



Overview of Legislation Impacting School Districts

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Questions?



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- The 2021 Mississippi Legislative Session began on Tuesday, January 5th amid talks of possibly postponing the session due to COVID-19 concerns.
- Many important bills were passed this year which impacted education such as the teacher pay raise bill, a bill requiring the implementation of a K-12 computer science curriculum, and a bill that holds districts harmless for ADA purposes.
- The legislature met mostly in person, but encouraged public participation virtually. All floor debates and committee meetings could be viewed virtually.

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House Bills

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House Bill 1

- Though not directly education related, HB 1 was the first bill considered during this session.
- HB 1 ratified the new state flag that was approved by voters in the November 2020 statewide election ushering in a new flag for Mississippi.
- HB 1 passed the House with a vote of 119-1, the Senate with a vote of 38-7, and was subsequently signed by Governor Reeves.

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House Bill 135

- This bill reenacts the Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act of 1998 and extends the repealer to July 1, 2024.
- The Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act provides funds for moving expenses, travel costs of interviews, and home loans to those who teach in geographical shortage areas.

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House Bill 504

- This bill clarifies the law to reflect the current four congressional districts, as opposed to the previous five districts, in relation to the members of the Commission on School Accreditation.
- The Commission on School Accreditation will now consist of 3 members from each of the 4 congressional districts, and 3 members from the state at large.



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House Bill 633

- This bill requires the implementation of a K-12 computer science curriculum.
- HB 633 accounts for teacher development and training for those teachers in the area of computer science along with funding for that training.
- The computer science curriculum will be implemented by the 2024-2025 school year.



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House Bill 754

- This is the dyslexia education and awareness bill that revises certain dyslexia diagnoses provisions.
- HB 754 requires that school districts shall make an initial determination of whether a student diagnosed with dyslexia meets eligibility criteria under the IDEA or if a 504 plan is appropriate.
- School districts shall conduct 4 hours of in-service training in dyslexia and related disorder awareness every 3 years for all licensed educators responsible for the instruction.



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House Bill 852

- This is the teacher pay raise bill that was originally supposed to be passed last year, but was delayed due to COVID-19.
- HB 852 provides a \$1,100 raise to teachers with 0-2 years of experience increasing their starting salary to \$37K and a \$1,000 increase for all other teachers.
- The bill also increases the minimum salary for assistant teachers by \$1,000.



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House Bill 1047

- This bill deletes the cap on the number of national board-certified nurses and speech-language pathologists and audiologists who are allowed to receive a salary supplement for national board certification.
- HB 1047 also allows for athletic trainers who have acquired national board certification to be eligible for an annual salary supplement.



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House Bill 1123

- This bill revises funding and specifies teaching standards and prescribes certain benchmarks under the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013.
- The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 helps to ensure that children have access to a voluntary prekindergarten program.
- Every 3 years, MDE is required to provide a rigorous evaluation of program effectiveness to the Legislature and the Governor. The PEER committee shall review that report and submit a summary.



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House Bill 1179

- This bill creates the William F. Winter and Jack Reed Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program.
- HB 1179 aims to consolidate previously unused loan programs and consolidate them into one, fully funded loan repayment program for new teachers.
- This program will be available for new teachers who commit to teaching in Mississippi Schools. It is a three year commitment with payments increasing each year.
- Teachers in critical needs areas would receive more.



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House Bill 1323

- This bill addresses executive session procedures under the Open Meetings Act and adds a few other reasons for boards to be able to enter closed session.
- HB 1323 allows any public body to enter into executive session for strategic development of plans to combat, eliminate, reduce or respond to human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children.



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House Bill 1387

- HB 1387 is the FY 22 pre-K-12 education funding bill. FY 22 education funding is increased by approximately 4% over current FY 21 funding.
- Among other provisions, the bill includes \$51.4 million for the teacher pay raise and \$13 million to cover the increase in health insurance premiums for educators.
- It also includes an additional \$8 million for classroom supplies and an additional \$9.7 million for early learning collaboratives.



Senate Bills

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Senate Bill 2149

- This bill will hold school districts harmless in the calculation of 2020-21 average daily attendance (ADA) for the purposes of funding under the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP).
- SB 2149 states that district's average daily attendance for the 2019-2020 scholastic year will be used in place of the 2020-2021 scholastic year unless the ADA for this previous year was higher.

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Senate Bill 2267

- SB 2267 aims to help alleviate the teacher shortage in the state by attempting to entice teachers from out-of-state and in good standing to attain reciprocity in Mississippi.
- This bill allows the Department of Education to grant licenses to teachers if they possess a valid standard license from another state.
- Teachers would still need to pass a background check at the school level.

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Senate Bill 2536

- This bill addresses school athletics in regards to gender separate sports teams.
- SB 2536 requires any public school that is a member of the MHSAA to designate its athletic teams or sports according to biological sex.
- Each team must be designated as male, female, or coed.
- Athletic teams or sports designated for females cannot be open to students of the male sex.

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Mississippi Tax Reform Bill

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House Bill 1439

- This bill sought to create the Mississippi Tax Freedom Act of 2021.
- The Act's goal was to eliminate the state individual income tax and lower the grocery tax.
- The state sales tax would also increase under the Act.
- At one point during the session, the teacher pay raise bill resided in this bill until HB 852 was passed by the Senate Education Committee.

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