courses, challenge courses, Learn to Earn courses and
250 examinations. The report shall include the number of credits
251 awarded and amounts paid pursuant to this section during the
252 previous school year. The report also shall be provided to the
253 other members of the Legislature upon request and posted on the
254 Department of Education's website for the general public to view.



255 (8) Public schools, shall be reimbursed, as applicable, up
256 to the stated limits, within one hundred twenty-five (125) days of
257 receiving the necessary data upon which reimbursements may be paid
258 for overload courses, challenge courses and Learn to Earn courses.
259 The submission method and timelines of reimbursement data shall be
260 determined by the Mississippi Board of Education. Payments shall
261 be made only for activity occurring and reported within each
262 fiscal year.

263 (9) Average daily attendance shall be counted as normal for
264 students participating in dual credit courses pursuant to this
265 section.

266 (10) If a student fails to successfully complete a course
267 paid for by the Accelerate Graduation Scholarship Program, the
268 student must pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one
269 (1) like course before being eligible for additional course
270 participation. Repeated and remedial courses or examinations are
271 not eligible for funding through the program.

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

276 (12) Public school personnel shall assist parents in the
277 process of enrolling students in overload, challenge and Learn to
278 Earn courses. Each participating student's high school transcript
279 at the public school at which the student is enrolled shall



280 include the credits earned and grades received by the student for
281 these courses taken pursuant to this section. For an eligible
282 course to be transcribed as meeting the requirements of a core
283 subject as identified in administrative rule, the course must meet
284 the approved content standards for the applicable subject and
285 grade level.

286 **SECTION 7.** (1) The Legislature may appropriate funds
287 annually to implement, administer and make awards under the
288 program provided for in Section 6 of this act. The Mississippi
289 Board of Education may seek, accept and expend funds from any
290 source, including private business, industry, foundations and
291 other groups as well as any federal or other governmental funding
292 available for this purpose.

293 (2) Unexpended amounts remaining in the fund at the end of a
294 fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any
295 interest earned or investment earnings or interest earned on
296 amounts in the fund shall be deposited to the credit of the fund.

297 **SECTION 8.** The Mississippi Board of Education shall
298 promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this chapter so as
299 to maximize participation in the Accelerate Mississippi
300 Scholarship Program.

301 **SECTION 9.** Public schools shall establish timelines and
302 requirements for participation in the Accelerate Mississippi
303 Scholarship Program, including implementing procedures for the
304 appropriate transcription of credits, reporting of program



305 participation and financial transaction requirements. Public
306 schools shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that any student
307 who considers participating in the program also considers the
308 challenges and time necessary to succeed in the program, and
309 schools shall make reasonable efforts to include guidance on how
310 the student's participation in the program contributes to
311 prospective college and career pathways. Such efforts shall be
312 performed prior to a student participating in the program and
313 throughout the student's involvement in the program.

314 **SECTION 10.** Section 37-71-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
315 amended as follows:

316 37-71-7. * * * (* * *1) Each local school board * * *
317 shall adopt an Extended Learning Opportunities policy to include
318 alternative educational opportunities for course credit that
319 recognizes learning opportunities outside of the traditional
320 classroom through apprenticeships, internships or
321 pre-apprenticeships, and grants elective credit for those
322 alternative learning opportunities. * * * The policy shall:

323 (a) Provide for an application process for entities to
324 submit proposals for alternative educational opportunities that
325 will qualify for elective course credit;

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

329 (i) Nonprofit organizations;



330 (ii) Businesses with established locations in the
331 state;

332 (iii) Trade associations;

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

335 (v) Teachers involved in programs outside of the
336 traditional classroom; and

337 (vi) School personnel involved in programs outside
338 of the traditional classroom * * *;

339 (c) Provide for the criteria used to evaluate the
340 alternative educational opportunity;

341 (d) Describe any communication and collaboration needed
342 with local school districts to implement alternative educational
343 opportunities * * *;

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

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

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

350 (* * *3) The State Department of Education shall have the
351 authority to audit approved alternative educational programs at
352 any time. If the audit results in findings that an approved
353 program is not meeting the provisions of this chapter * * *, then



354 the local school board shall take appropriate steps to meet these
355 provisions or disqualify the program * * *.

356 **SECTION 11.** Section 37-71-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
357 amended as follows:

358 37-71-9. * * * The State Department of Education shall
359 provide an annual report detailing the progress that has been made
360 in each school district in providing alternative courses, programs
361 and opportunities or apprenticeships. The report shall be
362 provided to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Education
363 Committees no later than December 1 of each year, beginning
364 December 1, * * * 2022. The report also shall be provided to the
365 other members of the Legislature upon request and posted on the
366 department's website for the general public to view.

367 **SECTION 12.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
368 and after July 1, 2022.

