

By: Representatives Frierson, Brown, Clarke, Eads, Holloway, Lott, Mayo, Myers, Warren, Whittington To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 859

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT A
2 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF ESTABLISHING PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS
3 THROUGHOUT THE STATE; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A
4 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTING MANDATORY KINDERGARTEN
5 THROUGHOUT THE STATE; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO STUDY THE
6 FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING AN OPTIONAL GRADUATION DIPLOMA TO BE
7 KNOWN AS AN OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO
8 REPORT ANNUALLY TO THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE ON CERTAIN COHORT
9 GROUPS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 SECTION 1. The State Department of Education shall:

12 (a) Conduct a total needs assessment of the state to
13 determine what areas currently lack pre-kindergarten programs and
14 services, and conduct a cost-benefit analysis of establishing
15 pre-kindergarten programs on a statewide basis. Any expected
16 costs, whether federal, state or local, associated with
17 implementing this requirement shall be clearly outlined; and

18 (b) Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of implementing
19 mandatory kindergarten on a statewide basis. Any expected costs,
20 whether federal, state or local, associated with implementing this
21 requirement shall be clearly outlined; and

22 (c) Study the feasibility of developing an optional
23 graduation diploma, to be known as an occupational diploma, that
24 would include course requirements to ensure that students have
25 mastered skills and employment competencies. The study shall
26 include proposed procedures for ensuring that students may select
27 and move between courses of study leading to a standard high
28 school diploma or an occupational diploma. The study shall
29 include options for continued skills training through community
30 colleges, which shall include agreements between school districts



31 and community colleges to minimize the circumstances under which  
32 students must repeat successfully completed high school coursework  
33 in community college. Any expected costs, both federal and state,  
34 associated in implementing these requirements shall be clearly  
35 outlined; and

36 (d) Report annually to the Mississippi Legislature on  
37 the graduation and dropout rates based on Grades 7 through 12 and  
38 Grades 9 through 12 cohort groups, statewide and by district.

39 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
40 and after July 1, 2003.

