

By: Representatives Holloway, Karriem, Bell
(65th)

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 4
(As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
2 IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH
3 INFORMATION AND TOOLS SHALL BE PROVIDED TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN
4 KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12; TO SET STANDARDS FOR PARENTAL
5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SPECIFYING CAUSES FOR STUDENT UNDERACHIEVEMENT;
6 PROVIDING PRINCIPLES ON WHICH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS BASED; TO
7 PROVIDE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH REQUIRED
8 SHARED INFORMATION BETWEEN TEACHERS, SCHOOLS AND PARENTS; TO
9 REQUIRE TEACHERS TO ASSIGN A PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT GRADE ON STUDENT
10 REPORT CARDS; TO REQUIRING THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO ADOPT AN
11 APPEALS PROCESS; TO REQUIRE THE SCHOOL BOARDS OF DISTRICTS WITH A
12 "C," "D" OR "F" ACCREDITATION RATING TO ADOPT CERTAIN POLICIES
13 RELATING TO THE DAILY CURRICULUM, HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AND OTHER
14 PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT IMPROVEMENT AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT FOR
15 TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION; TO
16 REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO CONDUCT A BASIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF
17 STUDENTS DEMONSTRATING BEHAVIORAL EPISODES OR REFERRED TO THE
18 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL SETTING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

19 WHEREAS, parent accountability has decreased, and efforts
20 undertaken to increase parental involvement is critical to
21 improving student academic performance, addressing student
22 misbehavior and monitoring daily attendance; and

23 WHEREAS, it has been determined that legislative policies are
24 enacted which specify: purposes to provide information and tools
25 to parents of K-12 students and to set standards for parental
26 accountability; causes for student underachievement; principles on



27 which parental involvement is based and strategies to improve
28 student achievement; requirements for shared information between
29 teachers, schools and parents; requirements for K-3 teachers to
30 assign parental involvement grade on student report cards; and
31 requirements for an appeals process; and

32 WHEREAS, although the school environment has a great impact
33 on a child's well-being and academic success, parents and the home
34 environment form the foundation of a child's present and future
35 life; and

36 WHEREAS, parental involvement is most effective when it is
37 comprehensive, well planned, and continues throughout the school
38 year, and without proper parental involvement in all aspects of a
39 child's life, the child's prospects to be a well-equipped and
40 useful member of society are greatly diminished; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

42 **SECTION 1.** The purpose of this act is to provide information
43 and tools to parents of students enrolled in kindergarten through
44 Grade 12 to enable them to have a positive impact on their child's
45 educational success and to set standards for parental
46 accountability.

47 **SECTION 2.** (1) (a) Beginning with the 2016-2017 school
48 year, each local school district having an accreditation rating of
49 "D" or "F" shall develop a policy for use by professional school
50 counselors to recognize and address the following behaviors with



51 respect to the relationship between a child's home and school are
52 identified as possible causes for a student's underachievement:

53 (i) A child is not physically prepared for the
54 school day due to inadequate rest or improper clothing, lack of
55 necessary school supplies, or frequent tardiness or absence;

56 (ii) A child is not mentally prepared for the
57 school day due to uncompleted homework or inadequate preparation
58 for tests; and

59 (iii) Communication between parents and the
60 teacher is often written rather than through personal contact and
61 often occurs only when a problem has arisen rather than on a
62 consistent basis throughout the school year.

63 (b) School districts that have been designated with an
64 "A," "B" or "C" accreditation rating shall have the discretion to
65 implement parental involvement and accountability practices upon a
66 decision of the local school board to opt in for the use of such
67 practices.

68 (2) The policy adopted by local school boards opting to
69 implement parental involvement and accountability practices shall:

70 (a) Be inclusive of measures to be implemented to
71 provide developmental parental involvement with a preventive
72 rather than remedial approach and an integral part of a strategy
73 to improve student achievement;



74 (b) Not require parents to be formally educated on
75 approaches to provide support and assistance to improve the
76 academic performance of their child; and

77 (c) Include intensive intervention to address at-risk
78 children of the district, who have the most to gain from parental
79 involvement.

80 (3) Parents are encouraged to support the learning of their
81 children and improve student achievement through:

82 (a) Attendance of parent-teacher conferences as
83 requested by district and school during which the student's
84 strengths and weaknesses are discussed and goals for the student
85 are collaboratively set;

86 (b) Maintaining correspondence with the child's
87 teachers through submission of signed forms and signed homework
88 assignments and respond to formal requests for conferences with
89 teachers;

90 (c) Contacting the teacher if a problem or issue arises
91 with homework, a situation in the home that may disturb the
92 student's performance, or absences and make-up assignments; and

93 (d) Providing for the student's on-time attendance,
94 prevent frequent absences and ensuring the student is equipped
95 with necessary school supplies.

96 **SECTION 3.** (1) Teachers and schools in districts that have
97 opted to implement parental involvement and accountability
98 practices shall develop information packets, forms or videos for



99 sharing the most current student information with each parent with
100 written acknowledgement of receipt. The shared information may be
101 presented in the parent guide to successful student achievement or
102 in the checklist of parental actions that can strengthen parental
103 involvement in a child's educational progress, and includes:

104 (a) Expectations of parents with respect to school
105 attendance requirements;

106 (b) Expectations of parents with respect to a child's
107 physical readiness for school, necessary school supplies, which
108 may be obtained through various organizations if needed, meals,
109 which may be obtained through a school's free or reduced priced
110 meal program if qualified; and immunizations and medical care; and

111 (c) Expectations of parents with respect to a child's
112 academic work, including time set aside for daily homework and
113 reading, nightly check of homework completion and preparation for
114 tests, early preparation of assigned school projects, signature on
115 required forms, and check of contents of school backpack.

116 (2) Each report card for students in kindergarten through
117 Grade 12 shall include a section in which the teacher grades
118 parental involvement as satisfactory, in need of improvement or
119 unsatisfactory on each of the following criteria:

120 (a) Parental response to requests for conferences or
121 communication;

122 (b) The student's completion of homework and
123 preparation for tests;



124 (c) The frequency of the student's absence and
125 tardiness; and

126 (d) The student's overall grade per nine (9) week's
127 assessment.

128 (3) A parent may appeal the report card parental involvement
129 grade assigned by the teacher under subsection (2) of this section
130 through a process adopted by the local school board in which the
131 principal, the teacher and the parent meet to discuss how the
132 report card grade was determined. The meeting shall also provide
133 information and feedback on the steps needed to improve the
134 parental involvement grade, thereby improving the environment and
135 elements that affect student learning.

136 **SECTION 4.** (1) The school board of each school district or
137 school having an accreditation rating of "C," "D" or "F," as
138 defined by the State Board of Education, shall adopt policies and
139 procedures regarding the daily curriculum in schools, weekly
140 homework assignments, parental involvement, dress codes, school
141 holidays, parent-teacher conferences and a school syllabus. The
142 policies and procedures must include, but not necessarily be
143 limited to, the following:

144 (a) Every child must be assigned daily homework
145 assignments;

146 (b) Every child must be taught to write in proper
147 manuscript and cursive lettering, which must be reinforced through
148 weekend homework assignments at every grade level;



149 (c) Every child must be assigned a daily reading
150 assignment;

151 (d) Every child must be assigned a daily written
152 assignment to accompany the daily reading assignment in order to
153 assess the reading comprehension level of the child;

154 (e) Every child must be assigned a minimum of five (5)
155 words per week in each subject area to learn to spell, define and
156 use in a sentence, which must be used to assess the child's
157 retention of the assignment;

158 (f) Every child must be assigned a minimum of one (1)
159 book to read per subject each month and must write a short report
160 on the subject matter of the book, which report must be used to
161 assess the child's learning ability. Children in primary grades
162 may be allowed to draw pictures, elaborate orally or use any other
163 alternative method to tell about their books;

164 (g) Every parent or guardian of a child shall
165 participate in one (1) supportive service for the school district,
166 such as assisting at the bus stop, working the concession stand
167 for an athletic event, chaperoning a school sponsored event,
168 serving in the Parent Teacher Association, or serving as a mentor,
169 resource officer, tutor or other related activity that is deemed
170 appropriate by the school or school district;

171 (h) Every teacher shall dress in a professional manner,
172 which does not include wearing blue jeans, denim jeans or tee



173 shirts, except in certain situations that have been previously
174 approved by the school or school district;

175 (i) Every child must be required to wear a school
176 uniform;

177 (j) Permanent early release days are prohibited. Staff
178 development training may not be held during a regular school day;
179 however, staff development training may be offered after the
180 regular school day has been completed. The staff development
181 training must be relevant to the teaching experience and
182 beneficial to the teacher, student and district as a whole;

183 (k) Parent-teacher conferences must be held at least
184 two (2) separate times during each nine-week term with the parent
185 and a child who has not mastered his or her coursework for the
186 mid-term or who has demonstrated bad citizenship;

187 (l) The school district shall provide a syllabus for
188 each nine (9) weeks with the homework assignments posted for each
189 subject. The syllabus must contain an agreement that the parent
190 or guardian is required to sign stating that the parent
191 understands the child has daily homework assignments and that the
192 parent has received a document outlining the child's work
193 assignments and due dates of the assignments; and

194 (m) The school district shall post the syllabus on the
195 school district website, if available. If a student loses his or
196 her syllabus, the school district may replace the document.



197 (2) Alternative school programs in school districts or
198 schools having an accreditation rating of "C," "D" or "F," as
199 defined by the State Board of Education, shall adhere to the
200 policies required under subsection (1) of this section. Students
201 attending an alternative school must attend school for no less
202 than eight (8) hours per day and must attend school on one (1)
203 Saturday during each month school is in session for no more than
204 three (3) hours per day. At alternative schools, the designated
205 Saturday must be known as "Attitude Adjustment Day." During one
206 (1) Saturday of each month, the school districts or schools shall
207 arrange for retired military, first responders, volunteer mentors,
208 ministers, parents and any other community volunteers to attend
209 school with the alternative school students and to share their
210 skills and knowledge with the students, encouraging them to become
211 better students and citizens. The skills and knowledge shared as
212 described in this subsection (2) may be shared with the students
213 in a singular group or in multiple smaller groups. The skills and
214 knowledge shared may be held off of the actual school campus. In
215 addition, the school district may authorize students to
216 participate in community service programs on Saturdays to help
217 build character and concern for their own school, family,
218 neighborhood and community."

219 **SECTION 5.** A school district shall conduct a basic needs
220 assessment of any student in the district who demonstrates a
221 behavioral episode or is referred to an alternative school



222 setting. Based upon the results of the assessment, the district
223 shall refer the student to the appropriate state or local agency,
224 including, but not limited to: the Division of Youth Services of
225 the Department of Human Services; the State Department of Health;
226 the county department of health; the Division of Medicaid; the
227 Department of Human Services; the county department of public
228 welfare; the Department of Mental Health; and the local regional
229 mental health center. Any agency receiving a referral under this
230 subsection must initiate action in response to the referral no
231 later than seventy-two (72) hours after receipt of the referral.

232 **SECTION 6.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act shall stand
233 repealed on July 1, 2019.

234 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
235 and after July 1, 2016, and shall stand repealed on June 30, 2016.

