

By: Senator(s) Tate

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2536

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
2 INTEGRATE SUCCESS SEQUENCE AND CHARACTER EDUCATION INTO THE
3 REQUIRED CURRICULUM FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12 OF THE
4 PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TO DEVELOP A SUCCESS SEQUENCE AND CHARACTER
5 EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR USE BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS; TO REQUIRE
6 SCHOOL BOARDS TO IMPLEMENT, NOT LATER THAN THE START OF THE
7 2027-2028 SCHOOL YEAR, EITHER THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY THE
8 DEPARTMENT OR A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD AND
9 APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT; TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED CONTENT FOR
10 SUCH A CURRICULUM; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO CONSULT WITH
11 PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
12 CURRICULUM; TO SPECIFY THAT PROSELYTIZING OR INDOCTRINATING
13 CONCERNING ANY SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL BELIEF IS NOT
14 AUTHORIZED FOR THE CURRICULA; TO EXEMPT OPTIONAL AFTER-SCHOOL
15 INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS LED BY THIRD PARTIES FROM SUCH PROHIBITION;
16 TO REQUIRE DATA COMPILATION AND ANNUAL REPORTING BY THE
17 DEPARTMENT; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT TO ACCEPT MONEY FROM THE
18 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SOURCES TO USE IN ASSISTING SCHOOL
19 DISTRICTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULA; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

21 **SECTION 1.** (1) (a) As used in this section, the following
22 terms have the meanings ascribed unless the context clearly
23 requires otherwise:

24 (i) "Department" means the State Department of
25 Education.



(ii) "Success and character curriculum" means a success sequence and character education curriculum compliant with subsection (2) of this section.

(b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the department shall integrate grade-level-appropriate success sequence and character education into the required curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12 of the public schools and shall develop a success and character curriculum for use by school districts. The school board of every district shall adopt a policy to implement success sequence and character education into its curriculum. Not later than the start of the 2027-2028 school year, the school board shall implement either the success and character curriculum developed by the department or a success and character curriculum developed by the school board and approved by the department. The department shall establish a protocol to be used by districts to provide continuity in teaching the success and character curriculum in a manner that is age, grade and developmentally appropriate.

(2) The success and character curriculum required by this section shall consist exclusively of instruction in the value of finishing high school, working full time, and marrying before having children, together with instruction in the following character traits and fundamental values deeply rooted in the history and tradition of the United States:



50 (i) Trustworthiness, including honesty,
51 reliability, punctuality and loyalty;
52 (ii) Responsibility, including hard work,
53 accountability, diligence, good judgment, perseverance and
54 self-control;
55 (iii) Care for family, including parents,
56 siblings, and future spouses and children;
57 (iv) Kindness and generosity toward others;
58 (v) Respect and care for human life;
59 (vi) Respect for parental authority;
60 (vii) Respect for parents' obligations to
61 children;
62 (viii) Respect for the property of other people;
63 (ix) Respect for legitimate authority and law;
64 (x) Respect for patriotism, service to the
65 community, and concern for the common good;
66 (xi) Respect for religious faith, morality, wisdom
67 and knowledge;
68 (xii) Respect for lifelong marriage, sexual
69 fidelity within marriage and sexual abstinence outside of
70 marriage;
71 (xiii) Gratitude;
72 (xiv) Charity; and
73 (xv) Courage.



(3) In developing or selecting a success and character curriculum, a school district shall consult with a committee selected by the district that consists of:

(a) Parents of district students;

(b) Educators with experience in teaching character education and content deeply rooted in our country's history and tradition; and

(c) Other members of the community, including community leaders with specific knowledge of fundamental values deeply rooted in our country's history and tradition.

(4) This section does not authorize proselytizing or indoctrinating concerning any specific religious or political belief. This subsection (4) does not apply to any after-school instruction program led by a third party as provided in subsection (7) of this section.

(5) The department shall:

(a) Maintain a list of success and character curricula that school districts have implemented;

(b) Include in an annual report to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, and Chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees electronic documents, which shall be made available without charge to the public in a clearly accessible manner on the department's website, with the following information:



(i) Based on data reported by districts, the impact of success and character curricula on student discipline and academic achievement; and

(ii) Other reported data relating to success and character curricula that the department considers appropriate for inclusion.

(6) The department may accept money from the federal government and private sources to use in assisting school districts in implementing success and character curricula.

(7) (a) Each school district and charter school may adopt a program to make the school premises available for after-school instruction programs provided by third parties that instruct students in the grounds for the success sequence and character traits listed in subsection (2) of this section. Such instruction may consist of any philosophical, historical, traditional or religious grounds for the success sequence and character traits listed, or any combination of such grounds. The school governing authority may deny approval to any group that proposes instruction in subject matter that is inconsistent with the grounds of the listed success sequence and character traits, but otherwise may not discriminate against any after-school program based on its viewpoint. Subject to that requirement, no school governing authority may discriminate against any after-school program of instruction on the basis that it contains religious or political expression.



123 (b) No student shall be required to participate in the
124 after-school programs described in this subsection (7) of this
125 section. A student may participate in such after-school programs
126 only if the student and the student's parent or legal guardian
127 consents to the student's participation. Either the student or
128 the student's parent or legal guardian may terminate the student's
129 participation at any time upon notice to the school governing
130 authority.

131 (c) School districts and charter schools making their
132 premises available for after-school instruction shall make a list
133 of approved after-school programs available to parents and adopt a
134 process, in cooperation with the third-party providers, to obtain
135 the consent of the student and the student's parent or legal
136 guardian.

137 (8) The department may adopt rules as necessary to implement
138 this section.

139 **SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this act shall be codified in
140 Chapter 13, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972.

141 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
142 and after its passage.

