

| Section Number(s) | Details in Bill |
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| Sections 1 - 3 | Establishes the Education Freedom Act and includes legislative intent and definitions. Defines the MS Education Freedom Program as a comprehensive initiative including Magnolia Student Accounts (MSAs), student portability scholarships, and Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs). |
| Section 4 | Establishes the Office of the State Treasurer as the Education Freedom Program administrator (referred to as fund manager). Allows the fund manager to contract with certified educational assistance organizations to administer the program. |
| Sections 5 - 6 | <p>Establishes rules for the Magnolia Student Accounts (MSAs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins in 2027-2028 academic year • Participation will be limited to 12,500 students in initial year; participation will increase by 2,500 students in subsequent years for 4 years; increases in 5th year and beyond will be determined by demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Half of the MSAs will be reserved for students who were in public schools the preceding school year ○ Half of the MSAs will be reserved for students without regard to prior public school attendance ○ All students will be eligible for MSAs but priority will be given to students based on median household income. There are 3 priority levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students with household income not exceeding 100% of the area median income will receive first priority; ▪ Students with income between 100% and 200% of the median income will receive second priority; ▪ Students with income between 200% and 300% will receive third priority; ▪ A lottery will be conducted if there is demand and siblings of participating students will be given priority in the lottery. • MSAs will be available for the following uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students can use the MSAs to attend participating schools, which will all be subject to fund manager approval. The following school types are eligible to be participating schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accredited non-public schools in MS; ▪ MS post-secondary schools; ▪ Public schools not located in the student’s resident school district ○ Students can use the MSAs to attend non-participating schools. ○ Students can use the MSAs on legitimate home instruction programs • The amount of the MSA that each student receives will vary based on where the student will spend it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For students attending participating schools, the MSA will equal the base student cost according to the MS Student Funding Formula for the applicable school year. ○ For students attending non-participating schools and not enrolled in a home-instruction program, the MSA shall not exceed \$2,000 (Max of \$4,000 per household) ○ For students utilizing a legitimate home instruction program, the MSA shall not exceed \$1,000 (Max of \$1,000 per family) • MSA funds may be used on the following eligible expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tuition |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fees ○ The cost of testing ○ The cost of school uniforms ○ Expenses determined by a participating school related to supplies, equipment, technology, curriculum, and services ○ Transportation to and from an education service provider or participating school ○ Other expenses approved by the fund manager ● MSA funds may not be used on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Televisions ○ Video games ○ Home theaters or audio equipment ○ Virtual reality products |
| Section 7 | <p>Establishes that the Equal Opportunity Scholarship for Students with Special Needs is separate and distinct from Magnolia Student Accounts and student portability scholarships. Students may only be eligible for one of these programs at a time.</p> |
| Section 8 | <p>Establishes standardized test requirements for students receiving MSAs. Participating students will have to complete one of the following assessments, and the parent of the student is allowed to select which assessment option for his/her student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A standardized assessment aligned to the curriculum of the participating school where the student is enrolled; ● A nationally norm-referenced achievement assessment; ● Or a nationally recognized achievement assessment <p>Students with disabilities are exempt from the assessment requirement.</p> <p>The fund manager will compile and publish a statewide program-level report summarizing academic performance of participating students annually.</p> <p>Participating students will not be required to take the state standardized assessments administered by the Mississippi Department of Education.</p> |
| Section 9 | <p>Establishes rules for education service providers to be approved by the fund manager. Entities eligible to be education service providers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating schools ● Organizations ● Certified educational assistance organizations (CEAOs) ● Individuals other than the parent of the participating student that provides educational services or goods <p>To be approved, the education service provider must be approved by the fund manager and agree to a list of requirements related to reporting, non-discrimination, and child protections. The fund manager can suspend or revoke the approval of a participating school.</p> |

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| | Establishes that school districts may become education service providers, and allows for “maximum flexibility to accommodate participating students,” including creating a process for accepting, selecting, or limiting the number of allowable participating students who are not assigned to it. |
| Section 10 | <p>Establishes rules for certified educational assistance organizations (CEAOs). CEOOs will receive funds from the fund manager and hold the funds in a trust for participating students. CEOOs will make transfers to the account of each participating student on a monthly basis. They are allowed to be compensated up to 3% of their total appropriation for administering the program.</p> <p>The CEOO is responsible for verifying that the participating student is not enrolled in a school district or charter school and thereby ineligible to receive a MSA.</p> <p>The fund manager will establish a process for CEOOs to process payments from a participant’s MSA account to approved education service providers and vendors.</p> |
| Section 11 | Allows for any leftover MSA funds to be used on eligible post secondary education or career credentials. Funds must be used within 4 years of the student’s graduation. |
| Section 12 | <p>Establishes the Education Freedom Fund to fund MSAs, student portability scholarships, and ESAs. The fund consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative appropriations for ESAs • Legislative appropriations for MSAs of students in participating schools, which will be calculated in accordance with the participation caps within this bill. (eg. Year 1: [(Base student cost) x (max of 12,500 participating students)]) • Legislative appropriation for MSAs of students in non-participating programs (eg. Year 1: [\$2000 x (max of 12,500)]) • Legislative appropriation for MSAs of students in legitimate home instruction programs (maximum of \$5 million) • Legislative appropriation for student portability scholarships (maximum of \$5 million) • Federal funding or funds from other state agencies and local governments • Gifts, grants, and donations <p>The fund shall not lapse into the state general fund at the close of the fiscal year.</p> |
| Section 13 | <p>Allows for students to transfer to another district in which they do not live without the consent of their home district. However, the district in which they are seeking to transfer must provide consent.</p> <p>Allows for athletic eligibility for transfer students to be determined by the MS High Schools Association</p> <p>Mandates each local school board to adopt policies to govern the process for enrollment options including policies regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enrollment timelines • prohibition of discrimination against any pupils based on race, address, ability, ethnicity, sex, or socioeconomic status • “evaluation of whether a student should be enrolled based on the student’s academic or athletic performance,” and • the enrollment capacity for each school and grade level |

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| | <p>For each transfer student, the MS Department of Education (MDE) will pay the receiving school district an amount equal to the total funding formula funds. This amount will be based on data (ADM) from the student’s home district during the previous year. MDE will make these payments monthly.</p> <p>MDE will collect, analyze, and publish the capacity and transfer data from each district on an annual basis. The data will include the number of participants, the number of denied requests, and “other relevant information.” MDE will also collect the names, grade classification, grade point average, gender, and ethnicity of all transfer students.</p> <p>School districts are eligible to apply for a student portability scholarship for each transfer student under the Education Freedom Program in order to offset the local funding that does not follow the student. (Parents cannot apply or control the scholarship.)</p> <p>The amount of a student portability scholarship is subject to availability, and it is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. It will be the lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The receiving school district’s out-of-district transfer tuition rate • The portion of the local contribution that does not follow the student under the MS Student Funding formula. • \$2000 <p>If a district receives a student portability scholarship for a student, they cannot charge additional tuition or fees to the student’s parent.</p> |
| Section 14 | <p>Establishes the Tim Tebow Act, which allows for students in a legitimate home instruction program to participate in “interscholastic extracurricular activities” at the public school where they would be assigned within their school district.</p> |
| Section 15 - 25 | <p>Establishes the Adolescent Literacy Initiative to provide a system of support for 5th through 8th grade students with reading difficulties. The system of support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning opportunities for teachers and leaders grounded in the science of reading; • Assessment systems to identify student needs; • Coaching support for 4th-8th grade teachers; and • Educator preparation programs focused on equipping teachers to effectively teach reading. <p>Calls for the MDE to develop a list of High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for districts to use in grades 4-8.</p> <p>MDE will also provide a list of approved reliable and valid reading assessments for districts to use in grades 4-8. The assessments will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be administered 3 times per year; • have progress monitoring and diagnostic capabilities; and • measure fluency and comprehension <p>Mandates districts to offer reading intervention services to students in 4-8 grade who exhibit deficiencies in reading based on the approved literacy assessment beginning in the first 30 days of school. Intervention services must be given to students with reading deficiencies in addition to core reading instruction. 4th - 8th grade students with deficiencies must also receive an individual reading plan no later than 30 days after the identification of the deficiency. This plan must be reviewed annually. Parents of students with reading deficiencies must be notified with 10 days of identification of the deficiency.</p> |

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| | <p>Mandates school boards to employ at least 1 reading specialist, interventionist, and/or dyslexia therapist in any school serving 4th - 8th grade students.</p> <p>Mandates educator preparation programs to require all graduating teacher candidates in the areas of social studies, science, and ELA to successfully complete a reading training program approved by MDE.</p> |
| <p>Sections 26 - 38</p> | <p>Establishes the Mississippi Math Act. Mandates the MDE to administer the Moving Mathematics in Mississippi (M³) Program for participating districts only. MDE will prioritize high-needs districts to participate in this program. The program includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The placement of math coaches in schools; • The administration of math screeners on students in grades K-5 • Use of the Grade 5 math assessment score to identify students in need of Individualized Math Plans (IMPs) • Ongoing regional training in math and professional development for teachers <p>Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, districts will be required to administer the mathematics screener 3 times per year for students in grades K-5. Students scoring below a benchmark set by MDE must receive an IMP.</p> <p>Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, MDE will publish an Algebra Readiness Indicator scale score for the Grade 5 state math assessment. Districts shall use this score to inform placement, acceleration, and development of IMPs for students scoring below the indicator score prior to entry into middle school mathematics.</p> |
| <p>Sections 39 - 57</p> | <p>Amends the Charter Schools Act with several clarifications. Also makes the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows charter management organizations to operate its schools as a single local educational agency or as multiple local educational agencies. • Allows the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board to approve charter schools in any school district with one or more D-rated or F-rated schools, regardless of the accountability rating of the district. • Reconstitutes the make-up of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board (MCSAB). • Establishes that the chairperson of the MCSAB be selected from among the members appointed by the governor. • Allows the MCSAB to approve expansions, mergers, consolidations, or reconfigurations of charter schools under the same governing board. • Removes the 3% administration fee paid from charter schools to the MCSAB, and instead funds the MCSAB through a legislative appropriation. • Allows multiple authorizers to exist in Mississippi (instead of one state authorizer). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishes the MS Community College Board and the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning as authorizers of charter schools operating in partnership with postsecondary institutions • Allows for a rolling application process for charter school applicants. • Allows charter schools applicants who are denied an opportunity to remedy conditions upon which the denial was based before denial is finalized. • Allows for 50% of teachers in a charter school to be exempt from state teacher licensure requirements. • Allows charter school teachers and other staff who are nationally board certified to receive an annual salary supplement of \$6000 (similar to teachers and staff in school districts). |

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| Section 58 | <p>Updates charter school personnel requirements by recognizing multiple charter school authorizers rather than a single authorizer.</p> <p>Clarifies that charter school personnel are subject to the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics.</p> |
| Sections 59-60 | <p>Authorizes Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) to submit student data to the Mississippi Department of Education on behalf of their charter schools and to collect payments on behalf of those schools.</p> <p>Removes the requirement that a charter authorizer approve contracts between a charter school and a school district for the provision of special education services.</p> |
| Section 61 | <p>Clarifies that charter schools must follow Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) standards and directs the State Auditor to develop a charter-school-specific financial accounting manual.</p> <p>Specifies that charter schools are not required to follow the MDE financial manual or financial policies derived from laws not applicable to charters.</p> <p>Clarifies that the nonprofit entity holding the charter contract, rather than the charter school itself, is subject to audit requirements, and prevents duplicative reporting to both MDE and the authorizer.</p> |
| Sections 62-69 | Brings forward selected provisions of the Mississippi Charter Schools Act. |
| Sections 70-74 | Revises statutory language to reflect the existence of multiple charter school authorizers rather than a single authorizer. |
| Section 75 | <p>Adds charter schools to school accreditation statutes.</p> <p>Authorizes local school boards to incorporate financial literacy instruction in grades 6–8 and requires completion of a financial literacy course as a condition of high school graduation.</p> |
| Section 76 | <p>Directs MDE and the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board to develop an additional accountability model for charter schools.</p> <p>Requires the State Board of Education to award additional accountability points to school districts with charter schools and to integrate the School Accountability Dashboard requirements into the accreditation system.</p> |
| Section 77 | Increases the minimum salary for assistant teachers from \$17,000 to \$20,000, beginning with the 2026–2027 school year. |
| Sections 78-80 | Increases dyslexia therapy scholarships and speech-language impairment scholarships by \$2,000 and brings forward related statutory provisions. |
| Sections 81-82 | Requires school district boards to adopt financial literacy as a graduation requirement and establishes the Financial Literacy Trust Fund to support related instruction. |

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| Sections 83-87 | Creates the School Accountability Dashboard Act, requiring all school districts to publish a standardized school performance data dashboard on their websites. Directs MDE to develop a uniform dashboard template and requires districts to submit monthly fiscal accounting reports to MDE. |
| Sections 88-89 | Allows retired teachers to teach in any school district in the state, elect to continue to receive their retirement allowance, and adjusts the employer contribution from school districts to PERS. |
| Sections 90-97 | Aligns the administration of special education ESAs to the vouchers created in this bill. Additionally, this section would allow all eligible students to apply, receive \$2,000 above the base student cost, and attend schools or programs of parent choice. |
| Sections 98-105 | Establishes AGENTS of Excellence Act to create regional, dual-enrollment early-college high schools with a boarding option. The school's focus on STEM and technical skills and prioritizes low-income students attending low-performing schools. |
| Sections 106-112 | Brings forward the code sections that govern the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement and the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law for possible amendment. |
| Section 113 | Requires MDE and the State Board of Education to request a federal waiver to remove ALL assessment requirements in grades 3-8. |
| Section 114 | Updates the definition of average compensation for a PERS member who joined the system after March 1, 2026, to align with those who joined the system before March 1, 2026. |
| Section 115 | Brings forward the code section that defines and calculates "creditable service" in PERS. |
| Section 116 | Adjusts the age and time of service requirements for the new retirement tier to take effect on March 1, 2026. |
| Section 117 | Brings forward the code section that governs cost-of-living adjustments for PERS. |
| Section 118 | Adjusts the age requirements for surviving spouses of PERS members. |
| Sections 119-120; 122 | Brings forward the code sections governing PERS retirement payment options, refunds, rollovers, repayment options, payments during pending disability claims, and the new fifth-tier benefits. |
| Section 121 | Sets the percentage school districts contribute to PERS for working retired teachers. |
| Sections 123-124 | Exempts the Office of the State Treasurer from State Personnel Board rules for one year as the Education Freedom Program is implemented. |
| Sections 125-128 | Brings forward the code sections governing the public procurement process. |
| Sections 129-131 | Allows independent schools to contract with local law enforcement to hire school resource officers and to receive donations of funds or services from municipalities for character development or public service programs. |

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| Section 132 | Creates a \$10M pilot program to increase the number of JROTC programs operating in the state. |
| Section 133 | Brings forward the code section governing student assignment to public school districts. |
| Sections 134-136 | Consolidates Copiah County School District and Hazlehurst City School District by the start of the 2028-2029 school year. |
| Sections 137-139 | Allows local school boards to implement policies to designate time at the start of the school day for prayer and reflection. |
| Section 140 | Technical change to adjust the responsibilities of the Office of the State Treasurer to align with its new role in administering vouchers. |
| Section 141 | Military families will now be required to have a current, valid Mississippi auto registration to finalize the enrollment of their children in public school. |
| Section 142 | Directs the MDE to submit a unified allocation plan to the US Department of Education by Dec. 31, 2026 seeking a waiver to consolidate and streamline the administration of multiple federal programs. |
| Section 143 | If any part of this act is found invalid or unconstitutional, the rest of the act remains in effect. |
| Section 144 | The act takes effect on July 1, 2026. |