

By: Representatives Read, Davis, Fillingane, Hamilton (109th), Shows To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1606

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-7-301, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO PROVIDE THAT SCHOOL BOARDS SHALL PAY THE COMPENSATION OF ANY
3 ATTORNEY EMPLOYED BY THE BOARD WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATURE
4 ONLY FROM FUNDS AVAILABLE TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT ARE NOT
5 APPROPRIATED BY THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-7-301, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 37-7-301. The school boards of all school districts shall
10 have the following powers, authority and duties in addition to all
11 others imposed or granted by law * * *:

12 (a) To organize and operate the schools of the district
13 and to make such division between the high school grades and
14 elementary grades as, in their judgment, will serve the best
15 interests of the school;

16 (b) To introduce public school music, art, manual
17 training and other special subjects into either the elementary or
18 high school grades, as the board shall deem proper;

19 (c) To be the custodians of real and personal school
20 property and to manage, control and care for same, both during the
21 school term and during vacation;

22 (d) To have responsibility for the erection, repairing
23 and equipping of school facilities and the making of necessary
24 school improvements;

25 (e) To suspend or to expel a pupil or to change the
26 placement of a pupil to the school district's alternative school
27 or home-bound program for misconduct in the school or on school
28 property, as defined in Section 37-11-29, on the road to and from

29 school, or at any school-related activity or event, or for conduct
30 occurring on property other than school property or other than at
31 a school-related activity or event when such conduct by a pupil,
32 in the determination of the school superintendent or principal,
33 renders that pupil's presence in the classroom a disruption to the
34 educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best
35 interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a
36 whole, and to delegate such authority to the appropriate officials
37 of the school district;

38 (f) To visit schools in the district, in their
39 discretion, in a body for the purpose of determining what can be
40 done for the improvement of the school in a general way;

41 (g) To support, within reasonable limits, the
42 superintendent, principal and teachers where necessary for the
43 proper discipline of the school;

44 (h) To exclude from the schools students with what
45 appears to be infectious or contagious diseases; * * * however,
46 such student may be allowed to return to school upon presenting a
47 certificate from a public health officer, duly licensed physician
48 or nurse practitioner that the student is free from such disease;

49 (i) To require those vaccinations specified by the
50 State Health Officer as provided in Section 41-23-37;

51 (j) To see that all necessary utilities and services
52 are provided in the schools at all times when same are needed;

53 (k) To authorize the use of the school buildings and
54 grounds for the holding of public meetings and gatherings of the
55 people under such regulations as may be prescribed by the board;

56 (l) To prescribe and enforce rules and regulations not
57 inconsistent with law or with the regulations of the State Board
58 of Education for their own government and for the government of
59 the schools, and to transact their business at regular and special
60 meetings called and held in the manner provided by law;

61 (m) To maintain and operate all of the schools under
62 their control for such length of time during the year as may be
63 required;

64 (n) To enforce in the schools the courses of study and
65 the use of the textbooks prescribed by the proper authorities;

66 (o) To make orders directed to the superintendent of
67 schools for the issuance of pay certificates for lawful purposes
68 on any available funds of the district and to have full control of
69 the receipt, distribution, allotment and disbursement of all funds
70 provided for the support and operation of the schools of such
71 school district whether such funds be derived from state
72 appropriations, local ad valorem tax collections, or otherwise;

73 (p) To select all school district personnel in the
74 manner provided by law, and to provide for such employee fringe
75 benefit programs, including accident reimbursement plans, as may
76 be deemed necessary and appropriate by the board;

77 (q) To provide athletic programs and other school
78 activities and to regulate the establishment and operation of such
79 programs and activities;

80 (r) To join, in their discretion, any association of
81 school boards and other public school-related organizations, and
82 to pay from local funds other than minimum foundation funds, any
83 membership dues;

84 (s) To expend local school activity funds, or other
85 available school district funds, other than minimum education
86 program funds, for the purposes prescribed under this paragraph.
87 "Activity funds" shall mean all funds received by school officials
88 in all school districts paid or collected to participate in any
89 school activity, such activity being part of the school program
90 and partially financed with public funds or supplemented by public
91 funds. The term "activity funds" shall not include any funds
92 raised and/or expended by any organization unless commingled in a
93 bank account with existing activity funds, regardless of whether

94 the funds were raised by school employees or received by school
95 employees during school hours or using school facilities, and
96 regardless of whether a school employee exercises influence over
97 the expenditure or disposition of such funds. Organizations shall
98 not be required to make any payment to any school for the use of
99 any school facility if, in the discretion of the local school
100 governing board, the organization's function shall be deemed to be
101 beneficial to the official or extracurricular programs of the
102 school. For the purposes of this provision, the term
103 "organization" shall not include any organization subject to the
104 control of the local school governing board. Activity funds may
105 only be expended for any necessary expenses or travel costs,
106 including advances, incurred by students and their chaperons in
107 attending any in-state or out-of-state school-related programs,
108 conventions or seminars and/or any commodities, equipment, travel
109 expenses, purchased services or school supplies which the local
110 school governing board, in its discretion, shall deem beneficial
111 to the official or extracurricular programs of the district,
112 including items which may subsequently become the personal
113 property of individuals, including yearbooks, athletic apparel,
114 book covers and trophies. Activity funds may be used to pay
115 travel expenses of school district personnel. The local school
116 governing board shall be authorized and empowered to promulgate
117 rules and regulations specifically designating for what purposes
118 school activity funds may be expended. The local school governing
119 board shall provide (i) that such school activity funds shall be
120 maintained and expended by the principal of the school generating
121 the funds in individual bank accounts, or (ii) that such school
122 activity funds shall be maintained and expended by the
123 superintendent of schools in a central depository approved by the
124 board. The local school governing board shall provide that such
125 school activity funds be audited as part of the annual audit
126 required in Section 37-9-18. The State Auditor shall prescribe a

127 uniform system of accounting and financial reporting for all
128 school activity fund transactions;

129 (t) To contract, on a shared savings, lease or
130 lease-purchase basis, for energy efficiency services and/or
131 equipment as provided for in Section 31-7-14, not to exceed ten
132 (10) years;

133 (u) To maintain accounts and issue pay certificates on
134 school food service bank accounts;

135 (v) (i) To lease a school building from an individual,
136 partnership, nonprofit corporation or a private for-profit
137 corporation for the use of such school district, and to expend
138 funds therefor as may be available from any nonminimum program
139 sources. The school board of the school district desiring to
140 lease a school building shall declare by resolution that a need
141 exists for a school building and that the school district cannot
142 provide the necessary funds to pay the cost or its proportionate
143 share of the cost of a school building required to meet the
144 present needs. The resolution so adopted by the school board
145 shall be published once each week for three (3) consecutive weeks
146 in a newspaper having a general circulation in the school district
147 involved, with the first publication thereof to be made not less
148 than thirty (30) days prior to the date upon which the school
149 board is to act on the question of leasing a school building. If
150 no petition requesting an election is filed prior to such meeting
151 as hereinafter provided, then the school board may, by resolution
152 spread upon its minutes, proceed to lease a school building. If
153 at any time prior to the meeting a petition signed by not less
154 than twenty percent (20%) or fifteen hundred (1500), whichever is
155 less, of the qualified electors of the school district involved
156 shall be filed with the school board requesting that an election
157 be called on the question, then the school board shall, not later
158 than the next regular meeting, adopt a resolution calling an
159 election to be held within such school district upon the question

160 of authorizing the school board to lease a school building. Such
161 election shall be called and held, and notice thereof shall be
162 given, in the same manner for elections upon the questions of the
163 issuance of the bonds of school districts, and the results thereof
164 shall be certified to the school board. If at least three-fifths
165 (3/5) of the qualified electors of the school district who voted
166 in such election shall vote in favor of the leasing of a school
167 building, then the school board shall proceed to lease a school
168 building. The term of the lease contract shall not exceed twenty
169 (20) years, and the total cost of such lease shall be either the
170 amount of the lowest and best bid accepted by the school board
171 after advertisement for bids or an amount not to exceed the
172 current fair market value of the lease as determined by the
173 averaging of at least two (2) appraisals by certified general
174 appraisers licensed by the State of Mississippi. The term "school
175 building" as used in this item (v) shall be construed to mean any
176 building or buildings used for classroom purposes in connection
177 with the operation of schools and shall include the site therefor,
178 necessary support facilities, and the equipment thereof and
179 appurtenances thereto such as heating facilities, water supply,
180 sewage disposal, landscaping, walks, drives and playgrounds. The
181 term "lease" as used in this item (v)(i) may include a
182 lease/purchase contract;

183 (ii) If two (2) or more school districts propose
184 to enter into a lease contract jointly, then joint meetings of the
185 school boards having control may be held but no action taken shall
186 be binding on any such school district unless the question of
187 leasing a school building is approved in each participating school
188 district under the procedure hereinabove set forth in item (v)(i).
189 All of the provisions of item (v)(i) regarding the term and amount
190 of the lease contract shall apply to the school boards of school
191 districts acting jointly. Any lease contract executed by two (2)
192 or more school districts as joint lessees shall set out the amount

193 of the aggregate lease rental to be paid by each, which may be
194 agreed upon, but there shall be no right of occupancy by any
195 lessee unless the aggregate rental is paid as stipulated in the
196 lease contract. All rights of joint lessees under the lease
197 contract shall be in proportion to the amount of lease rental paid
198 by each;

199 (w) To employ all noninstructional and noncertificated
200 employees and fix the duties and compensation of such personnel
201 deemed necessary pursuant to the recommendation of the
202 superintendent of schools;

203 (x) To employ and fix the duties and compensation of
204 such legal counsel as deemed necessary; however, the compensation
205 of any attorney employed by the board who is a member of the
206 Legislature shall be paid only from funds available to the school
207 district that are not appropriated by the Legislature;

208 (y) Subject to rules and regulations of the State Board
209 of Education, to purchase, own and operate trucks, vans and other
210 motor vehicles, which shall bear the proper identification
211 required by law;

212 (z) To expend funds for the payment of substitute
213 teachers and to adopt reasonable regulations for the employment
214 and compensation of such substitute teachers;

215 (aa) To acquire in its own name by purchase all real
216 property which shall be necessary and desirable in connection with
217 the construction, renovation or improvement of any public school
218 building or structure. Whenever the purchase price for such real
219 property is greater than Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00), the
220 school board shall not purchase the property for an amount
221 exceeding the fair market value of such property as determined by
222 the average of at least two (2) independent appraisals by
223 certified general appraisers licensed by the State of Mississippi.
224 If the board shall be unable to agree with the owner of any such
225 real property in connection with any such project, the board shall

226 have the power and authority to acquire any such real property by
227 condemnation proceedings pursuant to Section 11-27-1 et seq., and
228 for such purpose, the right of eminent domain is * * * conferred
229 upon and vested in the board. * * * The local school board is
230 authorized to grant an easement for ingress and egress over
231 sixteenth section land or lieu land in exchange for a similar
232 easement upon adjoining land where the exchange of easements
233 affords substantial benefit to the sixteenth section land; * * *
234 however, the exchange must be based upon values as determined by a
235 competent appraiser, with any differential in value to be adjusted
236 by cash payment. Any easement rights granted over sixteenth
237 section land under such authority shall terminate when the
238 easement ceases to be used for its stated purpose. No sixteenth
239 section or lieu land which is subject to an existing lease shall
240 be burdened by any such easement except by consent of the lessee
241 or unless the school district shall acquire the unexpired
242 leasehold interest affected by the easement;

243 (bb) To charge reasonable fees related to the
244 educational programs of the district, in the manner prescribed in
245 Section 37-7-335;

246 (cc) Subject to rules and regulations of the State
247 Board of Education, to purchase relocatable classrooms for the use
248 of such school district, in the manner prescribed in Section
249 37-1-13;

250 (dd) Enter into contracts or agreements with other
251 school districts, political subdivisions or governmental entities
252 to carry out one or more of the powers or duties of the school
253 board, or to allow more efficient utilization of limited resources
254 for providing services to the public;

255 (ee) To provide for in-service training for employees
256 of the district. Until June 30, 1994, the school boards may
257 designate two (2) days of the minimum school term, as defined in
258 Section 37-19-1, for employee in-service training for

259 implementation of the new statewide testing system as developed by
260 the State Board of Education. Such designation shall be subject
261 to approval by the State Board of Education pursuant to uniform
262 rules and regulations;

263 (ff) As part of their duties to prescribe the use of
264 textbooks, to provide that parents and legal guardians shall be
265 responsible for the textbooks and for the compensation to the
266 school district for any books which are not returned to the proper
267 schools upon the withdrawal of their dependent child. If a
268 textbook is lost or not returned by any student who drops out of
269 the public school district, the parent or legal guardian shall
270 also compensate the school district for the fair market value of
271 the textbooks;

272 (gg) To conduct fund-raising activities on behalf of
273 the school district that the local school board, in its
274 discretion, deems appropriate or beneficial to the official or
275 extracurricular programs of the district; provided that:

276 (i) Any proceeds of the fund-raising activities
277 shall be treated as "activity funds" and shall be accounted for as
278 are other activity funds under this section; and

279 (ii) Fund-raising activities conducted or
280 authorized by the board for the sale of school pictures, the
281 rental of caps and gowns or the sale of graduation invitations for
282 which the school board receives a commission, rebate or fee shall
283 contain a disclosure statement advising that a portion of the
284 proceeds of the sales or rentals shall be contributed to the
285 student activity fund;

286 (hh) To allow individual lessons for music, art and
287 other curriculum-related activities for academic credit or
288 nonacademic credit during school hours and using school equipment
289 and facilities, subject to uniform rules and regulations adopted
290 by the school board;

291 (ii) To charge reasonable fees for participating in an
292 extracurricular activity for academic or nonacademic credit for
293 necessary and required equipment such as safety equipment, band
294 instruments and uniforms;

295 (jj) To conduct or participate in any fund-raising
296 activities on behalf of or in connection with a tax-exempt
297 charitable organization;

298 (kk) To exercise such powers as may be reasonably
299 necessary to carry out the provisions of this section; and

300 (ll) To expend funds for the services of nonprofit arts
301 organizations or other such nonprofit organizations who provide
302 performances or other services for the students of the school
303 district.

304 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
305 and after its passage.