SENATE BILL NO. 2432
(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THE SPECIAL MISSISSIPPI OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SHALL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO ANY STUDENT ENTERING THE NINTH GRADE IN THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR OR THEREAFTER; TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-17, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THE CAREER TRACK PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS NOT PURSUING A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE SHALL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO ANY STUDENT ENTERING THE NINTH GRADE IN THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR OR THEREAFTER; TO AMEND SECTION 37-23-147, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE PROCESS BY WHICH SCHOOLS PROVIDING FULL INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL ACADEMIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE RECOGNIZED; TO RENAME THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE AS THE MISSISSIPPI SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-16-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-16-11. (1) A student who has been properly classified, in accordance with rules established by the State Board of Education shall, upon meeting all applicable requirements prescribed by the district school board, be awarded a special diploma in a form prescribed by the state board; however, such special graduation requirements prescribed by the district school board shall include minimum graduation requirements as prescribed...
by the state board. Any such student who meets all special
requirements of the district school board for his exceptionality,
but is unable to meet the appropriate special state minimum
requirements, shall be awarded a special certificate of completion
in a form prescribed by the state board. Nothing provided in this
section, however, shall be construed to limit or restrict the
right of an exceptional student solely to a special diploma. Any
such student shall, upon proper request, be afforded the
opportunity to fully meet all requirements of Section 37-16-7
through the standard procedures established therein and thereby
qualify for a standard diploma upon graduation.

(2) The State Board of Education shall develop and issue
criteria for a Mississippi Occupational Diploma for students
having a disability as defined by the federal Individuals with
Disabilities Education Act. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school
year, any such student, upon proper request, shall be afforded the
opportunity to fully meet such requirements and qualify for an
occupational diploma upon graduation.

(3) The special Mississippi Occupational Diploma for
students with disabilities shall not be available to any student
entering the Ninth Grade in the 2017-2018 school year or
thereafter, pending State Board of Education approval of new
graduation options.

SECTION 2. Section 37-16-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
amended as follows:
37-16-17. (1) Purpose. (a) The purpose of this section is to create a quality option in Mississippi's high schools for students not wishing to pursue a baccalaureate degree, which shall consist of challenging academic courses and modern career-technical studies. The goal for students pursuing the career track is to graduate from high school with a standard diploma and credit toward a community college certification in a career-technical field. These students also shall be encouraged to take the national assessment in the career-technical field in which they become certified.

(b) The State Board of Education shall develop and adopt course and curriculum requirements for career track programs offered by local public school boards in accordance with this section. The Mississippi Community College Board and the State Board of Education jointly shall determine course and curriculum requirements for the career track program.

(2) Alternative career track; description; curriculum. (a) A career track shall provide a student with greater technical skill and a strong academic core and shall be offered to each high school student enrolled in a public school district. The career track program shall be linked to postsecondary options and shall prepare students to pursue either a degree or certification from a postsecondary institution, an industry-based training or certification, an apprenticeship, the military, or immediate entrance into a career field. The career track shall be designed
primarily for those students who are not college bound and shall provide them with alternatives to entrance into a four-year university or college after high school graduation.

(b) Students pursuing a career track shall be afforded the opportunity to dually enroll in a community or technical college or to participate in a business internship or work-study program, when such opportunities are available and appropriate.

(c) Each public school district shall offer a career track program approved by the State Board of Education.

(d) Students in a career track program shall complete an academic core of courses and a career and technical sequence of courses.

(e) The twenty-one (21) course unit requirements for the career track shall consist of the following:

   (i) At least four (4) English credits, including English I and English II.

   (ii) At least three (3) mathematics credits, including Algebra I.

   (iii) At least three (3) science credits, including one (1) unit of biology.

   (iv) At least three (3) social studies credits, including one (1) unit of U.S. History and one (1) unit of Mississippi Studies/U.S. Government.

   (v) At least one-half (1/2) credit in health or physical education.
(vi) At least four (4) credits in career and technical education courses in the dual enrollment-dual credit programs authorized under Section 37-15-38.

(vii) At least one (1) credit in integrated technology with optional end of course testing.

(viii) At least two and one-half (2-1/2) credits in additional electives or career and technical education courses required by the local school board, as approved by the State Board of Education. Academic courses within the career track of the standard diploma shall provide the knowledge and skill necessary for proficiency on the state subject area tests.

(3) Nothing in this section shall disallow the development of a dual enrollment program with a technical college so long as an individual school district, with approval from the State Department of Education, agrees to implement such a program in connection with a technical college and the agreement is also approved by the proprietary school's commission.

(4) The career track program for students not pursuing a Baccalaureate Degree shall not be available to any student entering the Ninth Grade in the 2017-2018 school year or thereafter.

SECTION 3. Section 37-23-147, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-23-147. (1) The State Department of Education shall establish goals for the performance of **students with**
disabilities that will promote the purpose of IDEA and are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for * * * students established by the State Department of Education. Performance indicators used to assess progress toward achieving those goals that, at a minimum, address the performance of * * * students with disabilities on assessments, drop-out rates, and graduation rates shall be developed. Every two (2) years, the progress toward meeting the established performance goals shall be reported to the public.

(2) To encourage the full inclusion of * * * students with disabilities in all aspects of academic and extracurricular activities, the State Department of Education * * * may provide special recognition to the schools receiving such designation and their school districts. Examples of such recognition may include, but not be limited to: public announcements and events, certificates of recognition and plaques for teachers, principals, superintendents and parents, and media announcements utilizing the services of Mississippi Educational Television. This special recognition * * * may be awarded to * * * elementary, * * * middle * * * or high schools, based on entries submitted to the Mississippi Special Education Advisory * * * Panel by the deadline * * * to be determined annually by the panel. These entries shall be in the form of a report, * * * listing the name, address and telephone number of the school district/school; teacher or staff responsible for administering the program; type
of position held by each of these employees including credentials; description of the program; number of students with disabilities included; type and level of severity of disabilities; number of students without disabilities involved in the program; how long the program has been in operation; benefit of program to all students; and a description of how this program could be replicated by other school districts. Winners of the Exemplary Inclusion Program contest shall be chosen annually by the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel at a date determined by the panel.

Recognition may be given to these schools during a meeting of the Mississippi State Board of Education at a date determined by the board. Information on these exemplary programs shall be provided to other school districts and the general public through news releases, the state department website, and other similar avenues.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2017.