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Mississippi Senate Proposes Legislation Providing \$181 Million to Fully Fund Schools

Jackson, Miss.—The Mississippi Senate unveiled legislation to fully fund the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) and inject an additional \$181.1 million into school budgets.

The proposal comes on the heels of the largest pay raise in Mississippi history, a \$240 million investment in education, which was enacted last Session and will be rolled into the formula this year.

“With conservative management, we have significantly cut taxes, trimmed state government, and paid off debt during this term. Mississippi is still in excellent financial shape. Now, we need to make sure our schools have the funds they need to provide our students with a world-class education,” Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann said. “The most important resource we have in Mississippi is a child’s brain.”

At a joint meeting of the Senate Appropriations and Education Committees today, Senate Education Chairman Dennis DeBar explained three technical updates to the MAEP formula which would accompany the appropriation. These include updating the way the base student cost is calculated in non-recalculation years and changing the percentage cap on local contribution. Recalculation based on actual expenses occurs once every four years.

Current law allows the Department of Education to increase the base student cost by an inflationary factor each year that is equal to 40 percent of the previous year’s base student cost multiplied by the annual rate of inflation.

Under the new proposal, in non-recalculation years, the inflationary portion would be determined by taking 25 percent of the previous year’s base student cost and multiplying it by

the 20-year average annual rate of inflation, which equates to 2.5 percent this year. The first change reflects the actual amount of a district budget which is subject to inflation, which administrators have reported is about 20 to 25 percent. The second change provides a rate of inflation which is more reflective of the economy over time and helps lawmakers better predict increases to fully fund from year to year.

The third change will adjust the amount of the required local contribution to the lesser of the value of 28 mills, which is current law, or 29.5 percent, rather than 27 percent, of the basic adequate education cost.

“When we started this term, we had a goal to conclude it by significantly raising teacher pay and fully funding MAEP. The technical amendments to the formula allow us to update its elements while leaving it intact,” DeBar said. “We are very proud of the Senate’s leadership, we are thankful for the input so far from members of the education community, and we look forward to working with the House to move legislation providing full funding to the Governor’s desk.”

Senate Appropriations Chairman Briggs Hopson agreed.

“Our announcement of this commitment to education is another milestone in a historic four-year term of the Mississippi Legislature. I am proud to have worked with Lt. Governor Hosemann, Senator DeBar, and others in pairing a massive financial investment with an updated equitable education funding formula that will ultimately benefit all of Mississippi,” Hopson said. “With the significant teacher pay raise from last year, other changes we have implemented over time—like the Third Grade reading test, and the hard work of our educators across the state, Mississippi is on the precipice of excellence in education.”

House Bills [1369](#) and [1613](#), the legislation which includes the technical changes to MAEP and the appropriation, now move to the full Senate for consideration.

For more information about Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann, visit www.ltgovhosemann.ms.gov.