

By: Representatives Hopkins, Currie, Arnold, To: Education  
Baria, Boyd, Gibbs (36th), McNeal

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1050

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO REINSTATE THE SPECIAL MISSISSIPPI OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA FOR  
3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, WHICH SHALL BE AWARDED TO ELIGIBLE  
4 STUDENTS HAVING MET THE PRESCRIBED REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION  
5 BEGINNING IN THE 2019-2020 ACADEMIC YEAR; TO BRING FORWARD SECTION  
6 37-16-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, FOR THE PURPOSE OF POSSIBLE  
7 AMENDMENTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

11 37-16-11. (1) A student who has been properly classified,  
12 in accordance with rules established by the State Board of  
13 Education as an "educable person with an intellectual disability,"  
14 "trainable person with an intellectual disability," "deaf,"  
15 "specific learning disabled," "physically handicapped whose  
16 ability to communicate orally or in writing is seriously impaired"  
17 or "emotionally handicapped" shall not be required to meet all  
18 requirements of Section 37-16-7, and shall, upon meeting all  
19 applicable requirements prescribed by the district school board,  
20 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 \* \* \* be reinstated and be made available to any student \* \* \* having met all other graduation requirements beginning in the 2019-2020 academic year and each year thereafter.



46           **SECTION 2.** Section 37-16-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
47 brought forward as follows:

48           37-16-7. (1) Each district school board shall establish  
49 standards for graduation from its schools which shall include as a  
50 minimum:

51                   (a) Mastery of minimum academic skills as measured by  
52 assessments developed and administered by the State Board of  
53 Education.

54                   (b) Completion of a minimum number of academic credits,  
55 and all other applicable requirements prescribed by the district  
56 school board.

57                   (c) By school, information on high school graduation  
58 rates. High schools with graduation rates lower than eighty  
59 percent (80%) must submit a detailed plan to the Mississippi  
60 Department of Education to restructure the high school experience  
61 to improve graduation rates.

62           (2) A student who meets all requirements prescribed in  
63 subsection (1) of this section shall be awarded a standard diploma  
64 in a form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

65           (3) The State Board of Education may establish student  
66 proficiency standards for promotion to grade levels leading to  
67 graduation.

68           **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
69 and after July 1, 2019.

