

By: Representatives Porter, Nelson, McCarty

To: Education;
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 574

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GRANT
2 PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOWING SCHOOLS OR SCHOOL DISTRICTS
3 ESTABLISHED AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TO CREATE COMMUNITY
4 SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL
5 ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE FUNDS SHALL BE
6 DISTRIBUTED TO EACH DISTRICT OF INNOVATION APPROVED BY THE STATE
7 BOARD OF EDUCATION; TO PROVIDE CERTAIN DISTRIBUTION FORMULAS FOR
8 ALLOCATING THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR THE GRANT PROGRAM; TO AMEND
9 SECTIONS 37-179-1 AND 37-179-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
10 AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF
11 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION; TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS RELATED TO
12 "DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION"; TO LIMIT THE INITIAL APPROVAL AND
13 SUBSEQUENT RENEWALS OF DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION TO FIVE-YEAR
14 PERIODS; TO DIRECT THE BOARD TO PROMULGATE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
15 AND REGULATIONS TO PRESCRIBE THE CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES TO BE
16 USED BY LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO BE APPROVED AS A DISTRICT OF
17 INNOVATION; TO SPECIFY THE CRITERIA TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE
18 ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS; TO PRESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A
19 DISTRICT TO BE A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION APPLICANT; TO PRESCRIBE
20 THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS WITH WHICH SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION WITHIN
21 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION MUST COMPLY; TO IDENTIFY AREAS IN WHICH
22 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION MAY REQUEST APPROVAL OF PRACTICES THAT ARE
23 DIFFERENT THAN CURRENT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS; AND FOR RELATED
24 PURPOSES.

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

26 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the Mississippi
27 Community Schools Grant Program which shall be administered by the
28 State Department of Education.



29 (2) In order to assist districts of innovation in the
30 creation of community schools, as established under the provisions
31 of Sections 37-179-1 and 37-179-3, funds from the program shall be
32 distributed, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to each
33 district of innovation approved by the State Board of Education
34 which desires to expand in innovation practices by developing
35 community schools.

36 (3) The department shall distribute grants to each eligible
37 district of innovation in the minimum amount of Two Hundred
38 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00). A district of innovation may be
39 awarded additional grant funds as follows:

40 (a) Ten percent (10%) of the annual base student cost
41 under the adequate education fund for each student enrolled in the
42 community school program, according to total district enrollment
43 data submitted to the department by the local school district;

44 (b) Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) shall be
45 allocated to a district of innovation located within a local
46 school district with an identified student percentage of
47 twenty-five (25%) of all students enrolled in the districts during
48 the prior school year having received free lunch under the
49 National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; and

50 (c) In addition to the funds distributed in paragraphs
51 (a) and (b) of this subsection, any remaining funds appropriated
52 for the purposes of this grant program shall be distributed to
53 districts of innovation receiving funds in paragraphs (a) and (b)



of this subsection on a pro rata amount by dividing the total amount of the remaining funds by the total number of students enrolled in all districts of innovation in the state, regardless as to whether such district of innovation has developed a community schools component.

(4) The department shall adopt such reasonable rules as necessary for the administration of the program, but shall not place additional qualification requirements on school districts other than the minimum requirements in this section.

SECTION 2. Section 37-179-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-179-1. (1) For purposes of this chapter, the following terms shall have the meaning ascribed herein, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) "District of innovation" means a district that has developed a plan of innovation in compliance with this section and has been approved by the State Board of Education to be exempted from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions to improve the educational performance of students within the district;

(b) "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to existing instructional and administrative practices intended to improve student learning and student performance of all students, including community schools;



(c) "School of innovation" means a school that voluntarily participates in a district of innovation plan to improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local school board policies, selected provisions of rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and selected sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as permitted under this section and Section 37-179-3;

(d) "Board" means the State Board of Education;

(e) "Department" means the State Department of Education.

(f) "Community school" means a traditional district public school that partners with community-based organizations to coordinate academic, social, physical health and mental health services, to reduce barriers to learning and improve education outcomes. Community schools include all five (5) of the following:

(i) Integrated student supports coordinated by a community school director, which may include, but are not limited to:

1. Medical, dental, vision care and mental health services; or

2. Counselors to assist with housing, transportation, nutrition, or criminal justice issues;

(ii) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities including before school, after school, weekend and



summer programs, which provide additional academic instruction,
individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and
learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and
community problem solving, and which may include, but are not
limited to:

1. Art, music, drama and creative writing;
2. Hands-on experience with engineering or
science;
3. Tutoring and homework help; and
4. Recreational programs that enhance and are
consistent with the school's curriculum;

(iii) Active family and community engagement which
brings students' families and the community into the school as
partners in children's education and makes the school a
neighborhood hub, providing adults with educational opportunities
they want, including, but not limited to:

1. English as a second language class;
2. Citizenship preparation;
3. Computer skills;
4. Art;
5. GED classes; or
6. Other programs that bring community
members into the building for meetings or events;

(iv) Include, as a meaningful part of its
curriculum, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics



(STEM) program component commensurate and appropriate to the grade level of the school; and

(v) Collaborative leadership and practices, which build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies which shall, at a minimum, include:

1. A school-based leadership team;
2. A community school director; and
3. A community-wide leadership team, which may include, but not limited to:

A. Other leadership and governance teams;
B. Teacher learning communities; and
C. Other staff to manage the multiple complex, joint work of school and community organizations.

(g) "Community School Director" means a person who:

(i) Is a full-time staff member serving one (1) eligible school;

(ii) Is responsible for the identification, implementation and coordination of integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement and collaborative leadership and practices;

(iii) Serves as a member of the school-based leadership team;



(iv) Serves as the lead for the needs and assets assessment and community school plan; and

(v) Coordinates the needs and assets assessment and stakeholder-driven approach to problem-solving and continuous improvement.

(2) The State Board of Education is authorized to approve districts of innovation for the purposes of improving students' educational performance. Districts of innovation shall be provided flexibility from selected board regulations, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972, and local school board policies for school administrators, teachers and staff to meet the diverse needs of students. A low-performing school or school district managing the transition of multiple schools to the community school model shall be provided a three-year transition before becoming eligible for state takeover. The initial approval of a district of innovation shall be for a five-year period. Each renewal of a district of innovation shall not exceed five (5) years and shall comply with administrative regulations promulgated by the board pursuant to subsection (4) of this section.

(3) The board shall promulgate administrative rules and regulations to prescribe the conditions and procedures to be used by a local school board to be approved as a district of innovation and shall publish the same on or before December 31, 2015.

(4) Administrative rules and regulations promulgated by the board under subsection (3) of this section shall specify:



177 (a) The regulatory areas which may be exempted or
178 modified if approved by the board, except as provided in Section
179 37-179-3(2), and in addition to those areas identified in Section
180 37-179-3(3);

181 (b) The application, plan review, approval and
182 amendment process for a district;

183 (c) Timelines for initial approval as a district of
184 innovation, the renewal process and ongoing evaluative procedures
185 required of the district;

186 (d) Acceptable documentation of a critical mass of
187 parental, community, educator and business support and capacity to
188 effect a change;

189 (e) Evidence of teacher collaboration and shared
190 leadership within the district and the schools to be designated as
191 schools of innovation;

192 (f) The process of revocation of the designation of
193 district of innovation or school of innovation;

194 (g) Reporting and oversight responsibilities of the
195 district and the State Department of Education;

196 (h) The financial detail relating to budgets of schools
197 and evidence of sound fiscal management practices;

198 (i) Acceptable areas of emphasis for innovation;

199 (j) Acceptable documentation of job-embedded
200 professional development within the proposed innovation design;

201 and



(k) Other components deemed necessary to implement this section and Section 37-179-3.

SECTION 3. Section 37-179-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-179-3. (1) A district which is an applicant to be designated as a district of innovation under Section 37-179-1 shall:

(a) Establish goals and performance targets for the district of innovation proposal, which may include:

(i) Reducing socio-economic achievement gaps among groups of public school students by expanding learning experiences for students who are identified as academically low-achieving;

(ii) Increasing pupil learning through the implementation of high, rigorous standards for pupil performance;

(iii) Increasing student attendance rates as well as reducing chronic absenteeism;

(iv) Decreasing rates of student suspensions and expulsions;

(* * * y) Increasing the participation of students in various curriculum components and instructional components within selected schools to enhance at each grade level;

(* * * vi) Increasing the number of students who are college and career-ready and who have access to dual-enrollment courses;



(vii) Increasing student college preparation to enter secondary education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(* * *viii) Motivating students at different grade levels by offering more curriculum choices and student learning opportunities to parents and students within the district;

(b) Make public its goals and performance targets and, after five (5) years, share the performance target results with members of the Mississippi House and Senate Education Committees, as well as with the general public;

(* * *c) Identify changes needed from a comprehensive needs and assets assessment in the district and schools to lead to better prepared students for success in college, career and life * * *;

(* * *d) Have a district wide plan of innovation that describes and justifies which schools and innovative practices will be incorporated;

(* * *e) Provide documentation of community, educator, parental, and the local board's support of the proposed innovations;

(* * *f) Provide detailed information regarding the rationale of requests for waivers from Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972, which relate to the elementary and secondary education of public school students, and administrative regulations, and



exemptions for selected schools regarding waivers of local school board policies;

(* * *g) Document the fiscal and human resources the board will provide throughout the term of the implementation of the innovations within its plan; and

(* * *h) Provide other materials as required by the department in compliance with the board's administrative regulations and application procedures.

(2) The district and all schools participating in a district's innovation plan shall:

(a) Ensure the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements as are applied to all public schools;

(b) Ensure students meet compulsory attendance requirements under Sections 37-13-91 and 37-13-92;

(c) Ensure that high school course offerings meet or exceed the minimum required under Sections 37-16-7 and 37-3-49, for high school graduation or meet early graduation requirements that may be enacted by the Mississippi Legislature;

(d) Ensure the student performance standards meet or exceed those adopted by the State Board of Education as required by Sections 37-3-49, 37-16-3 and 37-17-6, including compliance with the statewide assessment system specified in Chapter 16, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972;



275 (e) Adhere to the same financial audits, audit
276 procedures, and audit requirements as are applied under Section
277 7-7-211(e);

278 (f) Require state and criminal background checks for
279 staff and volunteers as required of all public school employees
280 and volunteers within the public schools and specified in Section
281 37-9-17;

282 (g) Comply with open records and open meeting
283 requirements under Sections 25-41-1 et seq. and 25-61-1 et seq.;

284 (h) Comply with purchasing requirements and limitations
285 under Chapter 39, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972;

286 (i) Provide overall instructional time that is
287 equivalent to or greater than that required under Sections 37-1-11
288 and 37-13-67, but which may include on-site instruction, distance
289 learning, online courses, and work-based learning on
290 nontraditional school days or hours; and

291 (j) Provide data to the department as deemed necessary
292 to generate school and district reports.

293 (3) (a) Only schools that choose to be designated as
294 schools of innovation shall be included in a district's
295 application;

296 (b) As used in this paragraph, "eligible employees"
297 means employees that are regularly employed at the school and
298 those employees whose primary job duties will be affected by the
299 plan; and



(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of this subsection, a local school board may require a school that has been identified as a persistently low-achieving school under provisions of Section 37-17-6 to participate in the district's plan of innovation.

(4) Notwithstanding any statutes to the contrary, the board may approve the requests of districts of innovation to:

(a) Use capital outlay funds for operational costs;

(b) Hire persons for classified positions in nontraditional school and district assignments who have bachelors and advanced degrees from postsecondary education institutions accredited by a regional accrediting association (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) or by an organization affiliated with the National Commission on Accrediting;

(c) Employ teachers on extended employment contracts or extra duty contracts and compensate them on a salary schedule other than the single salary schedule;

(d) Extend the school days as is appropriate within the district with compensation for the employees as determined locally;

(e) Establish alternative education programs and services that are delivered in nontraditional hours and which may be jointly provided in cooperation with another school district or consortia of districts;



(f) Establish online classes within the district for delivering alternative classes in a blended environment to meet high school graduation requirements;

(g) Use a flexible school calendar;

(h) Convert existing schools into schools of innovation; * * *

(i) Modify the formula under Chapter 151, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972, for distributing total funding formula funds for students in net enrollment in nontraditional programming time, including alternative programs and virtual programs. Funds granted to a district shall not exceed those that would have otherwise been distributed based on net enrollment during regular instructional days * * *; and

(j) Allow community schools to seek and accept gifts, grants, donations, and funds from federal and state agencies, private foundations, organizations, or individuals for purposes related to its function as a community school.

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

