MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representatives McCarty, Ford (73rd), Owen, Yates, McLean, Summers

To: Education; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 925

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT RULES AND REGULATIONS REQUIRING NEWLY CONSTRUCTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS OR CERTAIN EXISTING SCHOOLS UNDERGOING RENOVATIONS TO HAVE A MINIMUM NUMBER OF WATER BOTTLE FILLING STATIONS; TO PRESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL WATER BOTTLE FILLING STATIONS AND DRINKING WATER FOUNTAINS; TO ALLOW STUDENTS AND STAFF TO CARRY REFILLABLE WATER BOTTLES WHILE IN SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SCHOOL PREMISES; TO SPECIFY THAT THE NEW REQUIREMENTS ARE APPLICABLE TO NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND CERTAIN RENOVATION PROJECTS COMMENCED AFTER JANUARY 1, 2022; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations that require those schools described under subsection (6) to have water bottle filling stations consistent with the requirements of this section.

(2) The State Board of Education shall allow students and staff to carry refillable water bottles in school facilities and on school premises in order to encourage water consumption and to mitigate the spread of germs and diseases.

(3) The State Department of Education shall not approve the plans and specifications for a new public school building contemplated by a local school board or for any addition to or

renovation of an existing school building, as set forth in subsection (6), unless the plans and specifications provide for the following:

(a) A minimum of one (1) water bottle filling station on each floor and wing of each school building;

(b) A minimum of one (1) water bottle refilling station located in or near gymnasiums, cafeterias and other high-traffic areas; and

(c) A minimum of one (1) drinking water fountain or water bottle filling station for every one hundred (100) students projected to attend the school upon completion of the proposed construction.

(4) A water bottle filling station installed in a public school building must:

(a) Dispense filtered, clean drinking water; and

(b) Be regularly cleaned and maintained.

Bottle filling stations may be integrated into drinking fountains.

(5) A drinking water fountain installed in a public school building must:

(a) Be equipped with a protective cowl;

(b) Be equipped with a waterspout at least one (1) inch above the overflow rim of the drinking water fountain;

(c) Dispense filtered, clean drinking water; and

(d) Be regularly cleaned and maintained.

(6) This section applies to:

(a) New school buildings, the construction of which commences on or after January 1, 2022;

(b) Existing school facilities that undergo capital improvements projects to renovate, repair, remodel or enlarge a school building commencing on or after January 1, 2022, if either:

(i) The total capital improvements project cost is One Hundred Thousand Dollars ($100,000.00) or more; or

(ii) The total capital improvements project cost is less than One Hundred Thousand Dollars ($100,000.00) but the project plans include the installation of additional drinking water fountains or the replacement of existing drinking water fountains; and

(c) Schools in which one or more existing drinking water fountains are replaced or new drinking water fountains are installed on or after January 1, 2022.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.