

By: Representative Scott

To: Education

## HOUSE BILL NO. 355

1       AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN SCHOOL  
2 DISTRICTS ASSIGNED AN ACCOUNTABILITY RATING OF "C", "D" OR "F" TO  
3 INCLUDE COURSES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND  
4 HOME ECONOMICS; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT  
5 CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND TO COLLABORATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES IN  
6 DEVELOPING COURSE MATERIALS SO THAT THOSE COURSES ARE UNIFORM IN  
7 DISTRICTS ACROSS THE STATE; TO REQUIRE STUDENTS TAKING SUCH  
8 COURSES TO BE AWARDED ELECTIVE CREDITS THAT MAY BE COUNTED TOWARD  
9 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; TO AMEND SECTION 37-13-151, MISSISSIPPI  
10 CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY TO THE PRECEDING PROVISIONS; TO AMEND  
11 SECTION 37-3-2, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE  
12 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EXPERT CITIZEN-TEACHER  
13 LICENSE TO PERSONS TEACHING SUCH COURSES; AND FOR RELATED  
14 PURPOSES.

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

16       SECTION 1. (1) In addition to the curriculum otherwise  
17 required by law or the State Board of Education to be taught in  
18 the public schools of this state, in each school district that is  
19 assigned a "C", "D" or "F" rating under the state accountability  
20 system, the district shall require the following courses to be  
21 taught in the high schools in that district:

- 22               (a) Vocational education;  
23               (b) Agriculture;  
24               (c) Forestry; and



25 (d) Home economics, as required under Section  
26 37-13-151.

27 (2) The State Board of Education shall establish curriculum  
28 standards for the courses required under subsection (1) of this  
29 section. In order to achieve uniformity in the courses in school  
30 districts across the state, the State Department of Education  
31 shall collaborate with appropriate state and federal governmental  
32 agencies and the state institutions of higher learning to develop  
33 materials and programs of study to be utilized by all school  
34 districts required under subsection (1) to offer those courses.

35 (3) Courses required to be taught under subsection (1) of  
36 this section must be considered elective courses for which  
37 academic credit may be earned toward fulfillment of a student's  
38 graduation requirements.

39           **SECTION 2.** Section 37-13-151, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
40 amended as follows:

41                   37-13-151. \* \* \* Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year,  
42                   all local school districts assigned an accountability rating of  
43                   "C", "D" or "F" shall provide programs of education in home  
44                   economics, in Grade 10, 11 or 12 \* \* \*. These programs shall  
45                   contain instruction to prepare students to understand children's  
46                   physical, mental, emotional and social growth and development as  
47                   well as to assume responsibility for their care and guidance, with  
48                   emphasis on nutrition, emotional health and physical health. All  
49                   such programs \* \* \* must utilize the materials and programs of



50 study adopted by the State Department of Education for home  
51 economics courses pursuant to Section 1 of House Bill No. ,  
52 2025 Regular Session.

53       **SECTION 3.** Section 37-3-2, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
54 amended as follows:

55       37-3-2. (1) There is established within the State  
56 Department of Education the Commission on Teacher and  
57 Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and  
58 Development. It shall be the purpose and duty of the commission  
59 to make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding  
60 standards for the certification and licensure and continuing  
61 professional development of those who teach or perform tasks of an  
62 educational nature in the public schools of Mississippi.

63       (2) (a) The commission shall be composed of fifteen (15)  
64 qualified members. The membership of the commission shall be  
65 composed of the following members to be appointed, three (3) from  
66 each of the four (4) congressional districts, as such districts  
67 existed on January 1, 2011, in accordance with the population  
68 calculations determined by the 2010 federal decennial census,  
69 including: four (4) classroom teachers; three (3) school  
70 administrators; one (1) representative of schools of education of  
71 public institutions of higher learning located within the state to  
72 be recommended by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of  
73 Higher Learning; one (1) representative from the schools of  
74 education of independent institutions of higher learning to be



75 recommended by the Board of the Mississippi Association of  
76 Independent Colleges; one (1) representative from public community  
77 and junior colleges located within the state to be recommended by  
78 the Mississippi Community College Board; one (1) local school  
79 board member; and four (4) laypersons. Three (3) members of the  
80 commission, at the sole discretion of the State Board of  
81 Education, shall be appointed from the state at large.

82 (b) All appointments shall be made by the State Board  
83 of Education after consultation with the State Superintendent of  
84 Public Education. The first appointments by the State Board of  
85 Education shall be made as follows: five (5) members shall be  
86 appointed for a term of one (1) year; five (5) members shall be  
87 appointed for a term of two (2) years; and five (5) members shall  
88 be appointed for a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, all  
89 members shall be appointed for a term of four (4) years.

90 (3) The State Board of Education when making appointments  
91 shall designate a chairman. The commission shall meet at least  
92 once every two (2) months or more often if needed. Members of the  
93 commission shall be compensated at a rate of per diem as  
94 authorized by Section 25-3-69 and be reimbursed for actual and  
95 necessary expenses as authorized by Section 25-3-41.

96 (4) (a) An appropriate staff member of the State Department  
97 of Education shall be designated and assigned by the State  
98 Superintendent of Public Education to serve as executive secretary  
99 and coordinator for the commission. No less than two (2) other



100 appropriate staff members of the State Department of Education  
101 shall be designated and assigned by the State Superintendent of  
102 Public Education to serve on the staff of the commission.

103 (b) An Office of Educator Misconduct Evaluations shall  
104 be established within the State Department of Education to assist  
105 the commission in responding to infractions and violations, and in  
106 conducting hearings and enforcing the provisions of subsections  
107 (11), (12), (13), (14) and (15) of this section, and violations of  
108 the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics.

109 (5) It shall be the duty of the commission to:

110 (a) Set standards and criteria, subject to the approval  
111 of the State Board of Education, for all educator preparation  
112 programs in the state;

113 (b) Recommend to the State Board of Education each year  
114 approval or disapproval of each educator preparation program in  
115 the state, subject to a process and schedule determined by the  
116 State Board of Education;

117 (c) Establish, subject to the approval of the State  
118 Board of Education, standards for initial teacher certification  
119 and licensure in all fields;

120 (d) Establish, subject to the approval of the State  
121 Board of Education, standards for the renewal of teacher licenses  
122 in all fields;

123 (e) Review and evaluate objective measures of teacher  
124 performance, such as test scores, which may form part of the  
125 licensure process, and to make recommendations for their use;

126 (f) Review all existing requirements for certification  
127 and licensure;

128 (g) Consult with groups whose work may be affected by  
129 the commission's decisions;

130 (h) Prepare reports from time to time on current  
131 practices and issues in the general area of teacher education and  
132 certification and licensure;

133 (i) Hold hearings concerning standards for teachers'  
134 and administrators' education and certification and licensure with  
135 approval of the State Board of Education;

136 (j) Hire expert consultants with approval of the State  
137 Board of Education;

138 (k) Set up ad hoc committees to advise on specific  
139 areas;

140 (1) Perform such other functions as may fall within  
141 their general charge and which may be delegated to them by the  
142 State Board of Education; and

143 (m) Establish standards, subject to the approval of the  
144 State Board of Education, for supplemental endorsements, provided  
145 that the standards allow teachers as many options as possible to  
146 receive a supplemental endorsement, including, but not limited to,  
147 the option of taking additional coursework or earning at least the



148 minimum qualifying score or higher on the required licensure  
149 subject assessment relevant to the endorsement area for which the  
150 licensure is sought. The subject assessment option shall not  
151 apply to certain subject areas, including, but not limited to,  
152 Early/Primary Education PreK-3, Elementary Education, or Special  
153 Education, except by special approval by the State Board of  
154 Education.

155 (6) (a) **Standard License - Approved Program Route.** An  
156 educator entering the school system of Mississippi for the first  
157 time and meeting all requirements as established by the State  
158 Board of Education shall be granted a standard five-year license.  
159 Persons who possess two (2) years of classroom experience as an  
160 assistant teacher or who have taught for one (1) year in an  
161 accredited public or private school shall be allowed to fulfill  
162 student teaching requirements under the supervision of a qualified  
163 participating teacher approved by an accredited college of  
164 education. The local school district in which the assistant  
165 teacher is employed shall compensate such assistant teachers at  
166 the required salary level during the period of time such  
167 individual is completing student teaching requirements.

168 Applicants for a standard license shall submit to the department:

169 (i) An application on a department form;  
170 (ii) An official transcript of completion of a  
171 teacher education program approved by the department or a  
172 nationally accredited program, subject to the following:



173 Licensure to teach in Mississippi prekindergarten through  
174 kindergarten classrooms shall require completion of a teacher  
175 education program or a Bachelor of Science degree with child  
176 development emphasis from a program accredited by the American  
177 Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) or by the  
178 National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or by  
179 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education  
180 (NCATE). Licensure to teach in Mississippi kindergarten, for  
181 those applicants who have completed a teacher education program,  
182 and in Grade 1 through Grade 4 shall require the completion of an  
183 interdisciplinary program of studies. Licenses for Grades 4  
184 through 8 shall require the completion of an interdisciplinary  
185 program of studies with two (2) or more areas of concentration.  
186 Licensure to teach in Mississippi Grades 7 through 12 shall  
187 require a major in an academic field other than education, or a  
188 combination of disciplines other than education. Students  
189 preparing to teach a subject shall complete a major in the  
190 respective subject discipline. All applicants for standard  
191 licensure shall demonstrate that such person's college preparation  
192 in those fields was in accordance with the standards set forth by  
193 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education  
194 (NCATE) or the National Association of State Directors of Teacher  
195 Education and Certification (NASDTEC) or, for those applicants who  
196 have a Bachelor of Science degree with child development emphasis,  
197 the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS).



198 Effective July 1, 2016, for initial elementary education  
199 licensure, a teacher candidate must earn a passing score on a  
200 rigorous test of scientifically research-based reading instruction  
201 and intervention and data-based decision-making principles as  
202 approved by the State Board of Education;

203 (iii) A copy of test scores evidencing  
204 satisfactory completion of nationally administered examinations of  
205 achievement, such as the Educational Testing Service's teacher  
206 testing examinations;

207 (iv) Any other document required by the State  
208 Board of Education; and

209 (v) From and after July 1, 2020, no teacher  
210 candidate shall be licensed to teach in Mississippi who did not  
211 meet the following criteria for entrance into an approved teacher  
212 education program:

213 1. An ACT Score of twenty-one (21) (or SAT  
214 equivalent); or

215 2. Achieve a qualifying passing score on the  
216 Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators examination as  
217 established by the State Board of Education; or

218 3. A minimum GPA of 3.0 on coursework prior  
219 to admission to an approved teacher education program.

220 (b) (i) **Standard License - Nontraditional Teaching**  
221 **Route.** From and after July 1, 2020, no teacher candidate shall be

222 licensed to teach in Mississippi under the alternate route who did  
223 not meet the following criteria:

224 1. An ACT Score of twenty-one (21) (or SAT  
225 equivalent); or

226 2. Achieve a qualifying passing score on the  
227 Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators examination as  
228 established by the State Board of Education; or

229 3. A minimum GPA of 3.0 on coursework prior  
230 to admission to an approved teacher education program.

231 (ii) Beginning July 1, 2020, an individual who has  
232 attained a passing score on the Praxis Core Academic Skills for  
233 Educators or an ACT Score of twenty-one (21) (or SAT equivalent)  
234 or a minimum GPA of 3.0 on coursework prior to admission to an  
235 approved teacher education program and a passing score on the  
236 Praxis Subject Assessment in the requested area of endorsement may  
237 apply for admission to the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI)  
238 program to teach students in Grades 7 through 12 if the individual  
239 meets the requirements of this paragraph (b). The State Board of  
240 Education shall adopt rules requiring that teacher preparation  
241 institutions which provide the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI)  
242 program for the preparation of nontraditional teachers shall meet  
243 the standards and comply with the provisions of this paragraph.

244 1. The Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI)  
245 shall include an intensive eight-week, nine-semester-hour summer  
246 program or a curriculum of study in which the student matriculates



247 in the fall or spring semester, which shall include, but not be  
248 limited to, instruction in education, effective teaching  
249 strategies, classroom management, state curriculum requirements,  
250 planning and instruction, instructional methods and pedagogy,  
251 using test results to improve instruction, and a one (1) semester  
252 three-hour supervised internship to be completed while the teacher  
253 is employed as a full-time teacher intern in a local school  
254 district. The TMI shall be implemented on a pilot program basis,  
255 with courses to be offered at up to four (4) locations in the  
256 state, with one (1) TMI site to be located in each of the three  
257 (3) Mississippi Supreme Court districts.

258                   2. The school sponsoring the teacher intern  
259 shall enter into a written agreement with the institution  
260 providing the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) program, under  
261 terms and conditions as agreed upon by the contracting parties,  
262 providing that the school district shall provide teacher interns  
263 seeking a nontraditional provisional teaching license with a  
264 one-year classroom teaching experience. The teacher intern shall  
265 successfully complete the one (1) semester three-hour intensive  
266 internship in the school district during the semester immediately  
267 following successful completion of the TMI and prior to the end of  
268 the one-year classroom teaching experience.

269                   3. Upon completion of the nine-semester-hour  
270 TMI or the fall or spring semester option, the individual shall  
271 submit his transcript to the commission for provisional licensure

272 of the intern teacher, and the intern teacher shall be issued a  
273 provisional teaching license by the commission, which will allow  
274 the individual to legally serve as a teacher while the person  
275 completes a nontraditional teacher preparation internship program.

276 4. During the semester of internship in the  
277 school district, the teacher preparation institution shall monitor  
278 the performance of the intern teacher. The school district that  
279 employs the provisional teacher shall supervise the provisional  
280 teacher during the teacher's intern year of employment under a  
281 nontraditional provisional license, and shall, in consultation  
282 with the teacher intern's mentor at the school district of  
283 employment, submit to the commission a comprehensive evaluation of  
284 the teacher's performance sixty (60) days prior to the expiration  
285 of the nontraditional provisional license. If the comprehensive  
286 evaluation establishes that the provisional teacher intern's  
287 performance fails to meet the standards of the approved  
288 nontraditional teacher preparation internship program, the  
289 individual shall not be approved for a standard license.

290 5. An individual issued a provisional  
291 teaching license under this nontraditional route shall  
292 successfully complete, at a minimum, a one-year beginning teacher  
293 mentoring and induction program administered by the employing  
294 school district with the assistance of the State Department of  
295 Education.

6. Upon successful completion of the TMI and the internship provisional license period, applicants for a Standard License - Nontraditional Route shall submit to the commission a transcript of successful completion of the twelve (12) semester hours required in the internship program, and the employing school district shall submit to the commission a recommendation for standard licensure of the intern. If the school district recommends licensure, the applicant shall be issued a Standard License - Nontraditional Route which shall be valid for a five-year period and be renewable.

318 (iii) Implementation of the TMI program provided  
319 for under this paragraph (b) shall be contingent upon the  
320 availability of funds appropriated specifically for such purpose



321 by the Legislature. Such implementation of the TMI program may  
322 not be deemed to prohibit the State Board of Education from  
323 developing and implementing additional alternative route teacher  
324 licensure programs, as deemed appropriate by the board. The  
325 emergency certification program in effect prior to July 1, 2002,  
326 shall remain in effect.

327 (iv) A Standard License - Approved Program Route  
328 shall be issued for a five-year period, and may be renewed.  
329 Recognizing teaching as a profession, a hiring preference shall be  
330 granted to persons holding a Standard License - Approved Program  
331 Route or Standard License - Nontraditional Teaching Route over  
332 persons holding any other license.

333 (c) **Special License - Expert Citizen.** In order to  
334 allow a school district to offer specialized or technical courses,  
335 including high school courses in vocational education,  
336 agriculture, forestry and home economics which are required to be  
337 taught in certain school districts under Section 1 of House Bill  
338 No. , 2025 Regular Session, the State Department of Education,  
339 in accordance with rules and regulations established by the State  
340 Board of Education, may grant a five-year expert citizen-teacher  
341 license to local qualified persons, including business or other  
342 professional personnel to teach in a public school or nonpublic  
343 school accredited or approved by the state. Such person shall be  
344 required to have a high school diploma, an industry-recognized  
345 certification related to the subject area in which they are



346 teaching and a minimum of five (5) years of relevant experience  
347 but shall not be required to hold an associate or bachelor's  
348 degree, provided that he or she possesses the minimum  
349 qualifications required for his or her profession, and may begin  
350 teaching upon his employment by the local school board and  
351 licensure by the Mississippi Department of Education. If a school  
352 board hires a career technical education pathway instructor who  
353 does not have an industry certification in his or her area of  
354 expertise but does have the required experience, the school board  
355 shall spread their decision on the minutes at their next meeting  
356 and provide a detailed explanation for why they hired the  
357 instructor. Such instructor shall present the minutes of the  
358 school board to the State Department of Education when he or she  
359 applies for an expert citizen license. The board shall adopt  
360 rules and regulations to administer the expert citizen-teacher  
361 license. A Special License - Expert Citizen may be renewed in  
362 accordance with the established rules and regulations of the State  
363 Department of Education.

364 (d) **Special License - Nonrenewable.** The State Board of  
365 Education is authorized to establish rules and regulations to  
366 allow those educators not meeting requirements in paragraph (a),  
367 (b) or (c) of this subsection (6) to be licensed for a period of  
368 not more than three (3) years, except by special approval of the  
369 State Board of Education.



370 (e) **Nonlicensed Teaching Personnel.** A nonlicensed  
371 person may teach for a maximum of three (3) periods per teaching  
372 day in a public school district or a nonpublic school  
373 accredited/approved by the state. Such person shall submit to the  
374 department a transcript or record of his education and experience  
375 which substantiates his preparation for the subject to be taught  
376 and shall meet other qualifications specified by the commission  
377 and approved by the State Board of Education. In no case shall  
378 any local school board hire nonlicensed personnel as authorized  
379 under this paragraph in excess of five percent (5%) of the total  
380 number of licensed personnel in any single school.

381 (f) **Special License - Transitional Bilingual Education.**

382 Beginning July 1, 2003, the commission shall grant special

383 licenses to teachers of transitional bilingual education who

384 possess such qualifications as are prescribed in this section.

385 Teachers of transitional bilingual education shall be compensated

386 by local school boards at not less than one (1) step on the

387 regular salary schedule applicable to permanent teachers licensed

388 under this section. The commission shall grant special licenses

389 to teachers of transitional bilingual education who present the

390 commission with satisfactory evidence that they (i) possess a

391 speaking and reading ability in a language, other than English, in

392 which bilingual education is offered and communicative skills in

393 English; (ii) are in good health and sound moral character; (iii)

394 possess a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree in teacher



395 education from an accredited institution of higher education; (iv)  
396 meet such requirements as to courses of study, semester hours  
397 therein, experience and training as may be required by the  
398 commission; and (v) are legally present in the United States and  
399 possess legal authorization for employment. A teacher of  
400 transitional bilingual education serving under a special license  
401 shall be under an exemption from standard licensure if he achieves  
402 the requisite qualifications therefor. Two (2) years of service  
403 by a teacher of transitional bilingual education under such an  
404 exemption shall be credited to the teacher in acquiring a Standard  
405 Educator License. Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to  
406 prohibit a local school board from employing a teacher licensed in  
407 an appropriate field as approved by the State Department of  
408 Education to teach in a program in transitional bilingual  
409 education.

410 (g) In the event any school district meets the highest  
411 accreditation standards as defined by the State Board of Education  
412 in the accountability system, the State Board of Education, in its  
413 discretion, may exempt such school district from any restrictions  
414 in paragraph (e) relating to the employment of nonlicensed  
415 teaching personnel.

416 (h) **Highly Qualified Teachers.** Beginning July 1, 2006,  
417 any teacher from any state meeting the federal definition of  
418 highly qualified, as described in the No Child Left Behind Act,



419 must be granted a standard five-year license by the State  
420 Department of Education.

421                   **(7) Administrator License.** The State Board of Education is  
422 authorized to establish rules and regulations and to administer  
423 the licensure process of the school administrators in the State of  
424 Mississippi. There will be four (4) categories of administrator  
425 licensure with exceptions only through special approval of the  
426 State Board of Education.

427                   **(a) Administrator License - Nonpracticing.** Those  
428 educators holding administrative endorsement but having no  
429 administrative experience or not serving in an administrative  
430 position on January 15, 1997.

431                   **(b) Administrator License - Entry Level.** Those  
432 educators holding administrative endorsement and having met the  
433 department's qualifications to be eligible for employment in a  
434 Mississippi school district. Administrator License - Entry Level  
435 shall be issued for a five-year period and shall be nonrenewable.

436                   **(c) Standard Administrator License - Career Level.** An  
437 administrator who has met all the requirements of the department  
438 for standard administrator licensure.

439                   **(d) Administrator License - Nontraditional Route.** The  
440 board may establish a nontraditional route for licensing  
441 administrative personnel. Such nontraditional route for  
442 administrative licensure shall be available for persons holding,  
443 but not limited to, a master of business administration degree, a



444 master of public administration degree, a master of public  
445 planning and policy degree or a doctor of jurisprudence degree  
446 from an accredited college or university, with five (5) years of  
447 administrative or supervisory experience. Successful completion  
448 of the requirements of alternate route licensure for  
449 administrators shall qualify the person for a standard  
450 administrator license.

451       Individuals seeking school administrator licensure under  
452 paragraph (b), (c) or (d) shall successfully complete a training  
453 program and an assessment process prescribed by the State Board of  
454 Education. All applicants for school administrator licensure  
455 shall meet all requirements prescribed by the department under  
456 paragraph (b), (c) or (d), and the cost of the assessment process  
457 required shall be paid by the applicant.

458       (8) **Reciprocity.** The department shall grant a standard  
459 five-year license to any individual who possesses a valid standard  
460 license from another state, or another country or political  
461 subdivision thereof, within a period of twenty-one (21) days from  
462 the date of a completed application. The issuance of a license by  
463 reciprocity to a military-trained applicant, military spouse or  
464 person who establishes residence in this state shall be subject to  
465 the provisions of Section 73-50-1 or 73-50-2, as applicable.

466       (9) **Renewal and Reinstatement of Licenses.** The State Board  
467 of Education is authorized to establish rules and regulations for  
468 the renewal and reinstatement of educator and administrator



469   licenses. Effective May 15, 1997, the valid standard license held  
470   by an educator shall be extended five (5) years beyond the  
471   expiration date of the license in order to afford the educator  
472   adequate time to fulfill new renewal requirements established  
473   pursuant to this subsection. An educator completing a master of  
474   education, educational specialist or doctor of education degree in  
475   May 1997 for the purpose of upgrading the educator's license to a  
476   higher class shall be given this extension of five (5) years plus  
477   five (5) additional years for completion of a higher degree. For  
478   all license types with a current valid expiration date of June 30,  
479   2021, the State Department of Education shall grant a one-year  
480   extension to June 30, 2022. Beginning July 1, 2022, and  
481   thereafter, applicants for licensure renewal shall meet all  
482   requirements in effect on the date that the complete application  
483   is received by the State Department of Education.

484           (10) All controversies involving the issuance, revocation,  
485   suspension or any change whatsoever in the licensure of an  
486   educator required to hold a license shall be initially heard in a  
487   hearing *de novo*, by the commission or by a subcommittee  
488   established by the commission and composed of commission members,  
489   or by a hearing officer retained and appointed by the commission,  
490   for the purpose of holding hearings. Any complaint seeking the  
491   denial of issuance, revocation or suspension of a license shall be  
492   by sworn affidavit filed with the Commission on Teacher and  
493   Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and



494 Development. The decision thereon by the commission, its  
495 subcommittee or hearing officer, shall be final, unless the  
496 aggrieved party shall appeal to the State Board of Education,  
497 within ten (10) days, of the decision of the commission, its  
498 subcommittee or hearing officer. An appeal to the State Board of  
499 Education shall be perfected upon filing a notice of the appeal  
500 and by the prepayment of the costs of the preparation of the  
501 record of proceedings by the commission, its subcommittee or  
502 hearing officer. An appeal shall be on the record previously made  
503 before the commission, its subcommittee or hearing officer, unless  
504 otherwise provided by rules and regulations adopted by the board.  
505 The decision of the commission, its subcommittee or hearing  
506 officer shall not be disturbed on appeal if supported by  
507 substantial evidence, was not arbitrary or capricious, within the  
508 authority of the commission, and did not violate some statutory or  
509 constitutional right. The State Board of Education in its  
510 authority may reverse, or remand with instructions, the decision  
511 of the commission, its subcommittee or hearing officer. The  
512 decision of the State Board of Education shall be final.

513 (11) (a) The State Board of Education, acting through the  
514 commission, may deny an application for any teacher or  
515 administrator license for one or more of the following:  
516 (i) Lack of qualifications which are prescribed by  
517 law or regulations adopted by the State Board of Education;

518 (ii) The applicant has a physical, emotional or  
519 mental disability that renders the applicant unfit to perform the  
520 duties authorized by the license, as certified by a licensed  
521 psychologist or psychiatrist;

527 (iv) Fraud or deceit committed by the applicant in  
528 securing or attempting to secure such certification and license;

529 (v) Failing or refusing to furnish reasonable  
530 evidence of identification;

531 (vi) The applicant has been convicted, has pled  
532 guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a felony, as  
533 defined by federal or state law. For purposes of this  
534 subparagraph (vi) of this paragraph (a), a "guilty plea" include  
535 a plea of guilty, entry of a plea of nolo contendere, or entry of  
536 an order granting pretrial or judicial diversion;

537 (vii) The applicant or licensee is on probation or  
538 post-release supervision for a felony or conviction, as defined by  
539 federal or state law. However, this disqualification expires upon  
540 the end of the probationary or post-release supervision period.

541 (b) The State Board of Education, acting through the  
542 commission, shall deny an application for any teacher or

543 administrator license, or immediately revoke the current teacher  
544 or administrator license, for one or more of the following:

545 (i) If the applicant or licensee has been  
546 convicted, has pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to  
547 a sex offense as defined by federal or state law. For purposes of  
548 this subparagraph (i) of this paragraph (b), a "guilty plea"  
549 includes a plea of guilty, entry of a plea of nolo contendere, or  
550 entry of an order granting pretrial or judicial diversion;

551 (ii) The applicant or licensee is on probation or  
552 post-release supervision for a sex offense conviction, as defined  
553 by federal or state law;

554 (iii) The license holder has fondled a student as  
555 described in Section 97-5-23, or had any type of sexual  
556 involvement with a student as described in Section 97-3-95; or

557 (iv) The license holder has failed to report  
558 sexual involvement of a school employee with a student as required  
559 by Section 97-5-24.

560 (12) The State Board of Education, acting through the  
561 commission, may revoke, suspend or refuse to renew any teacher or  
562 administrator license for specified periods of time or may place  
563 on probation, reprimand a licensee, or take other disciplinary  
564 action with regard to any license issued under this chapter for  
565 one or more of the following:



566 (a) Breach of contract or abandonment of employment may  
567 result in the suspension of the license for one (1) school year as  
568 provided in Section 37-9-57;

569 (b) Obtaining a license by fraudulent means shall  
570 result in immediate suspension and continued suspension for one  
571 (1) year after correction is made;

572 (c) Suspension or revocation of a certificate or  
573 license by another state shall result in immediate suspension or  
574 revocation and shall continue until records in the prior state  
575 have been cleared;

576 (d) The license holder has been convicted, has pled  
577 guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a felony, as  
578 defined by federal or state law. For purposes of this paragraph,  
579 a "guilty plea" includes a plea of guilty, entry of a plea of nolo  
580 contendere, or entry of an order granting pretrial or judicial  
581 diversion;

582 (e) The license holder knowingly and willfully  
583 committing any of the acts affecting validity of mandatory uniform  
584 test results as provided in Section 37-16-4(1);

585 (f) The license holder has engaged in unethical conduct  
586 relating to an educator/student relationship as identified by the  
587 State Board of Education in its rules;

588 (g) The license holder served as superintendent or  
589 principal in a school district during the time preceding and/or



590 that resulted in the Governor declaring a state of emergency and  
591 the State Board of Education appointing a conservator;

592 (h) The license holder submitted a false certification  
593 to the State Department of Education that a statewide test was  
594 administered in strict accordance with the Requirements of the  
595 Mississippi Statewide Assessment System; or

596 (i) The license holder has failed to comply with the  
597 Procedures for Reporting Infractions as promulgated by the  
598 commission and approved by the State Board of Education pursuant  
599 to subsection (15) of this section.

600 For purposes of this subsection, probation shall be defined  
601 as a length of time determined by the commission, its subcommittee  
602 or hearing officer, and based on the severity of the offense in  
603 which the license holder shall meet certain requirements as  
604 prescribed by the commission, its subcommittee or hearing officer.  
605 Failure to complete the requirements in the time specified shall  
606 result in immediate suspension of the license for one (1) year.

607 (13) (a) Dismissal or suspension of a licensed employee by  
608 a local school board pursuant to Section 37-9-59 may result in the  
609 suspension or revocation of a license for a length of time which  
610 shall be determined by the commission and based upon the severity  
611 of the offense.

612 (b) Any offense committed or attempted in any other  
613 state shall result in the same penalty as if committed or  
614 attempted in this state.

615 (c) A person may voluntarily surrender a license. The  
616 surrender of such license may result in the commission  
617 recommending any of the above penalties without the necessity of a  
618 hearing. However, any such license which has voluntarily been  
619 surrendered by a licensed employee may only be reinstated by a  
620 majority vote of all members of the commission present at the  
621 meeting called for such purpose.

(14) (a) A person whose license has been suspended or surrendered on any grounds except criminal grounds may petition for reinstatement of the license after one (1) year from the date of suspension or surrender, or after one-half (1/2) of the suspended or surrendered time has lapsed, whichever is greater. A person whose license has been suspended or revoked on any grounds or violations under subsection (12) of this section may be reinstated automatically or approved for a reinstatement hearing, upon submission of a written request to the commission. A license suspended, revoked or surrendered on criminal grounds may be reinstated upon petition to the commission filed after expiration of the sentence and parole or probationary period imposed upon conviction. A revoked, suspended or surrendered license may be reinstated upon satisfactory showing of evidence of rehabilitation. The commission shall require all who petition for reinstatement to furnish evidence satisfactory to the commission of good character, good mental, emotional and physical health and such other evidence as the commission may deem necessary to



640 establish the petitioner's rehabilitation and fitness to perform  
641 the duties authorized by the license.

642 (b) A person whose license expires while under  
643 investigation by the Office of Educator Misconduct for an alleged  
644 violation may not be reinstated without a hearing before the  
645 commission if required based on the results of the investigation.

646 (15) Reporting procedures and hearing procedures for dealing  
647 with infractions under this section shall be promulgated by the  
648 commission, subject to the approval of the State Board of  
649 Education. The revocation or suspension of a license shall be  
650 effected at the time indicated on the notice of suspension or  
651 revocation. The commission shall immediately notify the  
652 superintendent of the school district or school board where the  
653 teacher or administrator is employed of any disciplinary action  
654 and also notify the teacher or administrator of such revocation or  
655 suspension and shall maintain records of action taken. The State  
656 Board of Education may reverse or remand with instructions any  
657 decision of the commission, its subcommittee or hearing officer  
658 regarding a petition for reinstatement of a license, and any such  
659 decision of the State Board of Education shall be final.

660 (16) An appeal from the action of the State Board of  
661 Education in denying an application, revoking or suspending a  
662 license or otherwise disciplining any person under the provisions  
663 of this section shall be filed in the Chancery Court of the First  
664 Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, on the record



665 made, including a verbatim transcript of the testimony at the  
666 hearing. The appeal shall be filed within thirty (30) days after  
667 notification of the action of the board is mailed or served and  
668 the proceedings in chancery court shall be conducted as other  
669 matters coming before the court. The appeal shall be perfected  
670 upon filing notice of the appeal and by the prepayment of all  
671 costs, including the cost of preparation of the record of the  
672 proceedings by the State Board of Education, and the filing of a  
673 bond in the sum of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) conditioned that  
674 if the action of the board be affirmed by the chancery court, the  
675 applicant or license holder shall pay the costs of the appeal and  
676 the action of the chancery court.

677 (17) All such programs, rules, regulations, standards and  
678 criteria recommended or authorized by the commission shall become  
679 effective upon approval by the State Board of Education as  
680 designated by appropriate orders entered upon the minutes thereof.

681 (18) The granting of a license shall not be deemed a  
682 property right nor a guarantee of employment in any public school  
683 district. A license is a privilege indicating minimal eligibility  
684 for teaching in the public school districts of Mississippi. This  
685 section shall in no way alter or abridge the authority of local  
686 school districts to require greater qualifications or standards of  
687 performance as a prerequisite of initial or continued employment  
688 in such districts.

(19) In addition to the reasons specified in subsections (12) and (13) of this section, the board shall be authorized to suspend the license of any licensee for being out of compliance with an order for support, as defined in Section 93-11-153. The procedure for suspension of a license for being out of compliance with an order for support, and the procedure for the reissuance or reinstatement of a license suspended for that purpose, and the payment of any fees for the reissuance or reinstatement of a license suspended for that purpose, shall be governed by Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, as the case may be. Actions taken by the board in suspending a license when required by Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163 are not actions from which an appeal may be taken under this section. Any appeal of a license suspension that is required by Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163 shall be taken in accordance with the appeal procedure specified in Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, as the case may be, rather than the procedure specified in this section. If there is any conflict between any provision of Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163 and any provision of this chapter, the provisions of Section 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, as the case may be, shall control.

709 (20) The Department of Education shall grant and renew all  
710 licenses and certifications of teachers and administrators within  
711 twenty-one (21) days from the date of a completed application if  
712 the applicant has otherwise met all established requirements for  
713 the license or certification.



714           **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
715 and after July 1, 2025.

