

By: Representative Hines

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 241

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ACT; TO
 2 REQUIRE SCHOOLS TO ANNUALLY REPORT CERTAIN UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY TO
 3 THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT
 4 TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC DATA CONCERNING SUCH UNLAWFUL
 5 ACTIVITY; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE ONGOING STAFF
 6 TRAINING, STRATEGIES AND EVIDENCED-BASED PRACTICES TO CREATE SAFE,
 7 POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT IMPROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT SAFETY
 8 FOR YOUTH, LAW ENFORCEMENT, DISTRICT STAFF AND PARENTS; AND FOR
 9 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) Each school shall annually report the
 12 unlawful activity, as required to be reported under Section
 13 37-11-29, to the local school district. Further, each school
 14 district shall submit quarterly reports to the Mississippi
 15 Department of Education for a minimum of two (2) years beginning
 16 from and after July 1, 2024, of the reported unlawful activity.
 17 The Mississippi Department of Education shall release an annual
 18 report concerning the collected data from the unlawful activity
 19 reports submitted by each school district, and the annual report
 20 shall be made available online via the department's Mississippi
 21 Achievement and Accountability Reporting System (MAARS) database.



22 (2) The required public report of the Mississippi Department
23 of Education shall be released by the department and shall
24 include, but not be limited to, the following:

25 (a) The number of students referred to the juvenile
26 justice system; and

27 (b) The classification of such students on the basis of
28 race and ethnicity.

29 **SECTION 2.** (1) No later than July 1, 2025, the Mississippi
30 Department of Education shall develop and provide evidenced-based
31 training curriculum to support school districts in creating safe,
32 positive learning environments that improve district safety and
33 benefit all youth, law enforcement, district staff and parents.
34 The training curriculum developed under this section shall include
35 on-going staff training in the following areas:

36 (a) Reducing the number of youth referred to law
37 enforcement agencies for unlawful activity defined under Section
38 37-11-29;

39 (b) Alternatives to arrest;

40 (c) Training in cultural competency and the ability to
41 form a positive relationship with students;

42 (d) Methods for improving and coordinating all aspects
43 of law enforcement's role in youth disciplinary matters;

44 (e) Developing new methods for the prevention and
45 reduction of incidents referred to law enforcement agencies;

46 (f) Evidenced-based positive behavior intervention;



47 (g) Restorative justice principals;
48 (h) Implementation of successful, evidenced-based
49 programs, services, and systems that already exist to target
50 improving school discipline.

51 The training curriculum required in this subsection (1) shall
52 be made available on the Mississippi Department of Education's
53 website.

54 (2) In addition, the State Department of Education shall
55 develop strategies for school districts, law enforcement agencies
56 and other community organizations to collaborate on reducing
57 student involvement in the juvenile justice system. Such
58 strategies shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

59 (a) Educating all parties on the unforeseen negative
60 consequences of arresting a youth;

61 (b) Timing of notification of when district staff
62 administrators should be informed before a student is arrested;

63 (c) The types of youth arrests that are
64 counter-productive to community safety and should not occur;

65 (d) Evidenced-based practices for:

66 (i) Alternatives to arresting students and
67 reducing the number of youth entering the criminal justice system;

68 (ii) Improving interactions with youth, parents,
69 law enforcement, administrators and educators;

70 (iii) De-escalation methods, alternatives to the
71 use of force against students and reducing the use of force;



72 (iv) Improving the opportunities for positive
73 interaction with the students;
74 (v) Reducing the opportunities for negative school
75 resource officer interaction with students;
76 (vi) Eliminating the use of zero tolerance
77 policies; and
78 (vii) Maximizing resources in order to increase
79 staff assigned to improving and evaluating student behavior across
80 the district.

81 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
82 and after July 1, 2024.

