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To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1369

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-151-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO DEFINE THE TERM "AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP (ADM)" FOR PURPOSES
3 OF THE MISSISSIPPI ADEQUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION
4 37-151-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE FOR THE
5 DETERMINATION OF THE BASIC ADEQUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM COST FOR
6 EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT BASED ON STUDENT AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP
7 WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS; TO PROVIDE FOR STUDENT COUNTS BY THE
8 STATE AUDITOR; TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF THE TERMS "MINIMUM
9 SCHOOL TERM" AND "AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE" AS SUCH TERMS ARE USED
10 FOR DETERMINING ALLOCATIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS UNDER THE ADEQUATE
11 EDUCATION PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-151-85, 37-151-97 AND
12 37-151-103, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY; TO AMEND
13 SECTION 37-13-91, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REMOVE THE
14 ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT THAT A COMPULSORY-SCHOOL-AGE CHILD WHO IS
15 ABSENT MORE THAN 37% OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY MUST BE CONSIDERED
16 ABSENT FOR THE ENTIRE DAY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

18 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-151-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
19 amended as follows:

20 37-151-5. As used in Sections 37-151-5 and 37-151-7:

21 (a) "Adequate program" or "adequate education program"
22 or "Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP)" shall mean the
23 program to establish adequate current operation funding levels
24 necessary for the programs of such school district to meet at
25 least a successful Level III rating of the accreditation system as



26 established by the State Board of Education using current
27 statistically relevant state assessment data.

28 (b) "Educational programs or elements of programs not
29 included in the adequate education program calculations, but which
30 may be included in appropriations and transfers to school
31 districts" shall mean:

32 (i) "Capital outlay" shall mean those funds used
33 for the constructing, improving, equipping, renovating or major
34 repairing of school buildings or other school facilities, or the
35 cost of acquisition of land whereon to construct or establish such
36 school facilities.

37 (ii) "Pilot programs" shall mean programs of a
38 pilot or experimental nature usually designed for special purposes
39 and for a specified period of time other than those included in
40 the adequate education program.

41 (iii) "Adult education" shall mean public
42 education dealing primarily with students above eighteen (18)
43 years of age not enrolled as full-time public school students and
44 not classified as students of technical schools, colleges or
45 universities of the state.

46 (iv) "Food service programs" shall mean those
47 programs dealing directly with the nutritional welfare of the
48 student, such as the school lunch and school breakfast programs.

49 (c) "Base student" shall mean that student
50 classification that represents the most economically educated



51 pupil in a school system meeting the definition of successful, as
52 determined by the State Board of Education.

53 (d) "Base student cost" shall mean the funding level
54 necessary for providing an adequate education program for one (1)
55 base student, subject to any minimum amounts prescribed in Section
56 37-151-7(1).

57 (e) "Add-on program costs" shall mean those items which
58 are included in the adequate education program appropriations and
59 are outside of the program calculations:

60 (i) "Transportation" shall mean transportation to
61 and from public schools for the students of Mississippi's public
62 schools provided for under law and funded from state funds.

63 (ii) "Vocational or technical education program"
64 shall mean a secondary vocational or technical program approved by
65 the State Department of Education and provided for from state
66 funds.

67 (iii) "Special education program" shall mean a
68 program for exceptional children as defined and authorized by
69 Sections 37-23-1 through 37-23-9, and approved by the State
70 Department of Education and provided from state funds.

71 (iv) "Gifted education program" shall mean those
72 programs for the instruction of intellectually or academically
73 gifted children as defined and provided for in Section 37-23-175
74 et seq.



75 (v) "Alternative school program" shall mean those
76 programs for certain compulsory-school-age students as defined and
77 provided for in Sections 37-13-92 and 37-19-22.

78 (vi) "Extended school year programs" shall mean
79 those programs authorized by law which extend beyond the normal
80 school year.

81 (vii) "University-based programs" shall mean those
82 university-based programs for handicapped children as defined and
83 provided for in Section 37-23-131 et seq.

84 (viii) "Bus driver training" programs shall mean
85 those driver training programs as provided for in Section 37-41-1.

86 (f) "Teacher" shall include any employee of a local
87 school who is required by law to obtain a teacher's license from
88 the State Board of Education and who is assigned to an
89 instructional area of work as defined by the State Department of
90 Education.

91 (g) "Principal" shall mean the head of an attendance
92 center or division thereof.

93 (h) "Superintendent" shall mean the head of a school
94 district.

95 (i) "School district" shall mean any type of school
96 district in the State of Mississippi, and shall include
97 agricultural high schools.

98 (j) "Minimum school term" shall mean a term of at least
99 one hundred eighty (180) days of school in which both teachers and



100 pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled classroom
101 instruction for not less than * * * sixty percent (60%) of
102 the * * * normal day * * *. It is the intent of the Legislature
103 that any tax levies generated to produce additional local funds
104 required by any school district to operate school terms in excess
105 of one hundred seventy-five (175) days shall not be construed to
106 constitute a new program for the purposes of exemption from the
107 limitation on tax revenues as allowed under Sections 27-39-321 and
108 37-57-107 for new programs mandated by the Legislature.

109 (k) The term "transportation density" shall mean the
110 number of transported children in average daily attendance per
111 square mile of area served in a school district, as determined by
112 the State Department of Education.

113 (l) The term "transported children" shall mean children
114 being transported to school who live within legal limits for
115 transportation and who are otherwise qualified for being
116 transported to school at public expense as fixed by Mississippi
117 state law.

118 (m) The term "year of teaching experience" shall mean
119 nine (9) months of actual teaching in the public or private
120 elementary and secondary schools and shall also include nine (9)
121 months of actual teaching at postsecondary institutions accredited
122 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or
123 equivalent regional accrediting body for degree-granting
124 postsecondary institutions. In no case shall more than one (1)



125 year of teaching experience be given for all services in one (1)
126 calendar or school year. In determining a teacher's experience,
127 no deduction shall be made because of the temporary absence of the
128 teacher because of illness or other good cause, and the teacher
129 shall be given credit therefor. Beginning with the 2003-2004
130 school year, the State Board of Education shall fix a number of
131 days, not to exceed forty-five (45) consecutive school days,
132 during which a teacher may not be under contract of employment
133 during any school year and still be considered to have been in
134 full-time employment for a regular scholastic term. If a teacher
135 exceeds the number of days established by the State Board of
136 Education that a teacher may not be under contract but may still
137 be employed, that teacher shall not be credited with a year of
138 teaching experience. In determining the experience of school
139 librarians, each complete year of continuous, full-time employment
140 as a professional librarian in a public library in this or some
141 other state shall be considered a year of teaching experience. If
142 a full-time school administrator returns to actual teaching in the
143 public schools, the term "year of teaching experience" shall
144 include the period of time he or she served as a school
145 administrator. In determining the salaries of teachers who have
146 experience in any branch of the military, the term "year of
147 teaching experience" shall include each complete year of actual
148 classroom instruction while serving in the military. In
149 determining the experience of speech-language pathologists and



150 audiologists, each complete year of continuous full-time post
151 master's degree employment in an educational setting in this or
152 some other state shall be considered a year of teaching
153 experience. Provided, however, that school districts are
154 authorized, in their discretion, to negotiate the salary levels
155 applicable to certificated employees employed after July 1, 2009,
156 who are receiving retirement benefits from the retirement system
157 of another state, and the annual experience increment provided in
158 Section 37-19-7 shall not be applicable to any such retired
159 certificated employee.

160 (n) (i) The term "average daily attendance" shall be
161 the figure which results when the total aggregate full-day
162 attendance during the period or months counted is divided by the
163 number of days during the period or months counted upon which both
164 teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled
165 classroom instruction, * * * less the average daily attendance for
166 self-contained special education classes. * * * Prior to full
167 implementation of the adequate education program the department
168 shall deduct the average daily attendance for the alternative
169 school program provided for in Section 37-19-22.

170 (ii) [Repealed]

171 (o) The term "local supplement" shall mean the amount
172 paid to an individual teacher over and above the adequate
173 education program salary schedule for regular teaching duties.



174 (p) The term "aggregate amount of support from ad
175 valorem taxation" shall mean the amounts produced by the
176 district's total tax levies for operations.

177 (q) The term "adequate education program funds" shall
178 mean all funds, both state and local, constituting the
179 requirements for meeting the cost of the adequate program as
180 provided for in Section 37-151-7.

181 (r) "Department" shall mean the State Department of
182 Education.

183 (s) "Commission" shall mean the Mississippi Commission
184 on School Accreditation created under Section 37-17-3.

185 (t) The term "successful school district" shall mean a
186 Level III school district as designated by the State Board of
187 Education using current statistically relevant state assessment
188 data.

189 (u) "Dual enrollment-dual credit programs" shall mean
190 programs for potential or recent high school student dropouts to
191 dually enroll in their home high school and a local community
192 college in a dual credit program consisting of high school
193 completion coursework and a credential, certificate or degree
194 program at the community college, as provided in Section
195 37-15-38(19).

196 (v) "Charter school" means a public school that is
197 established and operating under the terms of a charter contract



198 between the school's governing board and the Mississippi Charter
199 School Authorizer Board.

200 (w) The term "average daily membership" or "ADM" shall
201 be the figure which results when the total aggregate student
202 enrollment during the period or months counted is divided by the
203 number of days during the period or months counted upon which both
204 teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled
205 classroom instruction. However, if a local school board adopts a
206 class schedule that operates throughout the year for all or any
207 schools in the district, average daily membership shall be
208 computed by the State Department of Education so that the
209 resulting average daily membership will not be higher or lower
210 than if the local school board had not adopted such schedule.

211 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-151-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
212 amended as follows:

213 37-151-7. The annual allocation to each school district for
214 the operation of the adequate education program shall be
215 determined as follows:

216 (1) **Computation of the basic amount to be included for**
217 **current operation in the adequate education program.** The
218 following procedure shall be followed in determining the annual
219 allocation to each school district:

220 (a) **Determination of average daily * * * membership.**
221 Effective with fiscal year * * * 2024, the State Department of
222 Education shall determine the percentage change from the prior



223 year of each year of each school district's average of months two
224 (2) and three (3) average daily * * * membership (ADM) for the
225 three (3) immediately preceding school years of the year for which
226 funds are being appropriated. For any school district that
227 experiences a positive growth in the average of months two (2) and
228 three (3) * * * average daily membership (ADM) each year of the
229 three (3) years, the average percentage growth over the three-year
230 period shall be multiplied times the school district's average of
231 months two (2) and three (3) * * * average daily membership (ADM)
232 for the year immediately preceding the year for which MAEP funds
233 are being appropriated. The resulting amount shall be added to
234 the school district's average of months two (2) and three
235 (3) * * * average daily membership (ADM) for the year immediately
236 preceding the year for which MAEP funds are being appropriated to
237 arrive at the * * * average daily membership (ADM) to be used in
238 determining a school district's MAEP allocation. Otherwise,
239 months two (2) and three (3) * * * average daily membership (ADM)
240 for the year immediately preceding the year for which MAEP funds
241 are being appropriated will be used in determining a school
242 district's MAEP allocation. * * * The district's average daily
243 attendance or average daily membership (ADM) shall include any
244 student enrolled in a Dual Enrollment-Dual Credit Program as
245 defined and provided in Section 37-15-38(19). The State
246 Department of Education shall make payments for Dual
247 Enrollment-Dual Credit Programs to the home school in which the



248 student is enrolled, in accordance with regulations promulgated by
249 the State Board of Education. The community college providing
250 services to students in a Dual Enrollment-Dual Credit Program
251 shall require payment from the home school district for services
252 provided to such students at a rate of one hundred percent (100%)
253 of * * * base student cost. All MAEP/state funding shall cease
254 upon completion of high school graduation requirements.

255 The State Auditor shall make one (1) actual count of students
256 in month two (2) and one (1) actual count of students in month
257 three (3) of the school year. The State Auditor shall not be
258 required to count students in all local school districts during
259 this time period, but shall make a concerted effort to count
260 students in as many local districts as practical. No advance
261 notice shall be given to a school when a count is scheduled to be
262 conducted, however a count may be postponed due to extraordinary
263 circumstances such as a natural disaster or fire. If the State
264 Auditor finds that the average of the two (2) counts made under
265 the provisions of this chapter shows that the number of students
266 enrolled and in actual attendance in any school is as much below
267 the number reported to the State Department of Education for month
268 two (2) and for month three (3) for the applicable scholastic
269 year, then the State Auditor shall certify the same to the State
270 Department of Education no later than December 11 of the
271 scholastic year during which the counts were made. The State
272 Department of Education shall thereupon reduce the amount of state



273 funds allotted to the school district for the Mississippi Adequate
274 Education Program (MAEP) for the ensuing scholastic year as
275 follows:

276 For each school district whose reported average daily
277 attendance is in excess of one hundred three percent (103%) of the
278 average number of students actually counted by the examiners, the
279 State Department of Education shall use one hundred three percent
280 (103%) of the average count by the examiners as the average daily
281 attendance for this school district in allotting MAEP funds for
282 the next school session if funding for that school district is
283 based on average daily attendance (ADA) and not average daily
284 membership (ADM).

285 (b) **Determination of base student cost.** Effective with
286 fiscal year 2011 and every fourth fiscal year thereafter, the
287 State Board of Education, on or before August 1, with adjusted
288 estimate no later than January 2, shall submit to the Legislative
289 Budget Office and the Governor a proposed base student cost
290 adequate to provide the following cost components of educating a
291 pupil in a successful school district: (i) instructional cost;
292 (ii) administrative cost; (iii) operation and maintenance of
293 plant; and (iv) ancillary support cost. For purposes of these
294 calculations, the Department of Education shall utilize financial
295 data from the second preceding year of the year for which funds
296 are being appropriated.



297 For the instructional cost component, the Department of
298 Education shall select districts that have been identified as
299 instructionally successful and have a ratio of a number of
300 teachers per one thousand (1,000) students that is between one (1)
301 standard deviation above the mean and two (2) standard deviations
302 below the mean of the statewide average of teachers per one
303 thousand (1,000) students. The instructional cost component shall
304 be calculated by dividing the latest available months one (1)
305 through nine (9) * * * ADM into the instructional expenditures of
306 these selected districts. For the purpose of this calculation,
307 the Department of Education shall use the following funds,
308 functions and objects:

309 Fund 1120 Functions 1110-1199 Objects 100-999, Functions
310 1210, 1220, 2150-2159 Objects 210 and 215;

311 Fund 1130 All Functions, Object Code 210 and 215;

312 Fund 2001 Functions 1110-1199 Objects 100-999;

313 Fund 2070 Functions 1110-1199 Objects 100-999;

314 Fund 2420 Functions 1110-1199 Objects 100-999;

315 Fund 2711 All Functions, Object Code 210 and 215.

316 Prior to the calculation of the instructional cost component,
317 there shall be subtracted from the above expenditures any revenue
318 received for Chickasaw Cession payments, Master Teacher
319 Certification payments and the district's portion of state revenue
320 received from the MAEP at-risk allocation.



321 For the administrative cost component, the Department of
322 Education shall select districts that have been identified as
323 instructionally successful and have a ratio of an administrative
324 staff to nonadministrative staff between one (1) standard
325 deviation above the mean and two (2) standard deviations below the
326 mean of the statewide average administrative staff to
327 nonadministrative staff. The administrative cost component shall
328 be calculated by dividing the latest available months one (1)
329 through nine (9) * * * ADM of the selected districts into the
330 administrative expenditures of these selected districts. For the
331 purpose of this calculation, the Department of Education shall use
332 the following funds, functions and objects:

333 Fund 1120 Functions 2300-2599, Functions 2800-2899,
334 Objects 100-999;

335 Fund 2711 Functions 2300-2599, Functions 2800-2899,
336 Objects 100-999.

337 For the plant and maintenance cost component, the Department
338 of Education shall select districts that have been identified as
339 instructionally successful and have a ratio of plant and
340 maintenance expenditures per one hundred thousand (100,000) square
341 feet of building space and a ratio of maintenance workers per one
342 hundred thousand (100,000) square feet of building space that are
343 both between one (1) standard deviation above the mean and two (2)
344 standard deviations below the mean of the statewide average. The
345 plant and maintenance cost component shall be calculated by



346 dividing the latest available months one (1) through nine
347 (9) * * * ADM of the selected districts into the plant and
348 maintenance expenditures of these selected districts. For the
349 purpose of this calculation, the Department of Education shall use
350 the following funds, functions and objects:

351 Fund 1120 Functions 2600-2699, Objects 100-699
352 and Objects 800-999;

353 Fund 2711 Functions 2600-2699, Objects 100-699
354 and Objects 800-999;

355 Fund 2430 Functions 2600-2699, Objects 100-699
356 and Objects 800-999.

357 For the ancillary support cost component, the Department of
358 Education shall select districts that have been identified as
359 instructionally successful and have a ratio of a number of
360 librarians, media specialists, guidance counselors and
361 psychologists per one thousand (1,000) students that is between
362 one (1) standard deviation above the mean and two (2) standard
363 deviations below the mean of the statewide average of librarians,
364 media specialists, guidance counselors and psychologists per one
365 thousand (1,000) students. The ancillary cost component shall be
366 calculated by dividing the latest available months one (1) through
367 nine (9) * * * ADM into the ancillary expenditures instructional
368 expenditures of these selected districts. For the purpose of this
369 calculation, the Department of Education shall use the following
370 funds, functions and objects:



371 Fund 1120 Functions 2110-2129, Objects 100-999;
372 Fund 1120 Functions 2140-2149, Objects 100-999;
373 Fund 1120 Functions 2220-2229, Objects 100-999;
374 Fund 2001 Functions 2100-2129, Objects 100-999;
375 Fund 2001 Functions 2140-2149, Objects 100-999;
376 Fund 2001 Functions 2220-2229, Objects 100-999.

377 The total base cost for each year shall be the sum of the
378 instructional cost component, administrative cost component, plant
379 and maintenance cost component and ancillary support cost
380 component, and any estimated adjustments for additional state
381 requirements as determined by the State Board of Education.

382 Provided, however, that the base student cost in fiscal year 1998
383 shall be Two Thousand Six Hundred Sixty-four Dollars (\$2,664.00).

384 For each of the fiscal years between the recalculation of the
385 base student cost under the provisions of this paragraph (b), the
386 base student cost shall be increased by an amount equal to forty
387 percent (40%) of the base student cost for the previous fiscal
388 year, multiplied by the latest annual rate of inflation for the
389 State of Mississippi as determined by the State Economist, plus
390 any adjustments for additional state requirements such as, but not
391 limited to, teacher pay raises and health insurance premium
392 increases.

393 (c) **Determination of the basic adequate education**
394 **program cost.** The basic amount for current operation to be



395 included in the Mississippi Adequate Education Program for each
396 school district shall be computed as follows:

397 Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, multiply the
398 average daily * * * membership of the district by the base student
399 cost as established by the Legislature, which yields the total
400 base program cost for each school district. However, beginning
401 with the 2024-2025 school year, the total base student cost for
402 each school district shall be based on the ADM of the school
403 district unless average daily attendance (ADA) is less than ninety
404 percent (90%) threshold of the district's ADM. In instances that
405 a district's attendance falls below the ninety percent (90%)
406 threshold of the ADM, the base student cost shall be funded based
407 on ADA.

408 (d) **Adjustment to the base student cost for at-risk**
409 **pupils.** The amount to be included for at-risk pupil programs for
410 each school district shall be computed as follows: Multiply the
411 base student cost for the appropriate fiscal year as determined
412 under paragraph (b) by five percent (5%), and multiply that
413 product by the number of pupils participating in the federal free
414 school lunch program in such school district, which yields the
415 total adjustment for at-risk pupil programs for such school
416 district.

417 (e) **Add-on program cost.** The amount to be allocated to
418 school districts in addition to the adequate education program



419 cost for add-on programs for each school district shall be
420 computed as follows:

421 (i) Transportation cost shall be the amount
422 allocated to such school district for the operational support of
423 the district transportation system from state funds.

424 (ii) Vocational or technical education program
425 cost shall be the amount allocated to such school district from
426 state funds for the operational support of such programs.

427 (iii) Special education program cost shall be the
428 amount allocated to such school district from state funds for the
429 operational support of such programs.

430 (iv) Gifted education program cost shall be the
431 amount allocated to such school district from state funds for the
432 operational support of such programs.

433 (v) Alternative school program cost shall be the
434 amount allocated to such school district from state funds for the
435 operational support of such programs.

436 (vi) Extended school year programs shall be the
437 amount allocated to school districts for those programs authorized
438 by law which extend beyond the normal school year.

439 (vii) University-based programs shall be the
440 amount allocated to school districts for those university-based
441 programs for handicapped children as defined and provided for in
442 Section 37-23-131 et seq., Mississippi Code of 1972.



443 (viii) Bus driver training programs shall be the
444 amount provided for those driver training programs as provided for
445 in Section 37-41-1, Mississippi Code of 1972.

446 The sum of the items listed above (i) transportation, (ii)
447 vocational or technical education, (iii) special education, (iv)
448 gifted education, (v) alternative school, (vi) extended school
449 year, (vii) university-based, and (viii) bus driver training shall
450 yield the add-on cost for each school district.

451 (f) **Total projected adequate education program cost.**

452 The total Mississippi Adequate Education Program cost shall be the
453 sum of the total basic adequate education program cost (paragraph
454 (c)), and the adjustment to the base student cost for at-risk
455 pupils (paragraph (d)) for each school district. In any year in
456 which the MAEP is not fully funded, the Legislature shall direct
457 the Department of Education in the K-12 appropriation bill as to
458 how to allocate MAEP funds to school districts for that year.

459 (g) The State Auditor shall annually verify the State
460 Board of Education's estimated calculations for the Mississippi
461 Adequate Education Program that are submitted each year to the
462 Legislative Budget Office on August 1 and the final calculation
463 that is submitted on January 2.

464 (2) **Computation of the required local revenue in support of**
465 **the adequate education program.** The amount that each district
466 shall provide toward the cost of the adequate education program
467 shall be calculated as follows:



468 (a) The State Department of Education shall certify to
469 each school district that twenty-eight (28) mills, less the
470 estimated amount of the yield of the School Ad Valorem Tax
471 Reduction Fund grants as determined by the State Department of
472 Education, is the millage rate required to provide the district
473 required local effort for that year, or twenty-seven percent (27%)
474 of the basic adequate education program cost for such school
475 district as determined under paragraph (c), whichever is a lesser
476 amount. In the case of an agricultural high school, the millage
477 requirement shall be set at a level which generates an equitable
478 amount per pupil to be determined by the State Board of Education.
479 The local contribution amount for school districts in which there
480 is located one or more charter schools will be calculated using
481 the following methodology: using the adequate education program
482 twenty-eight (28) mill value, or the twenty-seven percent (27%)
483 cap amount (whichever is less) for each school district in which a
484 charter school is located, an average per pupil amount will be
485 calculated. This average per pupil amount will be multiplied
486 times the number of students attending the charter school in that
487 school district. The sum becomes the charter school's local
488 contribution to the adequate education program.

489 (b) The State Department of Education shall determine
490 the following from the annual assessment information submitted to
491 the department by the tax assessors of the various counties: (i)
492 the total assessed valuation of nonexempt property for school



493 purposes in each school district; (ii) assessed value of exempt
494 property owned by homeowners aged sixty-five (65) or older or
495 disabled as defined in Section 27-33-67(2), Mississippi Code of
496 1972; (iii) the school district's tax loss from exemptions
497 provided to applicants under the age of sixty-five (65) and not
498 disabled as defined in Section 27-33-67(1), Mississippi Code of
499 1972; and (iv) the school district's homestead reimbursement
500 revenues.

501 (c) The amount of the total adequate education program
502 funding which shall be contributed by each school district shall
503 be the sum of the ad valorem receipts generated by the millage
504 required under this subsection plus the following local revenue
505 sources for the appropriate fiscal year which are or may be
506 available for current expenditure by the school district:

507 One hundred percent (100%) of Grand Gulf income as prescribed
508 in Section 27-35-309.

509 One hundred percent (100%) of any fees in lieu of taxes as
510 prescribed in Section 27-31-104.

511 (3) **Computation of the required state effort in support of**
512 **the adequate education program.**

513 (a) The required state effort in support of the
514 adequate education program shall be determined by subtracting the
515 sum of the required local tax effort as set forth in subsection
516 (2) (a) of this section and the other local revenue sources as set
517 forth in subsection (2) (c) of this section in an amount not to



518 exceed twenty-seven percent (27%) of the total projected adequate
519 education program cost as set forth in subsection (1)(f) of this
520 section from the total projected adequate education program cost
521 as set forth in subsection (1)(f) of this section.

522 (b) Provided, however, that in fiscal year 2015, any
523 increase in the said state contribution to any district calculated
524 under this section shall be not less than six percent (6%) in
525 excess of the amount received by said district from state funds
526 for fiscal year 2002; in fiscal year 2016, any increase in the
527 said state contribution to any district calculated under this
528 section shall be not less than four percent (4%) in excess of the
529 amount received by said district from state funds for fiscal year
530 2002; in fiscal year 2017, any increase in the said state
531 contribution to any district calculated under this section shall
532 be not less than two percent (2%) in excess of the amount received
533 by said district from state funds for fiscal year 2002; and in
534 fiscal year 2018 and thereafter, any increase in the said state
535 contribution to any district calculated under this section shall
536 be zero percent (0%). For purposes of this paragraph (b), state
537 funds shall include minimum program funds less the add-on
538 programs, State Uniform Millage Assistance Grant Funds, Education
539 Enhancement Funds appropriated for Uniform Millage Assistance
540 Grants and state textbook allocations, and State General Funds
541 allocated for textbooks.



542 (c) If the school board of any school district shall
543 determine that it is not economically feasible or practicable to
544 operate any school within the district for the full one hundred
545 eighty (180) days required for a school term of a scholastic year
546 as required in Section 37-13-63, Mississippi Code of 1972, due to
547 an enemy attack, a man-made, technological or natural disaster in
548 which the Governor has declared a disaster emergency under the
549 laws of this state or the President of the United States has
550 declared an emergency or major disaster to exist in this state,
551 said school board may notify the State Department of Education of
552 such disaster and submit a plan for altering the school term. If
553 the State Board of Education finds such disaster to be the cause
554 of the school not operating for the contemplated school term and
555 that such school was in a school district covered by the
556 Governor's or President's disaster declaration, it may permit said
557 school board to operate the schools in its district for less than
558 one hundred eighty (180) days and, in such case, the State
559 Department of Education shall not reduce the state contributions
560 to the adequate education program allotment for such district,
561 because of the failure to operate said schools for one hundred
562 eighty (180) days.

563 (4) The Interim School District Capital Expenditure Fund is
564 hereby established in the State Treasury which shall be used to
565 distribute any funds specifically appropriated by the Legislature
566 to such fund to school districts entitled to increased allocations



567 of state funds under the adequate education program funding
568 formula prescribed in Sections 37-151-3 through 37-151-7,
569 Mississippi Code of 1972, until such time as the said adequate
570 education program is fully funded by the Legislature. The
571 following percentages of the total state cost of increased
572 allocations of funds under the adequate education program funding
573 formula shall be appropriated by the Legislature into the Interim
574 School District Capital Expenditure Fund to be distributed to all
575 school districts under the formula: Nine and two-tenths percent
576 (9.2%) shall be appropriated in fiscal year 1998, twenty percent
577 (20%) shall be appropriated in fiscal year 1999, forty percent
578 (40%) shall be appropriated in fiscal year 2000, sixty percent
579 (60%) shall be appropriated in fiscal year 2001, eighty percent
580 (80%) shall be appropriated in fiscal year 2002, and one hundred
581 percent (100%) shall be appropriated in fiscal year 2003 into the
582 State Adequate Education Program Fund. Until July 1, 2002, such
583 money shall be used by school districts for the following
584 purposes:

585 (a) Purchasing, erecting, repairing, equipping,
586 remodeling and enlarging school buildings and related facilities,
587 including gymnasiums, auditoriums, lunchrooms, vocational training
588 buildings, libraries, school barns and garages for transportation
589 vehicles, school athletic fields and necessary facilities
590 connected therewith, and purchasing land therefor. Any such
591 capital improvement project by a school district shall be approved



592 by the State Board of Education, and based on an approved
593 long-range plan. The State Board of Education shall promulgate
594 minimum requirements for the approval of school district capital
595 expenditure plans.

596 (b) Providing necessary water, light, heating,
597 air-conditioning, and sewerage facilities for school buildings,
598 and purchasing land therefor.

599 (c) Paying debt service on existing capital improvement
600 debt of the district or refinancing outstanding debt of a district
601 if such refinancing will result in an interest cost savings to the
602 district.

603 (d) From and after October 1, 1997, through June 30,
604 1998, pursuant to a school district capital expenditure plan
605 approved by the State Department of Education, a school district
606 may pledge such funds until July 1, 2002, plus funds provided for
607 in paragraph (e) of this subsection (4) that are not otherwise
608 permanently pledged under such paragraph (e) to pay all or a
609 portion of the debt service on debt issued by the school district
610 under Sections 37-59-1 through 37-59-45, 37-59-101 through
611 37-59-115, 37-7-351 through 37-7-359, 37-41-89 through 37-41-99,
612 37-7-301, 37-7-302 and 37-41-81, Mississippi Code of 1972, or debt
613 issued by boards of supervisors for agricultural high schools
614 pursuant to Section 37-27-65, Mississippi Code of 1972, or
615 lease-purchase contracts entered into pursuant to Section 31-7-13,
616 Mississippi Code of 1972, or to retire or refinance outstanding



617 debt of a district, if such pledge is accomplished pursuant to a
618 written contract or resolution approved and spread upon the
619 minutes of an official meeting of the district's school board or
620 board of supervisors. It is the intent of this provision to allow
621 school districts to irrevocably pledge their Interim School
622 District Capital Expenditure Fund allotments as a constant stream
623 of revenue to secure a debt issued under the foregoing code
624 sections. To allow school districts to make such an irrevocable
625 pledge, the state shall take all action necessary to ensure that
626 the amount of a district's Interim School District Capital
627 Expenditure Fund allotments shall not be reduced below the amount
628 certified by the department or the district's total allotment
629 under the Interim Capital Expenditure Fund if fully funded, so
630 long as such debt remains outstanding.

631 (e) [Repealed]

632 (f) [Repealed]

633 (g) The State Board of Education may authorize the
634 school district to expend not more than twenty percent (20%) of
635 its annual allotment of such funds or Twenty Thousand Dollars
636 (\$20,000.00), whichever is greater, for technology needs of the
637 school district, including computers, software,
638 telecommunications, cable television, interactive video, film,
639 low-power television, satellite communications, microwave
640 communications, technology-based equipment installation and
641 maintenance, and the training of staff in the use of such



642 technology-based instruction. Any such technology expenditure
643 shall be reflected in the local district technology plan approved
644 by the State Board of Education under Section 37-151-17,
645 Mississippi Code of 1972.

646 (h) To the extent a school district has not utilized
647 twenty percent (20%) of its annual allotment for technology
648 purposes under paragraph (g), a school district may expend not
649 more than twenty percent (20%) of its annual allotment or Twenty
650 Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00), whichever is greater, for
651 instructional purposes. The State Board of Education may
652 authorize a school district to expend more than said twenty
653 percent (20%) of its annual allotment for instructional purposes
654 if it determines that such expenditures are needed for
655 accreditation purposes.

656 (i) The State Department of Education or the State
657 Board of Education may require that any project commenced under
658 this section with an estimated project cost of not less than Five
659 Million Dollars (\$5,000,000.00) shall be done only pursuant to
660 program management of the process with respect to design and
661 construction. Any individuals, partnerships, companies or other
662 entities acting as a program manager on behalf of a local school
663 district and performing program management services for projects
664 covered under this subsection shall be approved by the State
665 Department of Education.



666 Any interest accruing on any unexpended balance in the
667 Interim School District Capital Expenditure Fund shall be invested
668 by the State Treasurer and placed to the credit of each school
669 district participating in such fund in its proportionate share.

670 The provisions of this subsection (4) shall be cumulative and
671 supplemental to any existing funding programs or other authority
672 conferred upon school districts or school boards.

673 (5) The State Department of Education shall make payments to
674 charter schools for each student in average daily attendance at
675 the charter school equal to the state share of the adequate
676 education program payments for each student in average daily
677 attendance at the school district in which the public charter
678 school is located. In calculating the local contribution for
679 purposes of determining the state share of the adequate education
680 program payments, the department shall deduct the pro rata local
681 contribution of the school district in which the student resides
682 as determined in subsection (2) (a) of this section.

683 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-151-85, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
684 amended as follows:

685 37-151-85. (1) The amount to be allotted by the State Board
686 of Education for transportation shall be determined as follows:

687 The State Department of Education shall calculate the cost of
688 transportation in school districts by ascertaining the average
689 cost per pupil in average daily attendance of transported pupils
690 in school districts classified in different density groups as



691 determined by the State Department of Education. Based on these
692 calculations, the State Department of Education shall develop a
693 scale for determining the allowable cost per pupil in different
694 density groups, which scale shall provide greatest allowance per
695 pupil transported in school districts with lowest densities and
696 smallest allowance per pupil in school districts with highest
697 densities. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, the total
698 allowance in the adequate education program for transported
699 children for any school district for the current year shall be the
700 average daily * * * membership (ADM) of the transported children
701 for the nine (9) months of the prior year, multiplied by the
702 allowance per transported pupil as provided herein. However, the
703 State Department of Education is hereby authorized and empowered
704 to make proper adjustments in allotments, under rules and
705 regulations of the State Board of Education, in cases where major
706 changes in the number of children in average daily * * *
707 membership (ADM) transported occur from one (1) year to another as
708 a result of changes or alterations in the boundaries of school
709 districts, a change in or relocation of attendance centers, or for
710 other reasons which would result in major decrease or increase in
711 the number of children in average daily attendance transported
712 during the current school year as compared with the preceding
713 year. Moreover, the State Board of Education is hereby authorized
714 and empowered to make such payments to all districts and/or
715 university-based programs as deemed necessary in connection with



716 transporting exceptional children as defined in Section 37-23-3.
717 The State Board of Education shall establish and implement all
718 necessary rules and regulations to allot transportation payments
719 to university-based programs. In developing density
720 classifications under the provisions hereof, the State Department
721 of Education may give consideration to the length of the route,
722 the sparsity of the population, the lack of adequate roads,
723 highways and bridges, and the presence of large streams or other
724 geographic obstacles. In addition to funds allotted under the
725 above provisions, funds shall be allotted to each school district
726 that transports students from their assigned school or attendance
727 center to classes in an approved vocational-technical center at a
728 rate per mile not to exceed the average statewide cost per mile of
729 school bus transportation during the preceding year exclusive of
730 bus replacement. All such transportation must have prior approval
731 by the State Department of Education.

732 (2) The average daily * * * membership (ADM) of transported
733 children shall be reported by the school district in which such
734 children attend school. If children living in a school district
735 are transported at the expense of such school district to another
736 school district, the average daily * * * membership (ADM) of such
737 transported children shall be deducted by the State Department of
738 Education from the aggregate average daily * * * membership (ADM)
739 of transported children in the school district in which they
740 attend school and shall be added to the aggregate average



741 daily * * * membership (ADM) of transported children of the school
742 district from which they come for the purpose of calculating
743 transportation allotments. However, such deduction shall not be
744 made for the purpose of calculating adequate education program
745 pupil-based funding.

746 (3) The State Department of Education shall include in the
747 allowance for transportation for each school district an amount
748 for the replacement of school buses or the purchase of new buses,
749 which amount shall be calculated upon the estimated useful life of
750 all school buses being used for the transportation of children in
751 such school district, whether such buses be publicly or privately
752 owned.

753 (4) The school boards of all districts operating school bus
754 transportation are authorized and directed to establish a salary
755 schedule for school bus drivers. No school district shall be
756 entitled to receive the funds herein allotted for transportation
757 unless it pays each of its nonstudent adult school bus drivers
758 paid from such transportation allotments a minimum of One Hundred
759 Ninety Dollars (\$190.00) per month. In addition, local school
760 boards may compensate school bus drivers, to include temporary or
761 substitute bus drivers, for actual expenses incurred when
762 acquiring an initial commercial license or any renewal of a
763 commercial license in order to drive a school bus. In addition,
764 local school boards may compensate school bus drivers, to include
765 temporary or substitute bus drivers, for expenses, not to exceed



766 One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00), when acquiring an initial medical
767 exam or any renewal of a medical exam, in order to qualify for a
768 commercial driver's license.

769 (5) The State Board of Education shall be authorized and
770 empowered to use such part of the funds appropriated for
771 transportation in the adequate education fund as may be necessary
772 to finance driver training courses as provided for in Section
773 37-41-1, Mississippi Code of 1972.

774 (6) The State Board of Education, acting through the
775 Department of Education, may compensate school bus drivers, to
776 include temporary or substitute bus drivers, who are providing
777 driving services to the various state operated schools, such as
778 the Mississippi School for the Deaf, the Mississippi School for
779 the Blind, the Mississippi School of the Arts, the Mississippi
780 School for Math and Science and any other similar state operated
781 schools, for actual expenses incurred when acquiring an initial
782 commercial license or any renewal of a commercial license in order
783 to drive a school bus, to include the expense, not to exceed One
784 Hundred Dollars (\$100.00), of acquiring an initial medical exam or
785 any renewal of a medical exam in order to qualify for a commercial
786 driver's license.

787 **SECTION 4.** Section 37-151-97, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
788 amended as follows:

789 37-151-97. The State Department of Education shall develop
790 an annual reporting process to inform the Legislature, local



791 district personnel and the general public as to the ongoing and
792 future plans for the state's educational programs. The annual
793 reporting process will include those vital statistics that are
794 commonly reported by schools and districts and that can provide
795 clear demographic, strategic and educational information to
796 constituencies such as, but not limited to, the following
797 information:

798 (a) Student enrollment, average daily membership (ADM),
799 attendance, drop-out and graduation;

800 (b) Overall student and district achievement;

801 (c) Budget, administrative costs and other pertinent
802 fiscal information, including:

803 (i) The receipts and disbursements of all school
804 funds handled by the board;

805 (ii) Reports of expenditures for public schools,
806 which, upon request must be made available on an individual
807 district basis by the State Department of Education;

808 1. Total Student Expenditures:

809 a. Instruction (1000s);

810 b. Other Student Instructional

811 Expenditures (2100s, 2200s);

812 2. General Administration (2300s and 2500s);

813 3. School Administration (2400s);

814 4. Other Expenditures (2600s, 2700s, 2800s,

815 3100s, 3200s); and



816 5. Nonoperational Expenditures (4000s, 5000s,
817 6000s);

818 (iii) The number of school districts,
819 schoolteachers employed, school administrators employed, pupils
820 taught and the attendance record of pupils therein;

821 (iv) County and district levies for each school
822 district and agricultural high school;

823 (v) The condition of vocational education, a list
824 of schools to which federal and state aid has been given, and a
825 detailed statement of the expenditures of federal funds and the
826 state funds that may be provided, and the ranking of subjects
827 taught as compared with the state's needs.

828 (d) Other as directed by the State Board of Education.

829 Further, the reporting process will include an annual report
830 developed specifically to relate the mission and goals of the
831 State Board of Education, state superintendent and departments.
832 This document will become the method through which the strategic
833 planning and management process of the department is articulated
834 to the public. It will explain and inform the public of the major
835 initiatives of the department and clearly identify rationale for
836 program development and/or elimination. The report will establish
837 benchmarks, future plans and discuss the effectiveness of
838 educational programs.

839 In addition to the information specified herein, the State
840 Board of Education shall have full and plenary authority and power



841 to require the furnishing of such further, additional and
842 supplementary information as it may deem necessary for the purpose
843 of determining the cost of the adequate education program in such
844 school district for the succeeding fiscal year, the amount of the
845 adequate education program funds to be allotted to each school
846 district for the succeeding fiscal year, and for any other purpose
847 authorized by law or deemed necessary by said State Board of
848 Education.

849 It shall be the duty of the State Department of Education to
850 prescribe the forms for the reports provided for in this section.

851 **SECTION 5.** Section 37-151-103, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
852 amended as follows:

853 37-151-103. (1) Funds due each school district and charter
854 school under the terms of this chapter from the Adequate Education
855 Program Fund shall be paid in the following manner: Two (2)
856 business days prior to the last working day of each month there
857 shall be paid to each school district and charter school, by
858 electronic funds transfer, one-twelfth (1/12) of the funds to
859 which the district or charter school is entitled from funds
860 appropriated for the Adequate Education Program Fund. However, in
861 December those payments shall be made on December 15th or the next
862 business day after that date. All school districts shall process
863 a single monthly or a bimonthly payroll for employees, in the
864 discretion of the local school board, with electronic settlement
865 of payroll checks secured through direct deposit of net pay for



866 all school district employees. In addition, the State Department
867 of Education may pay school districts and charter schools from the
868 common school fund and the Adequate Education Program Fund on a
869 date earlier than provided for by this section if it is determined
870 that it is in the best interest of school districts and charter
871 schools to do so.

872 * * * However, * * * if the cash balance in the State
873 General Fund is not adequate on the due date to pay the amounts
874 due to all school districts and charter schools in the state as
875 determined by the State Superintendent of Education, the State
876 Fiscal Officer shall not transfer said funds payable to any school
877 district or districts or charter schools until money is available
878 to pay the amount due to all districts and charter schools.

879 (2) Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter or any
880 other law requiring the number of children in average daily
881 attendance, average daily membership (ADM) or the average
882 daily * * * membership (ADM) of transported children to be
883 determined on the basis of the preceding year, the State Board of
884 Education is hereby authorized and empowered to make proper
885 adjustments in allotments in cases where major changes in the
886 number of children in average daily attendance, average daily
887 membership (ADM) or the average daily * * * membership (ADM) of
888 transported children occurs from one year to another as a result
889 of changes or alterations in the boundaries of school districts,
890 the sending of children from one county or district to another



891 upon a contract basis, the termination or discontinuance of a
892 contract for the sending of children from one county or district
893 to another, a change in or relocation of attendance centers, or
894 for any other reason which would result in a major decrease or
895 increase in the number of children in average daily attendance,
896 average daily membership (ADM) or the average daily * * *
897 membership (ADM) of transported children during the current school
898 year as compared with the preceding year.

899 (3) In the event of an inordinately large number of
900 absentees in any school district or charter school as a result of
901 epidemic, natural disaster, or any concerted activity discouraging
902 school attendance, then in such event school attendance for the
903 purposes of determining average daily attendance or average daily
904 membership (ADM) under the adequate education program shall be
905 based upon the average daily attendance or average daily
906 membership (ADM) for the preceding school year for such school
907 district or charter school.

908 (4) The State Department of Education shall hold school
909 districts harmless for each school district's average daily
910 attendance calculation for the 2020-2021 scholastic year. For
911 purposes of determining average daily attendance for the 2020-2021
912 scholastic year, the State Department of Education shall use each
913 school district's average daily attendance for the 2019-2020
914 scholastic year if it is greater than the school's average daily
915 attendance for the 2020-2021 scholastic year.



916 **SECTION 6.** Section 37-13-91, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
917 amended as follows:

918 37-13-91. (1) This section shall be referred to as the
919 "Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law."

920 (2) The following terms as used in this section are defined
921 as follows:

922 (a) "Parent" means the father or mother to whom a child
923 has been born, or the father or mother by whom a child has been
924 legally adopted.

925 (b) "Guardian" means a guardian of the person of a
926 child, other than a parent, who is legally appointed by a court of
927 competent jurisdiction.

928 (c) "Custodian" means any person having the present
929 care or custody of a child, other than a parent or guardian of the
930 child.

931 (d) "School day" means not less than five and one-half
932 (5-1/2) and not more than eight (8) hours of actual teaching in
933 which both teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for
934 scheduled schoolwork.

935 (e) "School" means any public school, including a
936 charter school, in this state or any nonpublic school in this
937 state which is in session each school year for at least one
938 hundred eighty (180) school days, except that the "nonpublic"
939 school term shall be the number of days that each school shall
940 require for promotion from grade to grade.



941 (f) "Compulsory-school-age child" means a child who has
942 attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before
943 September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age
944 of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar
945 year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain
946 the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has
947 enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program.

948 (g) "School attendance officer" means a person employed
949 by the State Department of Education pursuant to Section 37-13-89.

950 (h) "Appropriate school official" means the
951 superintendent of the school district, or his designee, or, in the
952 case of a nonpublic school, the principal or the headmaster.

953 (i) "Nonpublic school" means an institution for the
954 teaching of children, consisting of a physical plant, whether
955 owned or leased, including a home, instructional staff members and
956 students, and which is in session each school year. This
957 definition shall include, but not be limited to, private, church,
958 parochial and home instruction programs.

959 (3) A parent, guardian or custodian of a
960 compulsory-school-age child in this state shall cause the child to
961 enroll in and attend a public school or legitimate nonpublic
962 school for the period of time that the child is of compulsory
963 school age, except under the following circumstances:

964 (a) When a compulsory-school-age child is physically,
965 mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as



966 determined by the appropriate school official based upon
967 sufficient medical documentation.

968 (b) When a compulsory-school-age child is enrolled in
969 and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or
970 education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged
971 children.

972 (c) When a compulsory-school-age child is being
973 educated in a legitimate home instruction program.

974 The parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age
975 child described in this subsection, or the parent, guardian or
976 custodian of a compulsory-school-age child attending any charter
977 school or nonpublic school, or the appropriate school official for
978 any or all children attending a charter school or nonpublic school
979 shall complete a "certificate of enrollment" in order to
980 facilitate the administration of this section.

981 The form of the certificate of enrollment shall be prepared
982 by the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement of the
983 State Department of Education and shall be designed to obtain the
984 following information only:

985 (i) The name, address, telephone number and date
986 of birth of the compulsory-school-age child;

987 (ii) The name, address and telephone number of the
988 parent, guardian or custodian of the compulsory-school-age child;

989 (iii) A simple description of the type of
990 education the compulsory-school-age child is receiving and, if the



991 child is enrolled in a nonpublic school, the name and address of
992 the school; and

993 (iv) The signature of the parent, guardian or
994 custodian of the compulsory-school-age child or, for any or all
995 compulsory-school-age child or children attending a charter school
996 or nonpublic school, the signature of the appropriate school
997 official and the date signed.

998 The certificate of enrollment shall be returned to the school
999 attendance officer where the child resides on or before September
1000 15 of each year. Any parent, guardian or custodian found by the
1001 school attendance officer to be in noncompliance with this section
1002 shall comply, after written notice of the noncompliance by the
1003 school attendance officer, with this subsection within ten (10)
1004 days after the notice or be in violation of this section.

1005 However, in the event the child has been enrolled in a public
1006 school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of
1007 the school year as required in subsection (6), the parent or
1008 custodian may, at a later date, enroll the child in a legitimate
1009 nonpublic school or legitimate home instruction program and send
1010 the certificate of enrollment to the school attendance officer and
1011 be in compliance with this subsection.

1012 For the purposes of this subsection, a legitimate nonpublic
1013 school or legitimate home instruction program shall be those not
1014 operated or instituted for the purpose of avoiding or
1015 circumventing the compulsory attendance law.



1016 (4) An "unlawful absence" is an absence for an entire school
1017 day or during part of a school day by a compulsory-school-age
1018 child, which absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary
1019 nonattendance. * * * Days missed from school due to disciplinary
1020 suspension shall not be considered an "excused" absence under this
1021 section. This subsection shall not apply to children enrolled in
1022 a nonpublic school.

1023 Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for
1024 temporary nonattendance of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled
1025 in a noncharter public school, provided satisfactory evidence of
1026 the excuse is provided to the superintendent of the school
1027 district, or his designee:

1028 (a) An absence is excused when the absence results from
1029 the compulsory-school-age child's attendance at an authorized
1030 school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of
1031 the school district, or his designee. These activities may
1032 include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions,
1033 musical festivals and any similar activity.

1034 (b) An absence is excused when the absence results from
1035 illness or injury which prevents the compulsory-school-age child
1036 from being physically able to attend school.

1037 (c) An absence is excused when isolation of a
1038 compulsory-school-age child is ordered by the county health
1039 officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school
1040 official.



1041 (d) An absence is excused when it results from the
1042 death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family of a
1043 compulsory-school-age child. The immediate family members of a
1044 compulsory-school-age child shall include children, spouse,
1045 grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, including
1046 stepbrothers and stepsisters.

1047 (e) An absence is excused when it results from a
1048 medical or dental appointment of a compulsory-school-age child.

1049 (f) An absence is excused when it results from the
1050 attendance of a compulsory-school-age child at the proceedings of
1051 a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is a party to
1052 the action or under subpoena as a witness.

1053 (g) An absence may be excused if the religion to which
1054 the compulsory-school-age child or the child's parents adheres,
1055 requires or suggests the observance of a religious event. The
1056 approval of the absence is within the discretion of the
1057 superintendent of the school district, or his designee, but
1058 approval should be granted unless the religion's observance is of
1059 such duration as to interfere with the education of the child.

1060 (h) An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated
1061 to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district,
1062 or his designee, that the purpose of the absence is to take
1063 advantage of a valid educational opportunity such as travel,
1064 including vacations or other family travel. Approval of the
1065 absence must be gained from the superintendent of the school



1066 district, or his designee, before the absence, but the approval
1067 shall not be unreasonably withheld.

1068 (i) An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated
1069 to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district,
1070 or his designee, that conditions are sufficient to warrant the
1071 compulsory-school-age child's nonattendance. However, no absences
1072 shall be excused by the school district superintendent, or his
1073 designee, when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent
1074 the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law.

1075 (j) An absence is excused when it results from the
1076 attendance of a compulsory-school-age child participating in
1077 official organized events sponsored by the 4-H or Future Farmers
1078 of America (FFA). The excuse for the 4-H or FFA event must be
1079 provided in writing to the appropriate school superintendent by
1080 the Extension Agent or High School Agricultural Instructor/FFA
1081 Advisor.

1082 (k) An absence is excused when it results from the
1083 compulsory-school-age child officially being employed to serve as
1084 a page at the State Capitol for the Mississippi House of
1085 Representatives or Senate.

1086 (5) Any parent, guardian or custodian of a
1087 compulsory-school-age child subject to this section who refuses or
1088 willfully fails to perform any of the duties imposed upon him or
1089 her under this section or who intentionally falsifies any
1090 information required to be contained in a certificate of



1091 enrollment, shall be guilty of contributing to the neglect of a
1092 child and, upon conviction, shall be punished in accordance with
1093 Section 97-5-39.

1094 Upon prosecution of a parent, guardian or custodian of a
1095 compulsory-school-age child for violation of this section, the
1096 presentation of evidence by the prosecutor that shows that the
1097 child has not been enrolled in school within eighteen (18)
1098 calendar days after the first day of the school year of the public
1099 school which the child is eligible to attend, or that the child
1100 has accumulated twelve (12) unlawful absences during the school
1101 year at the public school in which the child has been enrolled,
1102 shall establish a prima facie case that the child's parent,
1103 guardian or custodian is responsible for the absences and has
1104 refused or willfully failed to perform the duties imposed upon him
1105 or her under this section. However, no proceedings under this
1106 section shall be brought against a parent, guardian or custodian
1107 of a compulsory-school-age child unless the school attendance
1108 officer has contacted promptly the home of the child and has
1109 provided written notice to the parent, guardian or custodian of
1110 the requirement for the child's enrollment or attendance.

1111 (6) If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled
1112 in a school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day
1113 of the school year of the school which the child is eligible to
1114 attend or the child has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences
1115 during the school year of the public school in which the child is



1116 enrolled, the school district superintendent, or his designee,
1117 shall report, within two (2) school days or within five (5)
1118 calendar days, whichever is less, the absences to the school
1119 attendance officer. The State Department of Education shall
1120 prescribe a uniform method for schools to utilize in reporting the
1121 unlawful absences to the school attendance officer. The
1122 superintendent, or his designee, also shall report any student
1123 suspensions or student expulsions to the school attendance officer
1124 when they occur.

1125 (7) When a school attendance officer has made all attempts
1126 to secure enrollment and/or attendance of a compulsory-school-age
1127 child and is unable to effect the enrollment and/or attendance,
1128 the attendance officer shall file a petition with the youth court
1129 under Section 43-21-451 or shall file a petition in a court of
1130 competent jurisdiction as it pertains to parent or child.
1131 Sheriffs, deputy sheriffs and municipal law enforcement officers
1132 shall be fully authorized to investigate all cases of
1133 nonattendance and unlawful absences by compulsory-school-age
1134 children, and shall be authorized to file a petition with the
1135 youth court under Section 43-21-451 or file a petition or
1136 information in the court of competent jurisdiction as it pertains
1137 to parent or child for violation of this section. The youth court
1138 shall expedite a hearing to make an appropriate adjudication and a
1139 disposition to ensure compliance with the Compulsory School
1140 Attendance Law, and may order the child to enroll or re-enroll in



1141 school. The superintendent of the school district to which the
1142 child is ordered may assign, in his discretion, the child to the
1143 alternative school program of the school established pursuant to
1144 Section 37-13-92.

1145 (8) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and
1146 regulations for the purpose of reprimanding any school
1147 superintendents who fail to timely report unexcused absences under
1148 the provisions of this section.

1149 (9) Notwithstanding any provision or implication herein to
1150 the contrary, it is not the intention of this section to impair
1151 the primary right and the obligation of the parent or parents, or
1152 person or persons in loco parentis to a child, to choose the
1153 proper education and training for such child, and nothing in this
1154 section shall ever be construed to grant, by implication or
1155 otherwise, to the State of Mississippi, any of its officers,
1156 agencies or subdivisions any right or authority to control,
1157 manage, supervise or make any suggestion as to the control,
1158 management or supervision of any private or parochial school or
1159 institution for the education or training of children, of any kind
1160 whatsoever that is not a public school according to the laws of
1161 this state; and this section shall never be construed so as to
1162 grant, by implication or otherwise, any right or authority to any
1163 state agency or other entity to control, manage, supervise,
1164 provide for or affect the operation, management, program,



1165 curriculum, admissions policy or discipline of any such school or
1166 home instruction program.

1167 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
1168 and after July 1, 2023.

