

By: Representatives Porter, McCarty

To: Education;
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1398

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GRANT
 2 PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOWING SCHOOLS OR SCHOOL DISTRICTS
 3 ESTABLISHED AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TO CREATE COMMUNITY
 4 SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL
 5 ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE FUNDS SHALL BE
 6 DISTRIBUTED TO EACH DISTRICT OF INNOVATION APPROVED BY THE STATE
 7 BOARD OF EDUCATION; TO PROVIDE CERTAIN DISTRIBUTION FORMULAS FOR
 8 ALLOCATING THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR THE GRANT PROGRAM; TO AMEND
 9 SECTIONS 37-179-1 AND 37-179-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
 10 AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF
 11 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION; TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS RELATED TO
 12 "DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION"; TO LIMIT THE INITIAL APPROVAL AND
 13 SUBSEQUENT RENEWALS OF DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION TO FIVE-YEAR
 14 PERIODS; TO DIRECT THE BOARD TO PROMULGATE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
 15 AND REGULATIONS TO PRESCRIBE THE CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES TO BE
 16 USED BY LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO BE APPROVED AS A DISTRICT OF
 17 INNOVATION; TO SPECIFY THE CRITERIA TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE
 18 ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS; TO PRESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A
 19 DISTRICT TO BE A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION APPLICANT; TO PRESCRIBE
 20 THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS WITH WHICH SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION WITHIN
 21 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION MUST COMPLY; TO IDENTIFY AREAS IN WHICH
 22 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION MAY REQUEST APPROVAL OF PRACTICES THAT ARE
 23 DIFFERENT THAN CURRENT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS; AND FOR RELATED
 24 PURPOSES.

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

26 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the Mississippi
 27 Community Schools Grant Program which shall be administered by the
 28 State Department of Education.



29 (2) In order to assist districts of innovation in the
30 creation of community schools, as established under the provisions
31 of Sections 37-179-1 and 37-179-3, funds from the program shall be
32 distributed, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to each
33 district of innovation approved by the State Board of Education
34 which desires to expand in innovation practices by developing
35 community schools.

36 (3) The department shall distribute grants to each eligible
37 district of innovation in the minimum amount of Two Hundred
38 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00). A district of innovation may be
39 awarded additional grant funds as follows:

40 (a) Ten percent (10%) of the annual base student cost
41 under the adequate education fund for each student enrolled in the
42 community school program, according to total district enrollment
43 data submitted to the department by the local school district;

44 (b) Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) shall be
45 allocated to a district of innovation located within a local
46 school district with an identified student percentage of
47 twenty-five (25%) of all students enrolled in the districts during
48 the prior school year having received free lunch under the
49 National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; and

50 (c) In addition to the funds distributed in paragraphs
51 (a) and (b) of this subsection, any remaining funds appropriated
52 for the purposes of this grant program shall be distributed to
53 districts of innovation receiving funds in paragraphs (a) and (b)



54 of this subsection on a pro rata amount by dividing the total
55 amount of the remaining funds by the total number of students
56 enrolled in all districts of innovation in the state, regardless
57 as to whether such district of innovation has developed a
58 community schools component.

59 (4) The department shall adopt such reasonable rules as
60 necessary for the administration of the program, but shall not
61 place additional qualification requirements on school districts
62 other than the minimum requirements in this section.

63 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-179-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
64 amended as follows:

65 37-179-1. (1) For purposes of this chapter, the following
66 terms shall have the meaning ascribed herein, unless the context
67 clearly indicates otherwise:

68 (a) "District of innovation" means a district that has
69 developed a plan of innovation in compliance with this section and
70 has been approved by the State Board of Education to be exempted
71 from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions
72 to improve the educational performance of students within the
73 district;

74 (b) "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to
75 existing instructional and administrative practices intended to
76 improve student learning and student performance of all students,
77 including community schools;



78 (c) "School of innovation" means a school that
79 voluntarily participates in a district of innovation plan to
80 improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local
81 school board policies, selected provisions of rules and
82 regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and
83 selected sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as permitted
84 under this section and Section * * * 37-179-3;

85 (d) "Board" means the State Board of Education;

86 (e) "Department" means the State Department of
87 Education.

88 (f) "Community school" means a traditional district
89 public school that partners with community-based organizations to
90 coordinate academic, social, physical health and mental health
91 services, to reduce barriers to learning and improve education
92 outcomes. Community schools include all five (5) of the
93 following:

94 (i) Integrated student supports coordinated by a
95 community school director, which may include, but are not limited
96 to:

97 1. Medical, dental, vision care and mental
98 health services; or

99 2. Counselors to assist with housing,
100 transportation, nutrition, or criminal justice issues;

101 (ii) Expanded and enriched learning time and
102 opportunities including before school, after school, weekend and



103 summer programs, which provide additional academic instruction,
104 individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and
105 learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and
106 community problem solving, and which may include, but are not
107 limited to:

108 1. Art, music, drama and creative writing;
109 2. Hands-on experience with engineering or
110 science;

111 3. Tutoring and homework help; and

112 4. Recreational programs that enhance and are
113 consistent with the school's curriculum;

114 (iii) Active family and community engagement which
115 brings students' families and the community into the school as
116 partners in children's education and makes the school a
117 neighborhood hub, providing adults with educational opportunities
118 they want, including, but not limited to:

119 1. English as a second language class;

120 2. Citizenship preparation;

121 3. Computer skills;

122 4. Art;

123 5. GED classes; or

124 6. Other programs that bring community
125 members into the building for meetings or events;

126 (iv) Include, as a meaningful part of its

127 curriculum, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics



128 (STEM) program component commensurate and appropriate to the grade
129 level of the school; and

130 (v) Collaborative leadership and practices, which
131 build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and
132 shared responsibility using strategies which shall, at a minimum,
133 include:

134 1. A school-based leadership team;
135 2. A community school director; and
136 3. A community-wide leadership team, which
137 may include, but not limited to:

138 A. Other leadership and governance
139 teams;
140 B. Teacher learning communities; and
141 C. Other staff to manage the multiple
142 complex, joint work of school and community organizations.

143 (g) "Community School Director" means a person who:

144 (i) Is a full-time staff member serving one (1)
145 eligible school;

146 (ii) Is responsible for the identification,
147 implementation and coordination of integrated student supports,
148 expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and
149 community engagement and collaborative leadership and practices;

150 (iii) Serves as a member of the school-based
151 leadership team;



152 (iv) Serves as the lead for the needs and assets
153 assessment and community school plan; and

154 (v) Coordinates the needs and assets assessment
155 and stakeholder-driven approach to problem-solving and continuous
156 improvement.

157 (2) The State Board of Education is authorized to approve
158 districts of innovation for the purposes of improving students'
159 educational performance. Districts of innovation shall be
160 provided flexibility from selected board regulations, Title 37,
161 Mississippi Code of 1972, and local school board policies for
162 school administrators, teachers and staff to meet the diverse
163 needs of students. A low-performing school or school district
164 managing the transition of multiple schools to the community
165 school model shall be provided a three-year transition before
166 becoming eligible for state takeover. The initial approval of a
167 district of innovation shall be for a five-year period. Each
168 renewal of a district of innovation shall not exceed five (5)
169 years and shall comply with administrative regulations promulgated
170 by the board pursuant to subsection (4) of this section.

171 (3) The board shall promulgate administrative rules and
172 regulations to prescribe the conditions and procedures to be used
173 by a local school board to be approved as a district of innovation
174 and shall publish the same on or before December 31, 2015.

175 (4) Administrative rules and regulations promulgated by the
176 board under subsection (3) of this section shall specify:



177 (a) The regulatory areas which may be exempted or
178 modified if approved by the board, except as provided in Section
179 37-179-3(2), and in addition to those areas identified in Section
180 37-179-3(3);

181 (b) The application, plan review, approval and
182 amendment process for a district;

183 (c) Timelines for initial approval as a district of
184 innovation, the renewal process and ongoing evaluative procedures
185 required of the district;

186 (d) Acceptable documentation of a critical mass of
187 parental, community, educator and business support and capacity to
188 effect a change;

189 (e) Evidence of teacher collaboration and shared
190 leadership within the district and the schools to be designated as
191 schools of innovation;

192 (f) The process of revocation of the designation of
193 district of innovation or school of innovation;

194 (g) Reporting and oversight responsibilities of the
195 district and the State Department of Education;

196 (h) The financial detail relating to budgets of schools
197 and evidence of sound fiscal management practices;

198 (i) Acceptable areas of emphasis for innovation;

199 (j) Acceptable documentation of job-embedded
200 professional development within the proposed innovation design;

201 and



202 (k) Other components deemed necessary to implement this
203 section and Section 37-179-3.

204 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-179-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
205 amended as follows:

206 37-179-3. (1) A district which is an applicant to be
207 designated as a district of innovation under Section 37-179-1
208 shall:

209 (a) Establish goals and performance targets for the
210 district of innovation proposal, which may include:

211 (i) Reducing socio-economic achievement gaps among
212 groups of public school students by expanding learning experiences
213 for students who are identified as academically low-achieving;

214 (ii) Increasing pupil learning through the
215 implementation of high, rigorous standards for pupil performance;

216 (iii) Increasing student attendance rates as well
217 as reducing chronic absenteeism;

218 (iv) Decreasing rates of student suspensions and
219 expulsions;

220 (* * * y) Increasing the participation of students
221 in various curriculum components and instructional components
222 within selected schools to enhance at each grade level;

223 (* * * vi) Increasing the number of students who
224 are college and career-ready and who have access to
225 dual-enrollment courses;



226 (vii) Increasing student college preparation to
227 enter secondary education in the areas of science, technology,
228 engineering and mathematics.

229 (* * * viii) Motivating students at different
230 grade levels by offering more curriculum choices and student
231 learning opportunities to parents and students within the
232 district;

233 (b) Make public its goals and performance targets and,
234 after five (5) years, share the performance target results with
235 members of the Mississippi House and Senate Education Committees,
236 as well as with the general public;

237 (* * * c) Identify changes needed from a comprehensive
238 needs and assets assessment in the district and schools to lead to
239 better prepared students for success in college, career and
240 life * * *;

241 (* * * d) Have a districtwide plan of innovation that
242 describes and justifies which schools and innovative practices
243 will be incorporated;

244 (* * * e) Provide documentation of community, educator,
245 parental, and the local board's support of the proposed
246 innovations;

247 (* * * f) Provide detailed information regarding the
248 rationale of requests for waivers from Title 37, Mississippi Code
249 of 1972, which relate to the elementary and secondary education of
250 public school students, and administrative regulations, and



251 exemptions for selected schools regarding waivers of local school
252 board policies;

253 (* * *g) Document the fiscal and human resources the
254 board will provide throughout the term of the implementation of
255 the innovations within its plan; and

256 (* * *h) Provide other materials as required by the
257 department in compliance with the board's administrative
258 regulations and application procedures.

259 (2) The district and all schools participating in a
260 district's innovation plan shall:

261 (a) Ensure the same health, safety, civil rights, and
262 disability rights requirements as are applied to all public
263 schools;

264 (b) Ensure students meet compulsory attendance
265 requirements under Sections 37-13-91 and 37-13-92;

266 (c) Ensure that high school course offerings meet or
267 exceed the minimum required under Sections 37-16-7 and 37-3-49,
268 for high school graduation or meet early graduation requirements
269 that may be enacted by the Mississippi Legislature;

270 (d) Ensure the student performance standards meet or
271 exceed those adopted by the State Board of Education as required
272 by Sections 37-3-49, 37-16-3 and 37-17-6, including compliance
273 with the statewide assessment system specified in Chapter 16,
274 Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972;



275 (e) Adhere to the same financial audits, audit
276 procedures, and audit requirements as are applied under Section
277 7-7-211(e);

278 (f) Require state and criminal background checks for
279 staff and volunteers as required of all public school employees
280 and volunteers within the public schools and specified in Section
281 37-9-17;

282 (g) Comply with open records and open meeting
283 requirements under Sections 25-41-1 et seq. and 25-61-1 et seq.;

284 (h) Comply with purchasing requirements and limitations
285 under Chapter 39, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972;

286 (i) Provide overall instructional time that is
287 equivalent to or greater than that required under Sections 37-1-11
288 and 37-13-67, but which may include on-site instruction, distance
289 learning, online courses, and work-based learning on
290 nontraditional school days or hours; and

291 (j) Provide data to the department as deemed necessary
292 to generate school and district reports.

293 (3) (a) Only schools that choose to be designated as
294 schools of innovation shall be included in a district's
295 application;

296 (b) As used in this paragraph, "eligible employees"
297 means employees that are regularly employed at the school and
298 those employees whose primary job duties will be affected by the
299 plan; and



300 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of
301 this subsection, a local school board may require a school that
302 has been identified as a persistently low-achieving school under
303 provisions of Section 37-17-6 to participate in the district's
304 plan of innovation.

305 (4) Notwithstanding any statutes to the contrary, the board
306 may approve the requests of districts of innovation to:

307 (a) Use capital outlay funds for operational costs;

308 (b) Hire persons for classified positions in
309 nontraditional school and district assignments who have bachelors
310 and advanced degrees from postsecondary education institutions
311 accredited by a regional accrediting association (Southern
312 Association of Colleges and Schools) or by an organization
313 affiliated with the National Commission on Accrediting;

314 (c) Employ teachers on extended employment contracts or
315 extra duty contracts and compensate them on a salary schedule
316 other than the single salary schedule;

317 (d) Extend the school days as is appropriate within the
318 district with compensation for the employees as determined
319 locally;

320 (e) Establish alternative education programs and
321 services that are delivered in nontraditional hours and which may
322 be jointly provided in cooperation with another school district or
323 consortia of districts;



324 (f) Establish online classes within the district for
325 delivering alternative classes in a blended environment to meet
326 high school graduation requirements;

327 (g) Use a flexible school calendar;

328 (h) Convert existing schools into schools of
329 innovation; * * *

330 (i) Modify the formula under Section 37-151-7 for
331 distributing support education funds for students in average daily
332 attendance in nontraditional programming time, including
333 alternative programs and virtual programs. Funds granted to a
334 district shall not exceed those that would have otherwise been
335 distributed based on average daily attendance during regular
336 instructional days * * *; and

337 (j) Allow community schools to seek and accept gifts,
338 grants, donations, and funds from federal and state agencies,
339 private foundations, organizations, or individuals for purposes
340 related to its function as a community school.

341 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
342 and after July 1, 2024.

