

By: Senator(s) Williams

To: Education

## SENATE BILL NO. 2157

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-13-89, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM BASE SALARY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE  
3 OFFICERS; TO SET A SALARY SCALE FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICERS; TO  
4 AMEND SECTION 37-3-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE A  
5 LIMITATION ON THE SALARY OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC  
6 EDUCATION; TO AMEND SECTION 37-4-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
7 PROVIDE A LIMITATION ON THE SALARY OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
8 THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-13-89, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
11 amended as follows:

12 37-13-89. (1) In each school district within the state,  
13 there shall be employed the number of school attendance officers  
14 determined by the Office of Compulsory School Attendance  
15 Enforcement to be necessary to adequately enforce the provisions  
16 of the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law \* \* \*. From  
17 and after July 1, 1998, all school attendance officers employed  
18 pursuant to this section shall be employees of the State  
19 Department of Education. The State Department of Education shall  
20 employ all persons employed as school attendance officers by  
21 district attorneys before July 1, 1998, and shall assign them to



22 school attendance responsibilities in the school district in which  
23 they were employed before July 1, 1998. The first twelve (12)  
24 months of employment for each school attendance officer shall be  
25 the probationary period of state service.

26 (2) (a) The State Department of Education shall obtain  
27 current criminal records background checks and current child abuse  
28 registry checks on all persons applying for the position of school  
29 attendance officer after July 2, 2002. The criminal records  
30 information and registry checks must be kept on file for any new  
31 hires. In order to determine an applicant's suitability for  
32 employment as a school attendance officer, the applicant must be  
33 fingerprinted. If no disqualifying record is identified at the  
34 state level, the Department of Public Safety shall forward the  
35 fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for a  
36 national criminal history record check. The applicant shall pay  
37 the fee, not to exceed Fifty Dollars (\$50.00), for the  
38 fingerprinting and criminal records background check; however, the  
39 State Department of Education, in its discretion, may pay the fee  
40 for the fingerprinting and criminal records background check on  
41 behalf of any applicant. Under no circumstances may a member of  
42 the State Board of Education, employee of the State Department of  
43 Education or any person other than the subject of the criminal  
44 records background check disseminate information received through  
45 any such checks except insofar as required to fulfill the purposes  
46 of this subsection.



47           (b) If the fingerprinting or criminal records check  
48 discloses a felony conviction, guilty plea or plea of nolo  
49 contendere to a felony of possession or sale of drugs, murder,  
50 manslaughter, armed robbery, rape, sexual battery, sex offense  
51 listed in Section 45-33-23(h), child abuse, arson, grand larceny,  
52 burglary, gratification of lust or aggravated assault which has  
53 not been reversed on appeal or for which a pardon has not been  
54 granted, the applicant is not eligible to be employed as a school  
55 attendance officer. Any employment of an applicant pending the  
56 results of the fingerprinting and criminal records check is  
57 voidable if the new hire receives a disqualifying criminal records  
58 check. However, the State Board of Education, in its discretion,  
59 may allow an applicant aggrieved by an employment decision under  
60 this subsection to appear before the board, or before a hearing  
61 officer designated for that purpose, to show mitigating  
62 circumstances that may exist and allow the new hire to be employed  
63 as a school attendance officer. The State Board of Education may  
64 grant waivers for mitigating circumstances, which may include, but  
65 are not necessarily limited to: (i) age at which the crime was  
66 committed; (ii) circumstances surrounding the crime; (iii) length  
67 of time since the conviction and criminal history since the  
68 conviction; (iv) work history; (v) current employment and  
69 character references; and (vi) other evidence demonstrating the  
70 ability of the person to perform the responsibilities of a school



attendance officer competently and that the person does not pose a threat to the health or safety of children.

(c) A member of the State Board of Education or employee of the State Department of Education may not be held liable in any employment discrimination suit in which an allegation of discrimination is made regarding an employment decision authorized under this section.

(3) Each school attendance officer shall possess a college degree with a major in a behavioral science or a related field or shall have no less than three (3) years combined actual experience as a school teacher, school administrator, law enforcement officer possessing such degree, and/or social worker; however, these requirements shall not apply to persons employed as school attendance officers before January 1, 1987. School attendance officers also shall satisfy any additional requirements that may be established by the State Personnel Board for the position of school attendance officer.

(4) It shall be the duty of each school attendance officer to:

(a) Cooperate with any public agency to locate and identify all compulsory-school-age children who are not attending school;

(b) Cooperate with all courts of competent jurisdiction;



95 (c) Investigate all cases of nonattendance and unlawful  
96 absences by compulsory-school-age children not enrolled in a  
97 nonpublic school;

98 (d) Provide appropriate counseling to encourage all  
99 school-age children to attend school until they have completed  
100 high school;

101 (e) Attempt to secure the provision of social or  
102 welfare services that may be required to enable any child to  
103 attend school;

104 (f) Contact the home or place of residence of a  
105 compulsory-school-age child and any other place in which the  
106 officer is likely to find any compulsory-school-age child when the  
107 child is absent from school during school hours without a valid  
108 written excuse from school officials, and when the child is found,  
109 the officer shall notify the parents and school officials as to  
110 where the child was physically located;

111 (g) Contact promptly the home of each  
112 compulsory-school-age child in the school district within the  
113 officer's jurisdiction who is not enrolled in school or is not in  
114 attendance at public school and is without a valid written excuse  
115 from school officials; if no valid reason is found for the  
116 nonenrollment or absence from the school, the school attendance  
117 officer shall give written notice to the parent, guardian or  
118 custodian of the requirement for the child's enrollment or  
119 attendance;



120 (h) Collect and maintain information concerning  
121 absenteeism, dropouts and other attendance-related problems, as  
122 may be required by law or the Office of Compulsory School  
123 Attendance Enforcement; and

124 (i) Perform all other duties relating to compulsory  
125 school attendance established by the State Department of Education  
126 or district school attendance supervisor, or both.

127 (5) While engaged in the performance of his duties, each  
128 school attendance officer shall carry on his person a badge  
129 identifying him as a school attendance officer under the Office of  
130 Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement of the State Department  
131 of Education and an identification card designed by the State  
132 Superintendent of Public Education and issued by the school  
133 attendance officer supervisor. Neither the badge nor the  
134 identification card shall bear the name of any elected public  
135 official.

136 (6) \* \* \* The various pay ranges of the salary scale shall  
137 be based upon factors including, but not limited to, education,  
138 professional certification and licensure, and number of years of  
139 experience. School attendance officers shall be paid in  
140 accordance with this salary scale. The minimum salaries under the  
141 scale shall be no less than the following:

142 \* \* \*

143	<u>Exp. Master's</u>	<u>Bachelor's</u>
144	<u>Degree/Licensed</u>	<u>Degree/No</u>



145		<u>Social Worker</u>	<u>Degree</u>
146	<u>0</u>	<u>\$31,500.00</u>	<u>\$29,500.00</u>
147	<u>1</u>	<u>\$32,050.00</u>	<u>\$29,900.00</u>
148	<u>2</u>	<u>\$32,600.00</u>	<u>\$30,300.00</u>
149	<u>3</u>	<u>\$33,150.00</u>	<u>\$30,700.00</u>
150	<u>4</u>	<u>\$33,700.00</u>	<u>\$31,100.00</u>
151	<u>5</u>	<u>\$35,000.00</u>	<u>\$32,300.00</u>
152	<u>6</u>	<u>\$35,550.00</u>	<u>\$32,700.00</u>
153	<u>7</u>	<u>\$36,100.00</u>	<u>\$33,100.00</u>
154	<u>8</u>	<u>\$36,650.00</u>	<u>\$33,500.00</u>
155	<u>9</u>	<u>\$37,200.00</u>	<u>\$33,900.00</u>
156	<u>10</u>	<u>\$38,500.00</u>	<u>\$35,100.00</u>
157	<u>11</u>	<u>\$39,050.00</u>	<u>\$35,500.00</u>
158	<u>12</u>	<u>\$39,600.00</u>	<u>\$35,900.00</u>
159	<u>13</u>	<u>\$40,150.00</u>	<u>\$36,300.00</u>
160	<u>14</u>	<u>\$40,700.00</u>	<u>\$36,700.00</u>
161	<u>15</u>	<u>\$42,000.00</u>	<u>\$37,900.00</u>
162	<u>16</u>	<u>\$42,550.00</u>	<u>\$38,300.00</u>
163	<u>17</u>	<u>\$43,100.00</u>	<u>\$38,700.00</u>
164	<u>18</u>	<u>\$43,650.00</u>	<u>\$39,100.00</u>
165	<u>19</u>	<u>\$44,200.00</u>	<u>\$39,500.00</u>
166	<u>20</u>	<u>\$45,500.00</u>	<u>\$40,700.00</u>
167	<u>21</u>	<u>\$46,050.00</u>	<u>\$41,100.00</u>
168	<u>22</u>	<u>\$46,600.00</u>	<u>\$41,500.00</u>
169	<u>23</u>	<u>\$47,150.00</u>	<u>\$41,900.00</u>



170	<u>24</u>	<u>\$47,700.00</u>	<u>\$42,300.00</u>
171	<u>25</u>	<u>\$50,200.00</u>	<u>\$44,800.00</u>
172	<u>26</u>	<u>\$50,750.00</u>	<u>\$45,200.00</u>
173	<u>27</u>	<u>\$51,300.00</u>	<u>\$45,600.00</u>
174	<u>28</u>	<u>\$51,850.00</u>	<u>\$46,000.00</u>
175	<u>29</u>	<u>\$52,400.00</u>	<u>\$46,400.00</u>
176	<u>30</u>	<u>\$52,950.00</u>	<u>\$46,800.00</u>
177	<u>31</u>	<u>\$53,500.00</u>	<u>\$47,200.00</u>
178	<u>32</u>	<u>\$54,050.00</u>	<u>\$47,600.00</u>
179	<u>33</u>	<u>\$54,600.00</u>	<u>\$48,000.00</u>
180	<u>34</u>	<u>\$55,150.00</u>	<u>\$48,400.00</u>
181	<u>35</u>		
182	<u>&amp; above</u>	<u>\$55,700.00</u>	<u>\$48,800.00</u>

183           (7)   (a)   Each school attendance officer employed by a  
 184 district attorney on June 30, 1998, who became an employee of the  
 185 State Department of Education on July 1, 1998, shall be awarded  
 186 credit for personal leave and major medical leave for his  
 187 continuous service as a school attendance officer under the  
 188 district attorney, and if applicable, the youth or family court or  
 189 a state agency. The credit for personal leave shall be in an  
 190 amount equal to one-third (1/3) of the maximum personal leave the  
 191 school attendance officer could have accumulated had he been  
 192 credited with such leave under Section 25-3-93 during his  
 193 employment with the district attorney, and if applicable, the  
 194 youth or family court or a state agency. The credit for major



195 medical leave shall be in an amount equal to one-half (1/2) of the  
196 maximum major medical leave the school attendance officer could  
197 have accumulated had he been credited with such leave under  
198 Section 25-3-95 during his employment with the district attorney,  
199 and if applicable, the youth or family court or a state agency.  
200 However, if a district attorney who employed a school attendance  
201 officer on June 30, 1998, certifies, in writing, to the State  
202 Department of Education that the school attendance officer had  
203 accumulated, pursuant to a personal leave policy or major medical  
204 leave policy lawfully adopted by the district attorney, a number  
205 of days of unused personal leave or major medical leave, or both,  
206 which is greater than the number of days to which the school  
207 attendance officer is entitled under this paragraph, the State  
208 Department of Education shall authorize the school attendance  
209 officer to retain the actual unused personal leave or major  
210 medical leave, or both, certified by the district attorney,  
211 subject to the maximum amount of personal leave and major medical  
212 leave the school attendance officer could have accumulated had he  
213 been credited with such leave under Sections 25-3-93 and 25-3-95.

214 (b) For the purpose of determining the accrual rate for  
215 personal leave under Section 25-3-93 and major medical leave under  
216 Section 25-3-95, the State Department of Education shall give  
217 consideration to all continuous service rendered by a school  
218 attendance officer before July 1, 1998, in addition to the service



rendered by the school attendance officer as an employee of the department.

(c) In order for a school attendance officer to be awarded credit for personal leave and major medical leave or to retain the actual unused personal leave and major medical leave accumulated by him before July 1, 1998, the district attorney who employed the school attendance officer must certify, in writing, to the State Department of Education the hire date of the school attendance officer. For each school attendance officer employed by the youth or family court or a state agency before being designated an employee of the district attorney who has not had a break in continuous service, the hire date shall be the date that the school attendance officer was hired by the youth or family court or state agency. The department shall prescribe the date by which the certification must be received by the department and shall provide written notice to all district attorneys of the certification requirement and the date by which the certification must be received.

(8) (a) School attendance officers shall maintain regular office hours on a year-round basis; however, during the school term, on those days that teachers in all of the school districts served by a school attendance officer are not required to report to work, the school attendance officer also shall not be required to report to work. (For purposes of this subsection, a school district's school term is that period of time identified as the



244 school term in contracts entered into by the district with  
245 licensed personnel.) A school attendance officer shall be  
246 required to report to work on any day recognized as an official  
247 state holiday if teachers in any school district served by that  
248 school attendance officer are required to report to work on that  
249 day, regardless of the school attendance officer's status as an  
250 employee of the State Department of Education, and compensatory  
251 leave may not be awarded to the school attendance officer for  
252 working during that day. However, a school attendance officer may  
253 be allowed by the school attendance officer's supervisor to use  
254 earned leave on such days.

255 (b) The State Department of Education annually shall  
256 designate a period of six (6) consecutive weeks in the summer  
257 between school years during which school attendance officers shall  
258 not be required to report to work. A school attendance officer  
259 who elects to work at any time during that period may not be  
260 awarded compensatory leave for such work and may not opt to be  
261 absent from work at any time other than during the six (6) weeks  
262 designated by the department unless the school attendance officer  
263 uses personal leave or major medical leave accrued under Section  
264 25-3-93 or 25-3-95 for such absence.

265 (9) The State Department of Education shall provide all  
266 continuing education and training courses that school attendance  
267 officers are required to complete under state law or rules and  
268 regulations of the department.



269       **SECTION 2.** Section 37-3-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
270 amended as follows:

271       37-3-9. (1) There shall be a State Superintendent of Public  
272 Education who shall be appointed by the State Board of Education,  
273 with the advice and consent of the Senate, and serve at the  
274 board's will and pleasure. He shall be the Chief Administrative  
275 Officer for the State Department of Education and shall administer  
276 the department in accordance with the policies established by the  
277 State Board of Education. The State Superintendent of Education,  
278 serving on July 1, 2011, shall continue to receive the salary that  
279 he was receiving on January 1, 2011. From and after \* \* \* July  
280 1, \* \* \* 2025, the salary of the State Superintendent of Education  
281 shall be established by the State Board of Education and shall not  
282 exceed Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) per year.  
283 The State Superintendent of Public Education shall have at least a  
284 master's degree in any field and a minimum of five (5) years'  
285 experience in administration in the educational field.

286       (2) The State Superintendent shall give bond in the penalty  
287 of Seventy-five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00), with sureties to be  
288 approved by the Governor, conditioned according to law. The bond,  
289 when approved, shall be filed and recorded in the Office of the  
290 Secretary of State.

291       **SECTION 3.** Section 37-4-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
292 amended as follows:



37-4-3. (1) From and after July 1, 1986, there shall be a Mississippi Community College Board which shall receive and distribute funds appropriated by the Legislature for the use of the public community and junior colleges and funds from federal and other sources that are transmitted through the state governmental organization for use by said colleges. This board shall provide general coordination of the public community and junior colleges, assemble reports and such other duties as may be prescribed by law.

(2) The board shall consist of ten (10) members of which none shall be an elected official. Until January 1, 2028, the Governor shall appoint two (2) members from the First Mississippi Congressional District, one (1) who shall serve an initial term of two (2) years and one (1) who shall serve an initial term of five (5) years; two (2) members from the Second Mississippi Congressional District, one (1) who shall serve an initial term of five (5) years and one (1) who shall serve an initial term of three (3) years; and two (2) members from the Third Mississippi Congressional District, one (1) who shall serve an initial term of four (4) years and one (1) who shall serve an initial term of two (2) years; two (2) members from the Fourth Mississippi Congressional District, one (1) who shall serve an initial term of three (3) years and one (1) who shall serve an initial term of four (4) years; and two (2) members from the Fifth Mississippi Congressional District, one (1) who shall serve an initial term of



318 five (5) years and one (1) who shall serve an initial term of two  
319 (2) years. All subsequent appointments shall be for a term of six  
320 (6) years and continue until their successors are appointed and  
321 qualify. An appointment to fill a vacancy which arises for  
322 reasons other than by expiration of a term of office shall be for  
323 the unexpired term only. All members shall be appointed with the  
324 advice and consent of the Senate.

325       The Mississippi Community College Board, created by former  
326 Section 37-4-3, is continued and reconstituted as follows:  
327 Effective January 1, 2028, the Governor shall appoint three (3)  
328 members from each Mississippi Supreme Court District and one (1)  
329 from the state at large. The members shall be appointed by the  
330 Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of  
331 office of four (4) years, provided that six (6) members shall be  
332 appointed in 2028 to a term ending December 31, 2031, and four (4)  
333 members shall be appointed in 2030 to a term ending December 31,  
334 2033. Appointments made at the beginning of the four-year cycle  
335 shall be made to fill any member's term which actually expires  
336 that year and any member's term which expires next until the  
337 majority of the membership of the board or commission is reached.  
338 Appointments made at the beginning of the third year of the  
339 four-year cycle shall be made for the remainder of the membership  
340 positions irrespective of the time of their prior appointment.  
341 Any question regarding the order of appointments shall be  
342 determined by the Secretary of State in accordance with the



specific statute. All appointment procedures, vacancy provisions, interim appointment provisions and removal provisions specifically provided for in Section 7-1-35, Mississippi Code of 1972, shall be fully applicable to appointments to the Mississippi Community College Board, and to the position of executive director.

(3) There shall be a chairman and vice chairman of the board, elected by and from the membership of the board; and the chairman shall be the presiding officer of the board. The board shall adopt rules and regulations governing times and places for meetings and governing the manner of conducting its business.

(4) The members of the board shall receive no annual salary, but shall receive per diem compensation as authorized by Section 25-3-69, Mississippi Code of 1972, for each day devoted to the discharge of official board duties and shall be entitled to reimbursement for all actual and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties, including mileage as authorized by Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972.

(5) Effective July 1, 2028, the board shall name a director for the state system of public junior and community colleges, who shall serve at the will and pleasure of the board, with the advice and consent of the Senate, not less than every four (4) years. Such director shall be the chief executive officer of the board, give direction to the board staff, carry out the policies set forth by the board, and work with the presidents of the several community and junior colleges to assist them in carrying out the



mandates of the several boards of trustees and in functioning within the state system and policies established by the Mississippi Community College Board. The Mississippi Community College Board shall set the salary of the director of the board. From and after July 1, 2025, the salary of the director shall not exceed Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) per year. The Legislature shall provide adequate funds for the Mississippi Community College Board, its activities and its staff.

(6) The powers and duties of the Mississippi Community College Board shall be:

(a) To authorize disbursements of state-appropriated funds to community and junior colleges through orders in the minutes of the board.

(b) To make studies of the needs of the state as they relate to the mission of the community and junior colleges.

(c) To approve new, changes to and deletions of vocational and technical programs to the various colleges.

(d) To require community and junior colleges to supply such information as the board may request and compile, publish and make available such reports based thereon as the board may deem advisable.

(e) To approve proposed new attendance centers (campus locations) as the local boards of trustees should determine to be in the best interest of the district. Provided, however, that no



392 new community/junior college branch campus shall be approved  
393 without an authorizing act of the Legislature.

394 (f) To serve as the state approving agency for federal  
395 funds for proposed contracts to borrow money for the purpose of  
396 acquiring land, erecting, repairing, etc., dormitories, dwellings  
397 or apartments for students and/or faculty, such loans to be paid  
398 from revenue produced by such facilities as requested by local  
399 boards of trustees.

400 (g) To approve applications from community and junior  
401 colleges for state funds for vocational-technical education  
402 facilities.

403 (h) To approve any university branch campus offering  
404 lower undergraduate level courses for credit.

405 (i) To appoint members to the Post-Secondary  
406 Educational Assistance Board.

407 (j) To appoint members to the Authority for Educational  
408 Television.

409 (k) To contract with other boards, commissions,  
410 governmental entities, foundations, corporations or individuals  
411 for programs, services, grants and awards when such are needed for  
412 the operation and development of the state public community and  
413 junior college system.

414 (l) To fix standards for community and junior colleges  
415 to qualify for appropriations, and qualifications for community  
416 and junior college teachers.



417                   (m) To have sign-off approval on the State Plan for  
418 Vocational Education which is developed in cooperation with  
419 appropriate units of the State Department of Education.

420                   (n) To approve or disapprove of any proposed inclusion  
421 within municipal corporate limits of state-owned buildings and  
422 grounds of any community college or junior college and to approve  
423 or disapprove of land use development, zoning requirements,  
424 building codes and delivery of governmental services applicable to  
425 state-owned buildings and grounds of any community college or  
426 junior college. Any agreement by a local board of trustees of a  
427 community college or junior college to annexation of state-owned  
428 property or other conditions described in this paragraph shall be  
429 void unless approved by the board and by the board of supervisors  
430 of the county in which the state-owned property is located.

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

