

By: Representative Scott

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 256

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE  
2 BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO  
3 ESTABLISH A PROGRAM KNOWN AS THE "DREAM MAKERS PROGRAM" FOR PUBLIC  
4 SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GRADES 7 AND 8; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PURPOSE OF  
5 THE PROGRAM WILL BE TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS  
6 AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS; TO REQUIRE THE PROGRAM TO BE  
7 CONDUCTED AS AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE PROGRAM TO BE  
8 A TWO-YEAR COURSE OF STUDY; TO PRESCRIBE THE ELIGIBILITY  
9 REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN AND THE COMPONENTS TO BE  
10 INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM; TO PRESCRIBE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
11 PARTICIPANTS; TO REQUIRE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO DESIGNATE A  
12 PROGRAM ADVISOR RESPONSIBLE FOR PERFORMING THE NECESSARY SERVICES  
13 TO FACILITATE ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL  
14 DISTRICT TO DESIGNATE A REGIONAL COORDINATOR TO ASSIST THE ADVISOR  
15 IN MEETING GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES; TO REQUIRE THE  
16 UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER TO DESIGNATE A STAFF  
17 MEMBER TO ACT AS PROJECT COORDINATOR BETWEEN THE MEDICAL CENTER  
18 AND THE ADVISOR; TO ESTABLISH THE DREAM MAKERS TRUST FUND IN THE  
19 STATE TREASURY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND  
20 SCHOOLS FOR START-UP COSTS AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING  
21 AND OPERATING THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

22 WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature emphasizes the  
23 importance of fostering high standards for educating the state's  
24 students enrolled in and attending public schools by increasing  
25 efforts to prepare these students for the pursuit of continued  
26 educational success and the professional careers that are obtained  
27 as a result; and



28           WHEREAS, with a nationally growing demand for health care  
29 professionals, the Mississippi Legislature finds it incumbent upon  
30 itself to take proper measures to reduce shortages in the health  
31 care profession, as these shortages directly impact the medical  
32 workforce and the availability of health care throughout our  
33 state; and

34           WHEREAS, with education being the fundamental building block  
35 for the grooming and development of the impressionable minds of  
36 our state's educable children for the educational and career paths  
37 upon which they will embark, there exists a great need for the  
38 implementation of a more rigorously enhanced scientific,  
39 mathematic and language arts curriculum in the public school  
40 setting to facilitate an increased educational capacity in health  
41 care programs; and

42           WHEREAS, to accomplish the pertinent goal of producing a  
43 capable and knowledgeable health care workforce, a collaborative  
44 effort must be undertaken by the state's medical university and  
45 research institution, the State Department of Education and local  
46 school districts to afford students every reasonable opportunity  
47 to explore a career in the field of health care; and

48           WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Mississippi Legislature to  
49 promote the educational accountability of public schools and the  
50 students educated therein through the implementation of  
51 informational, analytical and research-based programs of



52 instruction to heighten public school students' awareness and  
53 interests in health care professions: NOW, THEREFORE,

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

55 **SECTION 1.** (1) Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year,  
56 the State Department of Education, in conjunction with the Board  
57 of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning acting for  
58 and on behalf of the University of Mississippi Medical Center  
59 (UMMC), shall establish and implement a program known as the  
60 "Dream Makers Program" for public school students in Grades 7 and  
61 8, the purpose of which will be to stimulate interest in science  
62 and mathematics and the health care professions, especially among  
63 underserved and underrepresented populations in Mississippi, and  
64 to increase awareness of the urgent need for health care workers  
65 in our state.

66 (2) The program established under subsection (1) of this  
67 section for the introduction of students to a potential career in  
68 the health care professions must be conducted as an after-school  
69 program, during which time students must be provided guidance  
70 about health-related careers and how science and mathematics  
71 pertain to these areas from a licensed school district employee  
72 with adequate certification in science or mathematics, or both.  
73 The State Department of Education and the Board of Trustees of  
74 State Institutions of Higher Learning shall determine the  
75 frequency that the program will meet, as well as the number of



76 meetings required to be facilitated by a UMMC medical student,  
77 resident or health care professional.

78 (3) The program must be a two-year course of study for those  
79 students meeting the eligibility requirements of this subsection.  
80 A student may not be admitted to the program before the end of the  
81 first academic grading period for the student's school district.  
82 Eligibility for participation is limited to students who:

83 (a) Maintain a cumulative 2.5 grade point average on a  
84 4.0 scale;

85 (b) Are recommended by the their science or mathematics  
86 teachers, or both;

87 (c) Have a consistent record of attendance;

88 (d) Display positive attitudes, character and  
89 citizenship; and

90 (e) Express a desire to expand their knowledge of  
91 health care and medicine.

92 However, before any student is accepted for participation  
93 under the criteria of this subsection, that student's parent,  
94 legal guardian or custodian must submit written authorization  
95 agreeing to the student's participation in the program.

96 (4) Each program must include, but not be limited to, the  
97 following components:

98 (a) Dissection of various specimens;

99 (b) Blood pressure and temperature reading instruction;

100 (c) A health care professionals panel;



101 (d) Instructional interaction with UMMC medical  
102 students;

103 (e) Activities planned by individual program advisors;  
104 and

105 (f) An end-of-the-year awards banquet.

106 A program advisor, with the consent of the State Department  
107 of Education, may modify the program under his or her authority to  
108 expand the instructional components offered to the students served  
109 by the program.

110 (5) Students participating in the program are expected to  
111 attend all meetings of the program; a student may not exceed one  
112 (1) excused absence per year in order to remain eligible for  
113 participation in the end-of-the-year awards banquet. Any student  
114 missing in excess of one (1) absence per year may elect, but is  
115 not required, to continue participating in the program.

116 (6) Nothing in this section may be construed to conflict  
117 with or repeal the provisions of law relating to after-school  
118 mentoring programs under Section 37-3-85.

119 **SECTION 2.** (1) Each local school district shall designate a  
120 program advisor, who shall perform the necessary services to  
121 facilitate the execution of the program goals, objectives and  
122 activities by:

123 (a) Providing health care career exposure;



124 (b) Identifying, recruiting, selecting, mentoring and  
125 advising a group of seventh and eighth graders from the school  
126 district to participate in the Dream Makers Program;

127 (c) Providing the minimum number of health care careers  
128 workshops per year, as designated by the State Department of  
129 Education and Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher  
130 Learning, to students in the Dream Makers Program;

131 (d) Providing Dream Makers student leadership workshops  
132 through community entities;

133 (e) Providing an evening presentation to members of the  
134 Dream Makers Program and their families on the costs associated  
135 with higher education and available sources of financial aid;

136 (f) Addressing unique issues relating to the cultural  
137 beliefs of the students from the local school district region  
138 about science and health care professions; and

139 (g) Educating students, families and communities about  
140 health care professions and UMMC.

141 (2) The program advisor shall develop session topics, which  
142 must include areas of health care that are available and relevant  
143 to the community.

144 (3) The local school district shall designate a regional  
145 coordinator for the district, who will assist the program advisor  
146 in securing local health professionals for student workshops. The  
147 regional coordinator also will assist in planning the schedule and



148 activities with the program advisor and local health care  
149 professionals.

150 (4) UMMC shall designate a staff member to act as project  
151 coordinator between UMMC and the program advisor. Throughout the  
152 period of the program, copies of all correspondence, work  
153 products, specifications, estimates and other materials prepared  
154 by the advisor must be directed to the project coordinator and  
155 also to any other UMMC personnel designated by the project  
156 coordinator. Direct contact or communication by the program  
157 advisor with other UMMC offices or any other state or governmental  
158 entity concerning the program may be made only with the prior  
159 knowledge and approval of the project coordinator and the State  
160 Department of Education.

161 (5) (a) The program advisor shall file with the project  
162 coordinator a monthly progress report and schedule for the  
163 program. One (1) copy must be forwarded to UMMC in sufficient  
164 time to be received no later than the tenth day of the month  
165 immediately following the end of the month covered by the report.

166 (b) Each report must include a summary of  
167 accomplishments during the past month, a projection of work to be  
168 accomplished during the month the report is filed, and a  
169 long-range projection of work to be accomplished during the next  
170 three (3) months. Any information required from UMMC and the  
171 dates that information is necessary in order to maintain the  
172 schedule must be specifically identified in these reports.



173 (c) A monthly report and schedule must be submitted  
174 until the program is completed.

175 (d) The schedule must show clearly the reason for any  
176 delay, such as program clarification or revision or delay in  
177 receipt of UMMC information or approvals, and must include the  
178 dates that each delay started and ended.

179 (6) If requested by the project coordinator, the program  
180 advisor shall meet, as soon as possible, with the project  
181 coordinator and other UMMC and State Department of Education staff  
182 to discuss final details relative to commencement of and  
183 performance of this program in the local school district.

184 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is established in the State Treasury a  
185 fund to be known as the "Dream Makers Trust Fund." The purpose of  
186 the fund is to provide financial support to local school districts  
187 and schools for start-up costs and costs associated with  
188 implementing and operating the Dream Makers Program. The fund may  
189 consist of monies obtained from grants from the federal  
190 government, funds made available by the Legislature, and grants,  
191 gifts, devises and donations from any public or private source.  
192 The State Board of Education and the Board of Trustees of State  
193 Institutions of Higher Learning shall administer the fund and may  
194 apply for any grants from the federal government or private  
195 sources.

196 (2) The State Board of Education and the Board of Trustees  
197 of State Institutions of Higher Learning jointly shall adopt rules





198 and regulations necessary for the implementation of this section.  
199 If sufficient funds are available for this purpose, monies from  
200 the Dream Makers Trust Fund must be distributed to qualifying  
201 school districts and schools in accordance with the procedures  
202 established by the State Board of Education and the Board of  
203 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

204         **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
205 and after July 1, 2024.

