Week of January 12, 2026

The second week of the 2026 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature has concluded. The House continued its work on a variety of issues, with education remaining the main focus. Lawmakers engaged in discussions and committee work on several measures related to schools, families, and educational policy, while also considering legislation regarding judicial structure and state funding.

The House took up legislation proposing revisions to the Fourth and Seventh Circuit Judicial Districts, which was referred to the Judiciary B Committee for review and consideration. Lawmakers discussed aspects of judicial administration and the potential consequences for the districts involved. In addition, the House examined legislation related to lottery and gaming fees, which included proposals to revise the distribution of these funds to support the State Highway Fund and the Education Enhancement Fund. These measures were considered by the Transportation Committee, which held detailed discussions on funding priorities and the potential impact on state programs and projects.

Education policy remained at the forefront during the week. On Tuesday, the House Education Committee met to consider House Bill 2, the *Mississippi Educational Freedom Program Act of 2026*. The committee engaged in extensive discussion, carefully reviewing various perspectives and potential implications of the bill. Following deliberation, the committee approved the measure and sent it to the full House for further consideration.

On Thursday, HB 2 was debated on the House floor for over four and a half hours. Lawmakers participated in an insightful discussion that included perspectives from both supporters and opponents of the bill. Topics addressed included the potential effects of school choice and expanding educational opportunities. The debate allowed members to present questions, concerns, and points of support, ensuring a thorough review of the measure before the chamber. After careful consideration, HB 2 was passed by the House and will continue through the legislative process.

The *Mississippi Educational Freedom Program Act of 2026* seeks to create an education choice program by establishing Magnolia Student Accounts (MSAs) for eligible students. These accounts would allow state education funds to follow students to participating schools—public or private—approved education service providers, or legitimate home instruction programs.

The act phases in eligibility over several years, prioritizing low-income families and students with special needs. It also integrates existing Education Scholarship Account (ESA) programs into the new framework and sets caps on yearly participation that gradually increase. The Office of the State Treasurer would serve as the fund manager, with authority over eligibility, disbursements, vendor contracts, audits, and enforcement of rules.

The House is adjourned until 4:00 p.m. on Monday.