

By: Senator(s) Boyd, Parker

To: Public Health and  
Welfare; Universities and  
Colleges

SENATE BILL NO. 2727

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI K-12 AND POST-SECONDARY  
 2 MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE DRAWING ON AVAILABLE DATA TO DETERMINE  
 3 CHALLENGES IN MISSISSIPPI AS IT RELATES TO THE MENTAL HEALTH OF  
 4 STUDENTS RANGING FROM K-12 THROUGH THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND  
 5 UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS, ASSESS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES  
 6 CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO YOUTH SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION, TRAUMA AND  
 7 SUICIDAL IDEATION, AND DETERMINE WHERE GAPS EXIST IN SERVICE  
 8 DELIVERY AND TREATMENT; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK  
 9 FORCE; TO REQUIRE THE TASK FORCE TO REVIEW AND MAKE  
 10 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE REGARDING AVAILABLE RESOURCES  
 11 AND GAPS IN RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THIS CRISIS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
 12 GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TASK FORCE; TO REQUIRE THE TASK  
 13 FORCE TO DEVELOP AND REPORT ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
 14 PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO THE LEGISLATURE ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1,  
 15 2024; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

17 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby established the "Mississippi  
 18 K-12 and Post-Secondary Mental Health Task Force," created to  
 19 address growing concerns related to student mental health. The  
 20 goal of the task force shall include, but not be limited to,  
 21 drawing on available data to determine challenges in Mississippi  
 22 as it relates to the mental health of students ranging from K-12  
 23 through the community college and university systems; assessing  
 24 public and private resources currently available to students who



25 need help managing mental health issues; assessing training and  
26 procedures in place for teachers, school district personnel and  
27 community college and university personnel; and determining where  
28 gaps exist in training and resources; exploring partnerships  
29 across communities to better serve students; and examining  
30 successful programs in Mississippi and across the nation. The  
31 task force shall develop recommendations to the Legislature on  
32 changes to policy and laws in Mississippi with a goal of better  
33 identifying students at all levels struggling with mental health  
34 issues; training school, community college and university  
35 personnel related to student mental health, and thus improving  
36 health outcomes and the probability of student success.

37 (2) The members of the task force shall be as follows:

38 (a) The Chairmen of the Education Committees of the  
39 Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of Representatives,  
40 or their designees from their respective committee membership;

41 (b) The Chairmen of the Medicaid Committees of the  
42 Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of Representatives,  
43 or their designees from their respective committee membership;

44 (c) The Chairmen of the Universities and Colleges  
45 Committees of the Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of  
46 Representatives, or their designees from their respective  
47 committee membership;

48 (d) The Superintendent of the Mississippi Department of  
49 Education, or his or her designee;



- 50 (e) The Executive Director of the Mississippi  
51 Department of Mental Health, or his or her designee;
- 52 (f) The Director of the Mississippi Division of  
53 Medicaid, or his or her designee;
- 54 (g) The State Health Officer of the Mississippi  
55 Department of Health, or his or her designee;
- 56 (h) One (1) psychiatrist with expertise in treating  
57 children to be appointed by the Governor;
- 58 (i) One (1) clinical psychologist with expertise in  
59 treating children appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;
- 60 (j) One (1) school psychologist employed by a  
61 Mississippi Public School District, to be named by the Mississippi  
62 Association of Psychologists in the Schools;
- 63 (k) One (1) public school teacher appointed by the  
64 Governor;
- 65 (l) One (1) employee of a university counseling center,  
66 or a person otherwise responsible for coordinating or providing  
67 student mental health services on campus, appointed by the  
68 Governor;
- 69 (m) One (1) public school counselor appointed by the  
70 Lieutenant Governor;
- 71 (o) One (1) employee of a community college counseling  
72 center, or a person responsible for coordinating or providing  
73 student mental health services on campus, appointed by the  
74 Lieutenant Governor;



75 (p) One (1) school nurse employed in a Mississippi  
76 public school to be appointed by the Superintendent of Education;

77 (q) One (1) employee of a non-profit provider of mental  
78 and behavioral health services to youth, appointed by the  
79 Lieutenant Governor; and

80 (r) One (1) employee of a community mental health  
81 provider that provides services to a Mississippi public school  
82 school, appointed by the Governor.

83 (3) The task force shall meet within forty-five (45) days of  
84 the effective date of this act and shall evaluate the current  
85 data, resources, and laws and policies of the State of  
86 Mississippi. Specifically, the task force shall:

87 (a) Collect and analyze publicly available data and  
88 statistics related to the current state of student mental health,  
89 K-12 through the community college and university level;

90 (b) Explore the impact of trauma and mental health  
91 issues on student behavior, dropout and graduation rates, academic  
92 achievement, employment and related issues;

93 (c) Evaluate currently available resources for  
94 addressing student mental health including, but not limited to,  
95 partnerships with nonprofits or experts, telehealth opportunities,  
96 inpatient and outpatient resources;

97 (d) Review mental health training and professional  
98 development provided to K-12 school personnel and school personnel



99 at community colleges and universities for classroom management,  
100 identification, referral, intervention and prevention;

101 (e) Evaluate successful strategies for addressing  
102 challenges in student mental health in Mississippi and across the  
103 nation;

104 (f) Review the current workforce landscapes as it  
105 relates to psychologists, nurses, counselors, behavior  
106 interventionists and others who work in schools, community  
107 colleges and universities, and consider strategies to recruit  
108 sufficient personnel if there are workforce strategies; and

109 (g) Review any other matters related to the above  
110 issues or student mental health in Mississippi.

111 (4) The task force may request the assistance of the  
112 Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Community College  
113 Board, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, Mississippi  
114 Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health,  
115 the University of Mississippi School of Medicine; the Mississippi  
116 Division of Medicaid or any other related agency, entity or  
117 organization with expertise in student mental health issues and  
118 services.

119 (5) The Chairmen of the Education Committees in the  
120 Mississippi Senate and Mississippi House of Representatives shall  
121 call the first meeting. The members of the task force shall elect  
122 a Chair from among the members at its first meeting. The task  
123 force shall develop and report its findings and recommendations to



124 the Mississippi Legislature on or before October 1, 2024. A  
125 majority of the membership shall be required to approve any final  
126 report and recommendation. Meetings of the task force shall be  
127 held at the State Capitol; however, if it is not feasible for the  
128 task force to hold an in-person meeting, the task force may  
129 convene utilizing an online meeting platform that is accessible  
130 for viewing by the public.

131 (6) The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance  
132 Evaluation and Expenditure Review shall provide necessary clerical  
133 support for the meetings of the task force and the preparation of  
134 the report.

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

