

# FACT SHEET

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# MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013

*House Bill 369 will not improve public schools in Mississippi. It uses a failed school improvement strategy to improve academic achievement in students who characteristically underperform on standardized tests. Provisions in the bill will in effect privatize public education while slowly destroying the public education system in Mississippi. The adverse effects of HB 369 will create numerous equity and access problems resulting from charter schools prohibiting admission and reducing the quality of services for thousands of students.*

# **HOUSE BILL 369 WILL NOT IMPROVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MISSISSIPPI**

**HOUSE BILL 369 (HB 369)** uses a failed school improvement strategy to improve academic achievement for students underperforming academically. The bill follows the usual pattern of reforming public education using the market model approach. In doing so, the bill depicts the charter school model as the *panacea* for raising academic achievement for students from schools that historically perform poorly on state standardized tests. In reality, HB 369 and SB 2189 are not designed to improve public education. The provisions in these bills will in effect privatize public education. In fact, HB 369 is very explicit in its intention to start another public school system in Mississippi while slowly destroying the current system managed by elected boards.

The adverse effects of HB 369 will create numerous equity and access problems resulting from charter schools prohibiting admission and quality of services for thousands of students. HB 369 prohibits charter school employees from participating in the state retirement system while opening the door for all public schools to become charter schools. There are approximately 33,103 public school teachers in Mississippi. Losing these employees will have devastating effects on or even destroy the state retirement system. This scenario also holds true for those charter schools not allowing their employees to participate in the state health insurance program. *The result of thousands of employees not participating in the state retirement and health care systems will have long-term effects on every current and retired employee from the state of Mississippi.*

## **WHY HOUSE BILL 369 WILL NOT WORK...**

- **HB 369** uses a model that has no proven track record for increasing academic achievement in students who historically underperformed.
- **HB 369** establishes low standards therefore eliminating *performance-based* accreditation – as is required for public schools – from charter schools, which receive state accreditation upon “approval” of their charters.
- **HB 369** exempts charter schools from participating in the state education department’s Health Education Programs.
- **HB 369** should require charter schools to have certified teachers and administrators just like all other public schools. The hiring of trained and certified teachers and principals follows Best Practices in numerous studies.
- **HB 369** exempts charter school employees from certain educational qualifications required of early childhood employees.
- **HB 369** exempts charter school students from in school screening for abnormal curvature of the spine which may be required by the state board of education.
- **HB 369** does not require charter schools to participate in the Alliance for Families Program.
- **HB 369** exempts charter schools from reporting requirements relating to the type and

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amount of work performed at each grade level.

## **WHY HOUSE BILL 369 WILL NOT WORK...**

- **HB 369** removes charter schools from the requirements relating to the transportation of students and school busing.
- **HB 369** provides that charter schools may contract with an accredited online course provider for the delivery of virtual courses to students enrolled in the charter school.
- **HB 369** places an unfair hardship on local school boards whose schools have been taken over by the state. These local school districts must not only restructure their budgets but also develop new education plans for their school district.
- **HB 369** gives unquestionable autonomy to charter schools in the areas of admission, curriculum, fiscal control, staffing and school focus.
- **HB 369** does not provide any academic projections on how long it should take for charter schools to turn failing schools into "A" or "B" rated schools. It also allows "A", "B" and "C" rated schools to become charter schools, thus permitting an unlimited number of public schools to be converted to charters even if they are doing well. HB 369 should live up to its mission to improve the achievement of students in *failing* schools and only a limited number of "D" or "F" rated schools should be allowed to become charters.
- **HB 369** promotes failure and mediocre performance by allowing failing charter schools to remain open for five years before closing them.
- **HB 369** creates charter schools through an undemocratic process without accountability to the public as: (1) charter schools are run by private self-appointed boards, (2) charter schools do not report to the duly elected local school board or the Mississippi Education Department.
- **HB 369** creates charter schools which take millions of dollars from local school board budgets, resulting in massive cuts for local public schools (teacher layoffs, elimination of educational programs and cuts in classroom funding).
- **HB 369** provides for poor financial oversight of charter schools and does not cap administrative costs.