

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
September 14, 2017

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

03. Action: Revise Standard 14, Appendix A, and Appendix G of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016: Graduation Requirements* effective school year 2018-2019 [Goals 1, 2, and 4 – MBE Strategic Plan]
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments)

Background Information: The Offices of Accreditation, Secondary Education, and Special Education began the process of examining Mississippi diploma requirements in the fall of 2015, with the convening of a Graduation Task Force. Based on feedback from stakeholders and surveys, the Graduation Task Force has endorsed the recommendations being discussed. The proposed recommendations included having one (1) Traditional Diploma with the opportunity for students to earn a career and technical endorsement, academic endorsement or a distinguished academic endorsement. Additionally, recommendations included an Alternate Diploma option for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD). The proposed recommendations were approved by the Commission on School Accreditation on June 15, 2017.

On July 13, 2017, the State Board of Education granted approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process to revise Standard 14, Appendix A and Appendix G of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016: Graduation Requirements*. The proposed revisions would allow students the opportunity to earn an endorsement with their high school diploma and would provide students with disabilities an opportunity to earn a traditional diploma. Oral proceedings were held on August 22, 2017, and August 24, 2017. In addition, the public comment period was open through August 31, 2017.

All public comments have been compiled and will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for consideration during its special-called meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2017.

This item references Goals 1, 2, and 4 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2016-2020 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Note: This item is subject to change and is contingent upon approval by the Commission on School Accreditation on Wednesday, September 13, 2017.

Item A
Traditional Diploma and Endorsement Chart
Alternate Diploma Chart

Proposed Mississippi Diploma

Mississippi has two diploma options: The Traditional Diploma and the Alternate Diploma. The Traditional Diploma is for all students. The Alternate Diploma is an option for students with a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD).

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA OPTION

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English I English II
Mathematics	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I
Science	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology I
Social Studies	3½	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 World History 1 U.S. History ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics ½ Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
Career and College Readiness	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	5 ½	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements

- Student must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.
- For early release, student must have met College or Career Readiness Benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math or earned a Silver level on ACT WorkKeys). Alternately, a student must meet ALL of the following:
 - Have a 2.5 GPA
 - Passed or met all MAAP assessments requirements for graduation
 - On track to meet diploma requirements
 - Concurrently enrolled in the Essentials of College Math or Essentials of College Literacy

Recommendations

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement.
- A student should take a math or math equivalent course the senior year.

ALTERNATE DIPLOMA OPTION

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate English Elements I-IV
Mathematics	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate Math Elements I-III Alternate Algebra Elements
Science	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate Biology Elements Alternate Science Elements II
Social Studies	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate History Elements (Strands: U.S. History and World History) Alternate Social Studies Elements (Strands: Economics and U.S. Government)
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate Health Elements
Art	1	
Career Readiness	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Readiness I-IV (Strands: Technology, Systems, Employability, and Social)
Life Skills Development	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills Development I-IV (Strands: Technology, Systems, Personal Care, and Social)
Additional Electives	2	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements

- The Alternate Diploma is not equivalent to a traditional high school diploma and is not recognized by post-secondary entities that require a traditional high school diploma.
- All students are required to participate in the Mississippi Assessment Program-Alternate Assessment (MAP-A) with a score TBD.
- Students who have met the criteria on their IEP for having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) may participate in a program of study to earn the Alternate Diploma.

Traditional Diploma Endorsement Options

Students pursuing a Traditional Diploma must identify an endorsement prior to entering 9th grade. There are three endorsement options: Career and Technical, Academic, and Distinguished Academic Endorsement.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I
Science	3	• Biology I
Social Studies	3½	• 1 World History • ½ Economics • 1 U.S. History • ½ Mississippi Studies • ½ U.S. Government
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
Career and College Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
CTE Electives	4	• Must complete a four-course sequential program of study
Additional Electives	3½	
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5
- Earn silver level on ACT WorkKeys
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One CTE dual credit or earn articulated credit in the high school CTE course
 - Work Based Learning experience or Career Pathway Experience
 - Earn a State Board of Education approved national credential

ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I
Science	3	• Biology I
Social Studies	3½	• 1 World History • ½ Economics • 1 U.S. History • ½ Mississippi Studies • ½ U.S. Government
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
Career and College Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	7½	• Must meet CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5
- Courses must meet MS IHL College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) requirements
- Earn MS IHL and Community college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math as approved by postsecondary for non-remediation at most Community Colleges and IHL college-ready courses in senior year.)
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One dual credit course with a C or higher in the course

DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I
Science	4	• Biology I
Social Studies	4	• 1 World History • ½ Economics • 1 U.S. History • ½ Mississippi Studies • ½ U.S. Government
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
Career and College Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	8	• Must meet CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	28	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0
- Courses must meet MS IHL CPC recommended requirements
- Earn national college readiness benchmarks on each subtest established by ACT of 18 in English and 22 in Math or SAT equivalency as established by College Board and IHL
- Earn four additional Carnegie Units for a total of 28
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a B or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One dual credit course with a B or higher in the course

Item B

**Justification Chart based on Administrative Procedures
Act (APA) Process**

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
The ACT is specified in the language as the CCR benchmark without the SAT.	*Changed based on public comment Add language "or the SAT equivalent, as specified by the College Board"	Mississippi IHLs accept both the ACT and SAT in admission process; therefore, both should be referenced in the requirements.
College and Career Ready course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time frame for administering class • What units of study are included in the College and Career Ready course? 	*Changed based on public comment Allow districts to teach class to students in junior or senior year. The CCR course is designed to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition, and will include the following units: College and Career Ready Units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from high school graduation to post-secondary enrollment • College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes • College and Career Assessments • College Affordability Planning • College and Career Admission Process Life Ready Units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Literacy • Community Service • Communication (oral, written) • Digital Literacy 	This change will allow districts more flexibility in offering the CCR course to either juniors or seniors or in the 4-course sequence. Because the class has overwhelming support from post-secondary and business partners, the requirement for the course will remain.

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which courses will count for this requirement? Endorsement requirements Additional cost to districts 	<p>The following classes will count for the CCR class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDE College and Career Readiness Course MDE Career Pathway Experience Senior Project/Capstone Project (with the addition of required CCR components) Leader in Me, Advisement Programs, and Seminar Courses (Students must complete the entire 4-year sequence of these courses with the addition of required CCR components) District developed course approved by MDE (process and timeline for approval) <p>There are no additional endorsement requirements for the MDE College and Career Ready course. A teacher with a valid secondary teaching license may teach this course.</p> <p>If implemented in a strategic manner, there should be no additional costs incurred by districts. The traditional diploma is a 24-credit diploma, just as the current standard diploma. Additionally, districts now have the option to</p>	<p>Timeline for development of MDE College and Career Readiness course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> November 2017 through January 2018 – Writing team with teachers, postsecondary representation, industry representatives, counselors, State treasurer representatives, and principals February 2018 – curriculum approval for APA process for State Board of Education April 2018 – final approval of curriculum Summer 2018 – Training for early adopters to follow Academic year 2018-2019 – implementation for early adopters

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
	implement the CCR course in the student's junior or senior year, or in an approved 4-year sequence which relieves the district from needing additional teacher units for this class.	
Elimination of the current 21-credit district option.	*No Change Move forward with the elimination of the 21-credit District option.	The 21-credit diploma is not preparing students for careers or for college. After the 21-credit diploma was adopted, MDE changed the accreditation rules to allow middle school students to earn Carnegie Units earlier. This provides students with more opportunities to earn Carnegie Units in middle school allowing them to gain college and career readiness skills within 24 credits (at an earlier grade).
Early Release <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for this are too high creating a burden on districts and students who need to work. <p>Early Release is a term referring to the practice of students who have earned most of their graduation credits being allowed to leave campus for part of the day to work in the community during their senior year.</p>	*Changed based on public comment Students who have not met the Mississippi postsecondary ACT remediation benchmarks of 17 in English and 19 in Math or the Silver level on the ACT WorkKeys for the CTE endorsement must meet ALL 4 of the following requirements for early release: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have the required 2.5 GPA have passed or met all MAAP assessments requirements for graduation (see Appendix A-5) be on track to meet diploma requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal #2 of the SBE states that ALL students will be prepared for college and career. Students who have not met the requirements prior to graduation need more opportunities to meet requirements. It is our responsibility to prepare all students to exit high school ready for post-secondary work without remediation and/or the necessary skills to enter the workforce in a job with a sustainable wage. Districts are allocated funds based on a student's enrollment as a fulltime

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
Early Release continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math and/or Essentials for College Literacy based on minimum 15 ACT sub-score 	<p>student. Making students aware of the readiness requirement immediately will encourage initiative and involvement in meeting standards by the student and parents.</p>
Early Graduation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will early graduates count in accountability? <p>Early graduation is when a student earns all the credits needed for graduation before his or her senior year and chooses to receive the diploma early and exit high school.</p>	<p>* Proposed revisions to the Business Rules of the MS Statewide Accountability System will be presented to the Accountability Task Force for Consideration in Fall 2017.</p>	<p>A concern with early graduation is that those students who meet diploma requirements and choose to exit are not counted in the senior snapshot for the districts in accordance with the Business Rules of the MS Statewide Accountability System. This is a separate accountability issue that is not tied to the traditional diploma. The issue of counting early graduates with their cohort in their senior snapshot and in the accountability model must be addressed separately.</p>
CTE Endorsement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPA 	<p>*No Change Keep the CTE endorsement standard as proposed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Readiness is just as important as College Readiness. The GPA requirement will remain the same to ensure that both endorsements are given equal value. Projected middle-skill career opportunities in Mississippi will require students to meet higher academic and career standards.

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkKeys funding • limited availability of CTE dual credit • Work-based learning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkKeys funding for CTE completers will be provided by the Office of Career and Technical Education. • For districts that do not have dual credit options, the statewide CTE articulation agreement allows students to earn dual credit through their local CTE classes, if assessment requirements (70 or above on CTE CPAS) are met. • MDE in partnership with all four local workforce boards is providing additional work-based learning opportunities for students. Since work-based-learning is limited in some areas, districts must ensure that students are supported in meeting one of the remaining options (CTE dual credit/ articulation or a National Certification).
Advanced Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade requirement for dual credit but not for IB or AP 	<p>*Changed based on public comment</p> <p>For Academic Endorsement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn a C or higher in any AP course and take the exam • Earn a C or higher in a Diploma Program-IB course and take the exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This change will apply the same standard of mastery for AP, IB, and dual credit.

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of weighted/non-weighted grades • Funding for dual credit, AP exams, and Diploma Program-IB exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn a C or higher in an academic dual enrollment course <p>For Distinguished Academic Endorsement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn a B or higher in any AP course and take the exam • Earn a B or higher in a Diploma Program-IB course and take the exams • Earn a B or higher in an academic dual enrollment course <p>The distinction of weighted grades was removed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts have their own grading systems. This change will allow districts to continue to follow their current grading policies. • Federal funding for Title I and Title IV, Part A, will be distributed directly to districts. ESSA permits districts to use these funds for providing a well-rounded education which includes the funding of advanced coursework. College Board provides discounts to districts for eligible students. Title II may be used for teacher professional development for teaching advanced courses.

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
<p>General curriculum concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Geography Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts with existing honors graduation requirements 	<p>*No Change Keep curriculum specification as proposed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts may add curriculum requirements to the traditional diploma; however, any local district policy must apply to a single traditional diploma for ALL students. If a district chooses to increase the traditional diploma requirements, MDE encourages districts to seek community input when crafting their local board policies. Districts with existing honors graduation requirements may keep them if they are equal to or above the proposed endorsement requirements.
<p>Elimination of the Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD)</p>	<p>* No Change Continue with the elimination of the MOD and support districts in transitioning students with disabilities into the courses to prepare them for the Traditional diploma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MOD did not allow students to transition to any post-secondary opportunities. Students who earned a MOD diploma were not considered high school graduates. All students should be given the opportunity to earn a credential that will allow them to become self-sufficient.

Traditional Diploma with Endorsements Response to APA

Concerns	Recommendations	Justification
Certificate of Attendance	<p>*Item pulled for further review and development based on concerns raised in APA process.</p> <p>The following items need clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define who can earn a Certificate of Attendance • Determine the requirements for earning a Certificate of Attendance • Establish the conditions in which a student who earns a Certificate of Attendance can participate in graduation • Define the age requirement for a Certificate of Attendance 	<p>Timeline for Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September – November 2017: Gather input from all district leaders in the Diploma regional meetings • October 27, 2017: Special Certification Work Group to make preliminary recommendations • December 2017: Accreditation Commission recommendation to the State Board of Education • January 2018: State Board of Education approval to begin the APA process • March 2018: Final approval to State Board of Education for the Certificate of Attendance
<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost to districts associated with CBR course • Requirements for early (work) release for students will cause districts to lose money • WorkKeys funding for CTE endorsement • Funding for dual credit, AP exams, and Diploma Program-IB exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See College and Career course section • See Early Release section • See CTE Endorsement section • See Advanced Courses section 	

Item C
Justification Chart for Standard 14
Redline Version Standard 14

Process Standard 14 Justification

Process Standard Number	Process Standard Description	Change and Justification as Request in July	Recommendations for Final Approval
14.1	Remove language "four (4)" to reflect changes in Career and Mississippi Occupations Diploma (MOD) Pathways	SB 2432 ended MOD and Career Diploma options for incoming 9 th graders of 2017-2018	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.1	District Option Pathway – To end with incoming 9 th graders of 2017-2018	Reflect changes for 2018-2019 new requirements	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.2	Traditional Diploma Pathway - To end with incoming 9 th graders of 2017-2018	Reflect changes for 2018-2019 new requirements	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.3	Career Pathway Option – Ended with incoming 9 th graders of 2016-2017	SB 2432 removed this as an option for incoming 9 th graders effective 2017-2018	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.4	No Change		
14.1.5	No Change		
14.1.6	Early Exit Diploma - To end with incoming 9 th graders of 2017-2018	Reflect changes for 2018-2019 new requirements	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.7 (NEW)	New Traditional Diploma	Make diploma more consistent and more reflective of student achievement	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.8 (NEW)	Traditional Diploma with a Career and Technical Endorsement	Make diploma more consistent and more reflective of student achievement for career readiness	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.9 (NEW)	Traditional Diploma with Academic Endorsement	Make diploma more consistent and more reflective of student achievement for postsecondary readiness without remediation	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.10 (NEW)	Traditional Diploma with Distinguished Academic Endorsement	Make diploma more consistent and more reflective of student achievement for national postsecondary readiness without remediation	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.11 (NEW)	Alternate Diploma for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities	Allowable under ESSA	Adopt as Proposed
14.1.12 (NEW)	Certificate of Completion	Change from Mississippi Occupational Diploma to Traditional Diploma with very specific guidelines for Certificate of Completion	<p>Pull item for adoption until additional changes have been developed.</p> <p>Changes that needs to be determined based on APA comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define who can earn a Certificate of Attendance • Determine the requirements for earning a Certificate of Attendance

Process Standard Number	Process Standard Description	Change and Justification as Request in July	Recommendations for Final Approval
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the conditions in which a student who earns the Certificate of Attendance can participate in graduation Define the age requirements for Certificate of Attendance <p>Timeline for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2017 – November 2017: Gather input from all Diploma regional meetings October 27, 2017: Special Certification Work Group to make recommendations December 2017: Accreditation Commission for approval for APA process to the State Board of Education January 2018: State Board of Education approval to begin the APA Process March 2018: Final approval to State Board of Education for Certificate of Attendance
14.2	Remove language for passing assessment	Reflects changes to State Board Policy 36.4 for assessment options	Adopt as Proposed
14.3	Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD) Reflect ending date for Incoming 9 th graders of 2016-2017	SB 2432 removed this as an option for incoming 9 th graders effective 2017-2018	Adopt as Proposed
14.4	No Changes		
14.5	No Changes		
Note	Change language to - Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual.	Change language to reflect changes already approved by CSA	Adopt as Proposed

Excerpt from *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2016*

14. The school district requires each student, in order to receive a high school diploma, to have met the requirements established by its local board of education and by the State Board of Education. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7) (7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 36, R. 36.1, R. 36.2, R. 36.3, R. 36.4)
- 14.1 Each student receiving a standard high school diploma has earned the minimum number of Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A. (See Appendix A.) (7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3) Students receiving a standard diploma may select from ~~four (4)~~ graduation pathways as specified by the local school district's graduation requirements.
- 14.1.1 Entering ninth graders in 2005-2006 and ~~thereafter ending with incoming ninth graders of 2017-18 (seniors of school year 2008-2009 and later)~~ are required to have a minimum of 21 Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A-1.
- 14.1.2 Entering ninth graders in 2008-2009 and ~~thereafter ending with incoming ninth graders of 2017-2018 (seniors of school year 2011-2012 and)~~ are required to have a minimum of 24 Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A-2, unless, in accordance with school board policy, their parent/guardian requests to opt the student out of Appendix A-2 requirements. This student would be required to complete the graduation requirements specified in Appendix A-1.
- 14.1.3 Entering eleventh graders in 2010-2011 and ending with incoming ninth graders of school year 2016-2017 and ~~thereafter (seniors of school year 2011-2012 and later who chose the Career Pathway Option are required to earn the minimum graduation requirements specified in Appendix A-3. (MS § Code 37-16-17)(Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7)~~
- 14.1.4 Beginning in school year 2011-2012, all eighth-grade students are required to have an Individualized Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) prior to exiting the eighth grade.
- 14.1.5 Innovative Programs
- 14.1.6 Early Exit Diploma shall end with incoming 9th graders of school year 2018-2019
- 14.1.7 Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter, are required to have a minimum of 24 Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A-6.
- 14.1.8 Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter, are required to have a minimum of 26 Carnegie units and meet additional requirements as specified in Appendix A-7 to earn a Traditional Diploma with a Career and Technical Endorsement.
- 14.1.9 Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter, are required to have a minimum of 26 Carnegie units and meet additional requirements as specified in Appendix A-8 to earn a Traditional Diploma with an Academic Endorsement.
- 14.1.10 Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter, are required to have a minimum of 28 Carnegie units and meet additional requirements as specified in Appendix A-9 to earn a Traditional Diploma with a Distinguished Academic Endorsement.
- 14.1.11 Entering ninth graders with a significant cognitive disability in 2018-2019 and thereafter, are required to have a minimum of 24 Credits as described in Appendix A-10 to earn an Alternate Diploma.
- 14.1.12 ~~Students with disabilities under the IDEA that enter ninth grade in 2018-2019 and thereafter, may be awarded a Certificate of Completion as specified in Appendix A-11 given they meet the following criteria:~~
- ~~• The student's IDEA disability ruling has been unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of either the Traditional Diploma or the Alternate Diploma; and~~
 - ~~• Student has reached the maximum age of service under the IDEA, which in Mississippi is age 20.~~
- 14.2 Each student receiving a standard diploma has ~~achieved a passing score~~ met assessment requirements on each of the required high school exit examinations. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7) (7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 34, R. 34.1, Ch. 36, R. 36.1, R. 36.3, R. 36.4)

- 14.3 Ending with incoming ninth graders of 2016-2017 each student who has completed the secondary curriculum for special education may be issued a special diploma or certificate of completion, which states: "This student has successfully completed an Individualized Education Program." (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-11(1))
- 14.4 Ending with the incoming ninth grade class of 2016-2017, each student with disabilities receiving a Mississippi Occupational Diploma has successfully completed all minimum requirements established by the State Board of Education. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-11(2)) (See Appendix G.)
- 14.5 The student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation exercises.

Note: ~~Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual.~~ Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual.

Item D

Justification Chart for Appendix A-1 through A-11

Redline Version Appendix A-1 through A-11

Summary of Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016
Justification Changes for School Year 2017-2018 and School Year 2018-2019

A. Changes to current graduation requirements for school year 2017-2018

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications as Presented to the Commission and State Board of Education in July 2017	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
Appendix A-1	District Option	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Option ends with the 2017-2018 incoming freshmen class 2. Add Carnegie units for middle school 3. Changes Business and Technology requirement to Technology or Computer Science and add the additional technology courses that can count as credit toward graduation 4. Change passing assessment to meeting assessment requirements 5. Add Foundations of Algebra requirement 	<p>Adopt changes 1-5 as requested</p> <p>Additional changes requested</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove AP English Language Composition as a replacement for English II. This is an incorrect statement. 2. Add in the science Carnegie Units section: Sports Medicine, or Sports Medicine-Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine-Theory and Application II. These courses were not included in the original document. 3. Add in the Technology and Computer Science section: Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science. Remove and any other computer science course to reflect courses approved by MDE and the Accreditation Commission.

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications as Presented to the Commission and State Board of Education in July 2017	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
Appendix A-2	Standard Diploma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Option ends with the 2017-2018 incoming freshmen class Add Carnegie units for middle school Changes Business and Technology requirement to Technology or Computer Science and add the additional technology courses that can count as credit toward graduation Change passing assessment to meeting assessment requirements Add Foundations of Algebra requirement 	<p>Adopt changes 1-5 as requested</p> <p>Additional changes requested</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Remove AP English Language Composition as a replacement for English II. This is an incorrect statement. Add in the science Carnegie Units section: Sports Medicine, or Sports Medicine-Theory and Application I <i>and</i> Sports Medicine-Theory and Application II. These courses were not included in the original document. Add in the Technology and Computer Science section: Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science. Remove and any other computer science course to reflect courses approved by MDE and the Accreditation Commission.
Appendix A-4	Early Exit Diploma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Option ends with the 2017-2018 incoming freshmen class Add Carnegie units for middle school Changes Business and Technology requirement to Technology or Computer Science and add the additional technology courses that can count as credit toward graduation Change passing assessment to meeting assessment requirements 	Adopt changes 1-5 as requested

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications as Presented to the Commission and State Board of Education in July 2017	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
		5. Add Foundations of Algebra requirement	

B. Changes to graduation requirements for 2017-2018 based on Senate Bill 2432

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
Appendix A-3	Career Diploma	Option is no longer available for students entering high school due to passage of Senate Bill 2432 (Entering Ninth Graders no longer have this option after school year 2016-2017)	Adopt changes as requested

C. Graduation Assessment Option Clarification Language

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
Appendix A-5	Dual Credit Course Identification	Courses accepted for assessment requirement: English II assessment option – English Composition Algebra I assessment option – College Algebra Biology I assessment option – College Biology U.S. History assessment option – College American History	Adopt changes as requested
Appendix A-5	ASVAB Clarification	Only the ASVAB will be accepted as an assessment option for graduation requirement. The PICAT prescreened will not be accepted for this option.	Adopt changes as requested

D. New graduation requirements for incoming ninth graders of 2018-2019

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
Appendix A-6	Traditional Diploma	Add new diploma requirements for incoming 9 th graders of 2018-2019	<p>Add new Traditional Diploma requirements for incoming 9th graders of 2018-2019 as requested with the following clarifications</p> <p>Adopt changes 1-5 as requested in Appendix A-1 and A-2</p> <p>Additional changes requested</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove AP English Language Composition as a replacement for English II. This is an incorrect statement. 2. Add in the science Carnegie Units section: Sports Medicine, or Sports Medicine-Theory and Application I <i>and</i> Sports Medicine-Theory and Application II. These courses were not included in the original document. 3. Add in the Technology and Computer Science section: Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science. Remove and any other computer science course to reflect courses approved by MDE and the Accreditation Commission. 4. For seniors that have not met the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have a GPA of 2.5 o Passed or met the assessment option

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>requirements for all four end-of-course assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o On track to meet the diploma requirements o Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math and/or Essentials for College Literacy based on a 15 ACT subscore <p>5. The College and Career Readiness course is to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness qualification must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. b. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence and the student completes all four years.
Appendix A-7	Traditional Diploma with Career and Technical Endorsement	Add new diploma endorsement for Career and Technical Education requirements for incoming 9 th graders of 2018-2019	<p>Add new Traditional Diploma with Career and Technical Endorsement requirements for incoming 9th graders of 2018-2019 as requested with the following clarifications</p> <p>Adopt changes 1-5 as requested in Appendix A-1 and A-2</p>

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>Additional changes requested</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove AP English Language Composition as a replacement for English II. This is an incorrect statement. 2. Add in the science Carnegie Units section: Sports Medicine, or Sports Medicine-Theory and Application I <i>and</i> Sports Medicine-Theory and Application II. These courses were not included in the original document. 3. Add in the Technology and Computer Science section: Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science. Remove and any other computer science course to reflect courses approved by MDE and the Accreditation Commission. 4. For seniors that have not met the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have a GPA of 2.5 o Passed or met the assessment option requirements for all four end-of-course assessments o On track to meet the diploma requirements o Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math and/or Essentials for College Literacy based on a 15 ACT subscore

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>5. The College and Career Readiness course is to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. b. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence and the student completes all four years.
Appendix A-8	Traditional Diploma with Academic Endorsement	Add new diploma endorsement for Academic requirements for incoming 9 th graders of 2018-2019	<p>Add new Traditional Diploma and Academic Endorsement requirements for incoming 9th graders of 2018-2019 as requested with the following clarifications</p> <p>Adopt changes 1-5 as requested in Appendix A-1 and A-2</p> <p>Additional changes requested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove AP English Language Composition as a replacement for English II. This is an incorrect statement. 2. Add in the science Carnegie Units section: Sports Medicine, or Sports Medicine-Theory and Application I <i>and</i> Sports Medicine-Theory and Application II. These courses were not included in the original document.

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>3. Add in the Technology and Computer Science section: Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science. Remove and any other computer science course to reflect courses approved by MDE and the Accreditation Commission.</p> <p>4. For seniors that have not met the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have a GPA of 2.5 o Passed or met the assessment option requirements for all four end-of-course assessments o On track to meet the diploma requirements o Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math and/or Essentials for College Literacy based on a 15 ACT subscore <p>5. The College and Career Readiness course is to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. b. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>and the student completes all four years.</p> <p>Add for clarification requirements above the Traditional Diploma Option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn 26 Carnegie Units • Earn an overall GPA of 2.5 • Courses must meet MS IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC) requirements • Earn MS college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores of 17 in English and 19 in Math or completion of appropriate Essentials of College Math or Essentials of College Literacy with and 80 or above) or on the SAT as defined by IHL <p>Must successfully complete one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate AP exam • One Diploma Program-IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams • One dual credit course and earn a C or higher in the course
Appendix A-9	Traditional Diploma with Distinguished Academic Endorsement	Add new diploma endorsement for Distinguished Academic requirements for incoming 9 th graders of 2018-2019	<p>Add new Traditional Diploma and Distinguished Academic Endorsement requirements for incoming 9th graders of 2018-2019 as requested with the following clarifications</p> <p>Adopt changes 1-5 as requested in Appendix A-1 and A-2</p>

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>Additional changes requested</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove AP English Language Composition as a replacement for English II. This is an incorrect statement. 2. Add in the science Carnegie Units section: Sports Medicine, or Sports Medicine-Theory and Application I <i>and</i> Sports Medicine-Theory and Application II. These courses were not included in the original document. 3. Add in the Technology and Computer Science section: Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science. Remove and any other computer science course to reflect courses approved by MDE and the Accreditation Commission. 4. For seniors that have not meet the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have a GPA of 2.5 o Passed or met the assessment option requirements for all four end-of-course assessments o On track to meet the diploma requirements o Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math and/or Essentials for College Literacy based on a 15 ACT subscore

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
			<p>5. The College and Career Readiness course is to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. b. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence and the student completes all four years. <p>Add for clarification requirements above the Traditional Diploma Option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn 28 Carnegie Units • Earn an overall GPA of 3.0 • Courses must meet MS IHL College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) requirements • Earn ACT college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores of 18 in English and 22) or on the SAT as defined by IHL <p>Must successfully complete one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam • One Diploma Program-IB course with a B or higher and take the appropriate IB exams • One dual credit course and earn a B or higher in the course

Accountability Standards Appendix	Title	Changes and Justifications	Changes and Justification based on APA Comments
Appendix A-10	Alternate Diploma	Add Alternate Diploma requirements for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) only	Add Alternate Diploma requirements for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) only Change score from 3 to TBD
Appendix A-11	Certificate of Completion	A Certificate of Completion is not a high school diploma or an Alternate Diploma, but rather an acknowledgement of the child's participation in and completion of his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP).	Pull for additional clarifications

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APPENDIX A-1 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 DISTRICT OPTION

Note: Ending with incoming ninth graders of 2017-2018.

Note: This option may be offered by districts, but it is not required.

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks, Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Students enrolled in grades 7-12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual. Enrollment in online and correspondence courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has met the requirements for achieved a passing score on each of the required high school assessments exit examinations is eligible to receive a high school diploma. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra I or Integrated Math I
SCIENCE	3 ³	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3	1 World History ⁴ 1 U.S. History ⁴ ½ U.S. Government ½ Mississippi Studies ⁵
HEALTH	½ ^{6,7}	Contemporary Health ¹¹
<u>BUSINESS and TECHNOLOGY or Computer Science</u>	1 ⁸	1 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) II or 1 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) or 1 Technology Foundations or ½ Keyboarding and ½ Computer Applications ¹²
THE ARTS	1 ⁹	Any approved 500.000 course
ELECTIVES	4½ ¹⁰	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	21	

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APPENDIX A-1 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 DISTRICT OPTION

¹Compensatory English, Compensatory Reading, and Compensatory Writing may not be included in the four (4) English courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the four and one-half (4½) general electives required for graduation. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory English may only be taken if a credit-bearing English course is taken in the same school year. MYP English I and MYP English II are accepted in lieu of the English I and English II requirements for students enrolled in the IB program.

²Compensatory Mathematics and any developmental mathematics course may not be included in the four (4) mathematics courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the four and one-half (4½) general electives required for graduation. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory Mathematics may only be taken if a credit-bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. Beginning school year 2004-2005 for all entering eighth graders, at least one (1) of the four (4) required mathematics courses must be higher than Algebra I or Integrated Math I. The allowable mathematics courses that can be taken which are higher than Algebra I are: Geometry, Integrated Math II, Algebra II, Integrated Math III, CCSS Advanced Math Plus, Algebra III, SREB Math Ready, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, and AP Statistics. Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Discrete Mathematics, and Statistics meet this requirement if taken prior to the 2015-2016 school year. One (1) of the four (4) required mathematics units may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two-course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II. Effective with the eighth graders of 2004-2005, Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Algebra I, may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Pre-Algebra and Transition to Algebra are no longer available after the 2013-2014 school year. Carnegie units may be earned by seventh and eighth graders effective with school year 2014-2015 for the following courses: CCSS Compacted Math Grade 7, CCSS Math Grade 8, CCSS Compacted Math Grade 8 (with Integrated Math I), and CCSS Math Grade 8 (with Algebra I/Traditional). MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB DP Mathematics I, IB DP Mathematics II, IB DP Mathematical Studies I, IB DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students.

³One (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agricultural Plants, Science of Agricultural Animals, or Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turfgrass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences. The allowable lab-based physical science courses are Physical Science, Chemistry, AP Chemistry, Physics, AP Physics B, AP Physics C — Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C — Mechanics, Polymer Science II, and Robotics/Engineering II. IB DP Physics I, IB DP Physics II, MYP Chemistry, and IB DP Chemistry may be accepted as allowable lab-based physical science courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP Biology and IB DP Biology I may be accepted in lieu of the Biology I requirement for students enrolled in an IB program. Effective with school year 2013-14, up to two (2) of the three (3) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II. One (1) credit allowed shall be awarded for Biology II, and one-half (½) credit shall be awarded for Botany, and one-half (½) credit shall be awarded for Field Experiences in Science. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Introduction to Agriscience may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.

⁴Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-Reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. IB DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students

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~~enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.~~

~~*The credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one-half (½) unit social studies course. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Mississippi Studies and Geography may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.~~

~~*Credit earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I/Health Science I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.~~

~~*Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health beginning in the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter, when instruction includes all health components in the JROTC curriculum.~~

~~*Evidence of proficiency in Keyboarding and Computer Applications is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one (1) unit in any of the courses listed in the *Business and Technology Framework* (academic and vocational). Information & Computer Technology (ICT) II may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery. A Carnegie unit earned for Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM) in the 8th or 9th grade meets this graduation requirement. Technology Foundations replaces Computer Discovery. Keyboarding and Computer Applications and meets this graduation requirement when taken in grades 8-12. MYP Computer Discovery may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery for students enrolled in an IB program.~~

~~*Beginning school year 2015-2016, and thereafter, Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement.~~

~~*Elective units in physical education include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.~~

~~*Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health meet this requirement if taken prior to the 2014-2015 school year.~~

~~*Computer Discovery meets this requirement if taken prior to the 2012-2013 school year.~~

~~*Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) English Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory English may be taken only if a credit-bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. Beginning school year 2010-2011 for all entering ninth graders, English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.~~

~~*Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) Math Carnegie units required for graduation; however, these courses Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory Mathematics may be taken only if a credit-bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics Grade 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course. At least two (2) of the four (4) required mathematics Carnegie units must be earned in courses higher than the CCR Algebra I course. The Ready for High School Mathematics course shall only be available for 8th grade or 9th grade students. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for 9th grade students. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB-DP Mathematics I, IB-DP Mathematics II, IB-DP Mathematical Studies I, and IB-DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One (1) of the four (4) required~~

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Carnegie units for mathematics may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two-course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II.

For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences, Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine Theory and Application II. --Effective with school year 2013-14, up to two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Introduction to Agriscience may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.

Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course. A.P. Human Geography can be accepted in lieu of the required Geography course. MYP World Geography is accepted in lieu of the required Geography course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

Carnegie units earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one-half (½) unit in Economics.

The Carnegie units earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one half (½) unit social studies course.

Carnegie units earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.

Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health beginning in the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter.

Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health meet the health requirement if taken prior to the 2014-2015 school year. The graduation requirement for one-half (½) unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the Fitness through Physical Education Framework and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer

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Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses. Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science. following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICF II (Information & Communication Technology-II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.

¹¹Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹²Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, show choir, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

APPENDIX A-2

APPENDIX A-2 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14

(Ending with Incoming ninth graders of 2017-2018)
SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012 (and thereafter)
(Entering ninth graders in 2008-2009 and thereafter)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks - Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Students enrolled in grades 7-12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual. Enrollment in online courses and correspondence courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has met the requirements for achieved a passing score on each of the required high school exit examinations assessments is eligible to receive a high school diploma. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

Beginning school year 2008-2009 and ending with school year 2017-2018, and thereafter, all entering ninth graders (seniors of school year 2011-2012 and later) will be required to have a minimum of 24 Carnegie units as specified below, unless their parent/guardian requests to opt the student out of Appendix A-2 requirements in accordance with local school board policy. Any student who is taken out of these requirements of Appendix A-2 will be required to complete the graduation requirements as specified in Appendix A-1 (District Option). All students must meet one of the graduation options as specified in the appendices. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7. NOTE: This option will no longer be available for entering ninth graders after the 2017-2018 school year. New graduation requirements will go into effect for entering ninth graders for 2018-2019.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra I <u>or Integrated Math I</u>
SCIENCE	4 ³	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	4	1 World History ⁴ 1 U.S. History ⁴ ½ Geography ⁴ ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics ⁵ ½ Mississippi Studies ⁴
HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1 ^{7&8}	½ Contemporary Health and ½ Physical Education ^{9&11}
<u>BUSINESS and TECHNOLOGY or</u> <u>Computer Science</u>	1 ¹⁰	<u>1 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) II or 1 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) or 1 Technology Foundations or ½ Keyboarding and ½ Computer Applications¹⁰</u>

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THE ARTS	1¹¹	Any approved 500.000 course
ELECTIVES	5¹²	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	24	

APPENDIX A-2 (Continued)
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 14

(Ending with incoming ninth graders of 2017-2018)

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012

(Entering ninth graders in 2008-2009 and thereafter)

¹~~Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses, Compensatory Reading, and Compensatory Writing may not be included in any of the four (4) English courses Carnegie units required for graduation; however, these courses Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the five (5) general elective graduation requirements for graduation. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory English may only be taken only if a credit-bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. Beginning school year 2010-2011 for all entering ninth graders, English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.~~

²~~Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses, cannot be included as any of the four (4) Math Carnegie units required for graduation; however, these courses Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory Mathematics, Introduction to Engineering, and any developmental mathematics course may not be included in the four (4) mathematics courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the five (5) general electives required for graduation. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory Mathematics may only be taken only if a credit-bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics Grade 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course, or Integrated Math I. Beginning school year 2007-2008 for all entering eighth graders, at least two (2) of the four (4) required mathematics Carnegie units courses must be earned in a course higher than the CCR Algebra I course, or Integrated Math I. Effective with ninth graders of 2010-2011, Survey of Mathematical Topics may not be included in the two (2) math courses higher than Algebra I. The allowable mathematics courses that can be taken which are higher than Algebra I or Integrated Math I are: Geometry, Integrated Math II, Algebra II, Integrated Math III, CCSS Advanced Math Plus, Algebra III, SREB Math Ready, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, and AP Statistics. Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Discrete Mathematics, and Statistics meet this requirement if taken prior to the 2015-2016 school year. The Ready for High School Mathematics course shall only be available for 8th grade or 9th grade students. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for 9th grade students. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB-DP Mathematics I, IB-DP Mathematics II, IB-DP Mathematical Studies I, and IB-DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One (1) of the four (4) required Carnegie units for mathematics units may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two-course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II. One (1) of the four (4) required mathematics units may be in Survey of Mathematical Topics; however, this course does not meet the mathematics requirement for admission to institutions of higher learning. Effective with the eighth graders of 2004-2005, Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Algebra I may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Survey of Mathematical Topics are no longer available after the 2013-2014 school year. Carnegie units may be earned by seventh and eighth graders effective with school year 2014-2015 for the following courses: CCSS Compacted Math Grade 7, CCSS Math Grade 8, CCSS Compacted Math Grade 8 (with Integrated Math I), and CCSS Math Grade 8 (with Algebra I/Traditional). Effective with the eighth graders of 2008-2009, Geometry may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Effective with 7th graders of 2012-13, Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Biology I, ICT II (Information & Communication Technology), and first-year Foreign Language may be taken in the 7th grade for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course. Effective with 8th graders of 2012-2013, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics) and second-year Foreign Language may be taken in the 8th grade for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course. Effective with 8th graders of 2013-2014, Introduction to Agriscience may be taken for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course.~~

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³For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation. One (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Science, Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine Theory and Application II. ~~Effective with school year 2013-2014, up to two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-2014, Introduction to Agriscience may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Beginning school year 2008-2009 for all entering eighth graders, one (1) unit must be a lab-based physical science. The allowable lab-based physical science courses are Physical Science, Chemistry, AP Chemistry, Physics, AP Physics B, AP Physics C – Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C – Mechanics, Polymer Science II, and Robotics/Engineering II. IB-DP Physics I, IB-DP Physics II, MYP Chemistry, and IB-DP Chemistry may be accepted as allowable lab-based physical science courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP Biology and IB-DP Biology I may be accepted in lieu of the Biology I requirement for students enrolled in an IB program. Effective with school year 2013-14, up to two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II. One (1) credit allowed shall be awarded for Biology II; one-half (½) credit shall be awarded for Botany; and one-half (½) credit shall be awarded for Field Experiences in Science. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Introduction to Agriscience may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.~~

⁴Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course. A.P. Human Geography can be accepted in lieu of the required Geography course. MYP World Geography is accepted in lieu of the required Geography course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program. ~~Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Mississippi Studies and Geography may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.~~

⁵~~Carnegie Credit unit~~ earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one-half (½) unit in Economics.

⁶The ~~Carnegie credit unit~~ earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one-half (½) unit social studies course.

⁷~~Carnegie unit Credit~~ earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.

⁸Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health beginning in the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter.

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⁹Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health meet the health requirement if taken prior to the 2014-2015 school year. The graduation requirement for one-half (½) unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

¹⁰~~The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses: Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science. Evidence of proficiency in technology is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one (1) unit in a technology-rich academic or career technical course related to their program of study. Effective with school year 2012-2013, a Carnegie unit credit for ICT II (Information & Communication Technology) may be awarded to 7th-grade students. Effective with school year 2012-2013, a Carnegie unit credit for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics) may be awarded to 8th-grade students. ICT II may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery. A Carnegie unit earned for STEM in the 8th or 9th grade meets this graduation requirement. Technology Foundations replaces Computer Discovery, Keyboarding, and Computer Applications, and meets this graduation requirement when taken in grades 8-12. MYP Computer Discovery may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery for students enrolled in an IB program. Computer Discovery meets this requirement if taken prior to the 2012-2013 school year. ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.~~

¹¹~~Beginning school year 2015-2016, and thereafter, Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.~~

¹²Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, show choir, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

APPENDIX A-3

APPENDIX A-3 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 CAREER PATHWAY OPTION

~~(ending with incoming ninth graders in 2016-2017)~~
~~SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012 (and thereafter)~~
~~(entering eleventh graders in 2010-2011 and thereafter)~~

In 2010, Mississippi state policymakers passed legislation to create multiple pathways to a standard diploma. The 2010 legislative actions created a career pathway to a standard diploma, with the goal of improving Mississippi graduation rates and providing students with career and technical training that prepares students for postsecondary credential or certification programs and employable workplace skills. This legislative change created Section § 37-16-17, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, to provide for high school career option programs and career track curricula for students not wishing to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

Enrollment in online ~~and correspondence courses~~ listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. ~~No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course.~~

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	3 ²	Algebra I or Integrated Math I
SCIENCE	3 ³	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3 ^{4&5}	1 U.S. History ½ U.S. Government ½ Mississippi Studies
HEALTH or PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½ ⁶	½ Contemporary Health or ½ Physical Education ¹⁰
CAREER and TECHNICAL	4 ⁷	(Selected from Student's Program of Study)
BUSINESS and TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1 ⁸	Technology Foundations, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) II, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), or Computer Applications and Keyboarding
ELECTIVES	2½ ⁹	Courses selected from the student's approved program of study
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	21	

NOTE: Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning requirements differ from minimum graduation requirements for this diploma pathway.

APPENDIX A-3

APPENDIX A-3 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 CAREER PATHWAY OPTION

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012 ~~(and thereafter)~~

~~(Entering eleventh graders 2010-2011 and thereafter ending with incoming ninth graders in 2016-2017)~~

~~Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses, Compensatory Reading, and Compensatory Writing shall not be included in any of the four (4) English courses Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory English may only be taken if a credit-bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. Beginning school year 2010-2011 for all entering ninth graders, English I is a required prerequisite score for English II. English I cannot be taken after a student completes English II. The two (2) additional English credits must be from the student's program of study which includes Technical Writing, Creative Writing, English III, English IV, or any college-level dual credit courses.~~

~~²Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses may not be included in the three (3) mathematics courses Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Beginning school year 2014-2015, Compensatory Mathematics may only be taken only if a credit-bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course or Integrated Math I. For students pursuing the Career Pathway Graduation Option, at least one (1) of the required mathematics Carnegie units courses must be earned in a course higher than above Algebra I or Integrated Math I and selected from the student's program of study. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for ninth grade students. The allowable mathematics courses that can be taken which are higher than Algebra I or Integrated Math I are: Geometry, Integrated Math II, Algebra II, Integrated Math III, CCSS Advanced Math Plus, Algebra III, SREB Math Ready, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, and AP Statistics, or any college-level dual credit courses. Survey of Mathematical Topics, Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Discrete Mathematics, and Statistics meet this requirement if taken prior to the 2015-2016 school year. Effective with the eighth graders of 2004-2005, Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Algebra I may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Effective with the eighth graders of 2008-2009, Geometry may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Pre-Algebra and Transition to Algebra are no longer available after the 2013-2014 school year. Carnegie units may be earned by seventh and eighth graders effective with school year 2014-2015 for the following courses: CCSS Compacted Math Grade 7, CCSS Math Grade 8, CCSS Compacted Math Grade 8 (with Integrated Math I), and CCSS Math Grade 8 (with Algebra I/Traditional).~~

~~³For students pursuing the Career Pathway Graduation Option, at least one (1) of the required science Carnegie units courses must be above earned in a course higher than Biology I and selected from the student's program of study. If a student's program of study allows, for science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience (AEST) or Introduction to Agriscience, and a —A second science unit may be earned by completing a two-course sequence selected from the following options: Science of Agricultural Animals, Science of Agricultural Plants, or Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the two-course sequence: Healthcare & Clinical Services I & II, Health Science I & II; Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine Theory and Application II, Aquaculture I & II; Forestry I & II; Horticulture I & II; Polymer Science I & II; and Engineering I & II. Effective with school year 2013-14, up to two (2) of the three (3) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II. One (1) credit allowed shall be awarded for Biology II, and one-half (½) credit shall be awarded for Botany, and one-half (½) credit shall be awarded for Field Experiences in Science. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Introduction to Agriscience may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.~~

APPENDIX A-3

⁴AP U.S. History is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History Post-reconstruction to Present. The third social studies credit should be selected based on the student's program of study.

⁵The Carnegie credit unit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one-half (½) unit social studies course. Credit earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one-half (½) unit in Economics. Effective with eighth graders of school year 2013-14, Mississippi Studies, Geography and Introduction to Agriscience may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.

⁶Carnegie Credit unit earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I/Health Science I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health. Interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir and ROTC, if they meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework*, may also be accepted.

⁷Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses must be based on the student's program of study and should include dual credit/dual enrollment options as found in Section 37-15-38 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972*.

⁸Evidence of proficiency in technology is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one (1) unit in a technology-rich academic or career technical course related to their program of study. The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses. Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science.
~~courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.~~

⁹Electives must be selected from courses related to the student's program of study. Credits earned not approved for that student's program of study will not be counted toward graduation requirements.

¹⁰Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health meet the health requirement if taken prior to the 2014-2015 school year.

APPENDIX A-4

APPENDIX A-4 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 MISSISSIPPI EARLY EXIT DIPLOMA

~~(ending with incoming ninth graders in 2017-2018)~~
~~SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2013-2014 (and thereafter)~~
~~(entering ninth graders in 2011-2012 and thereafter)~~

Qualification for a Mississippi Early Exit Diploma signifies to students that they are ready to do college-level work without remediation and opens up a variety of education and career pathways within and beyond high school.

In order to qualify for a Mississippi Early Exit Diploma, in addition to earning the Carnegie units listed below, students must meet college and career qualification scores in all core content areas on a series of end-of-course exams and/or the required benchmarks for college readiness on the ACT (18 in English Composition; 22 in Mathematics; 22 in Reading; 23 in Science) or Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) approved college entrance exam.

Enrollment in online and correspondence courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. ~~No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course.~~

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	2	English II (equivalent Course)
MATHEMATICS	3	Algebra I (Equivalent Course)
SCIENCE	2	Biology I (Equivalent Course)
SOCIAL STUDIES	2½	1 World History 1 U.S. History (Equivalent Courses) ½ Mississippi Studies
HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1	Any combination of Health and Physical Education
BUSINESS and TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1	Technology Foundations; Information and Communication Technology (ICT) II; or Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
THE ARTS	1	Any approved 500,000 course
ELECTIVES	5	(Should focus on college admission or national certification requirements)
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	17½	

APPENDIX A-4

Equivalency Chart for Innovative Programs

Authorized by the State Board of Education

Equivalency Curriculum Chart for MS Tested Areas

MS Curriculum	Cambridge	Innovative High School	Quality Core ACT
Algebra I or Integrated Math I	Cambridge IGCSE Mathematics I Or Cambridge IGSE Extended Sequence	Integrated Mathematics I	ACT Quality Core Algebra I
Biology I	Coordinated Science I Or Cambridge IGCSE Biology	Integrated Science II	ACT Quality Core Biology I
English II	Cambridge IGCSE English Language	Integrated English Language II	ACT Quality Core English II
US History	Cambridge IGCSE American History	Integrated History II	ACT Quality Core American History

Equivalency Test Chart for MS Tested Areas

MS Curriculum	Cambridge	Innovative High School	Quality Core ACT
Algebra I	Cambridge Mathematics End of Sequence Test	PLAN or ACT	ACT Quality Core Algebra I EOC Test
Biology I	Coordinated Science I or Cambridge IGCSE Biology End of Course (EOC) Test	PLAN or ACT	ACT Quality Core Biology I EOC Test
English II	Cambridge IGCSE English Language EOC Test	PLAN or ACT	ACT Quality Core English II EOC Test
US History	Cambridge IGCSE American History EOC Test	PLAN or ACT	ACT Quality Core American History EOC Test

APPENDIX A-5

Appendix A-5

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS IN LIEU OF SATP

7 MISS. ADMIN. CODE PT. 3, CH. 36, R. 36.4 (EFFECTIVE 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR)

7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 36, R. 36.4~~5~~, provides approved options for students to meet high school end-of-course Subject Area Test requirements for graduation through approved alternate measures. ~~State Board Policy 3804- 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 36, R. 36.5~~ applies to past, current, and future graduates and allows a student to meet the graduation requirements once he or she has failed to pass any required end-of-course Subject Area Test one (1) time.

The following graduation options provide opportunities for students to obtain a certain score or level on the ACT, ASVAB, ACT WorkKeys, MS-CPAS2, or other state-approved industry certifications. Students also may obtain a grade of "C" or higher in a dual credit/dual enrollment course, corresponding to the EOC assessment that was not passed.

Notes:

- ACT sub-scores resulting from non-college reportable accommodations can be used for graduation options, but the scores are non-college reportable.
- ACT sub-scores resulting from Residual ACT Testing cannot be used for graduation options.
- This option is available regardless of when the student took the SATP2, PARCC, or MAP assessments.
- The college credit option is only applicable if the student is enrolled in high school and college at the same time.
- The Graduation Options listed below are applicable to any Subject Area Testing Program assessment.

Assessment Options	Math	Science	English	Social Studies
ACT	17	17	17	17
Dual Credit/Enrollment	C or higher in MAT credit-bearing course College Algebra	C or higher in BIO credit-bearing course College Biology	C or higher in ENG credit-bearing course English Comp I	C or higher in MIS credit-bearing course American History
ASVAB + MS-CPAS2 OR Industry Certification	ASVAB (PICAT prescreen scores are not allowable) score of 36 plus one (1) of the following: 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements OR 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint			
ACT Work Keys + MS-CPAS2 OR Industry Certification	WorkKeys Silver Level plus one (1) of the following: 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements OR 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint.			

APPENDIX A-5

Concordance Tables

7 MISS. ADMIN. CODE PT. 3, CH. 36, R. 36.2 (EFFECTIVE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR)

Concordance tables provide opportunities for students who do not obtain a passing score on an End of Course (EOC) assessment to utilize a different graduation option, using a combination of the assessment scores with the final course grade. The tables provide the final course grade required to use with the scale score obtained on the EOC assessment. Districts are to use the concordance table specific to when the student took the assessment.

MAP English II (Senior Only Retest & Spring 2016)

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	1049-1048	1047	1046	1045
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for MAP English II is 1050.

MAP Algebra I (Senior Only Retest, Fall 2016, Spring 2016)

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	1049	1048	1047	1046
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for MAP Algebra I is 1050.

MAP Fall 2016-English II

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	1048	1046	1045	1043
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for MAP English II is 1050.

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PARCC Fall 2014 & Spring 2015-English II

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	724-722	721-719	718-716	715
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for PARCC English II is 725.

PARCC Fall 2014 & Spring 2015-Algebra I

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	724-722	721-719	718-716	715
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for PARCC Algebra I is 725.

SATP2 English II

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	644-641	640-639	638-637	636-635
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for SATP2 English II is 645.

SATP2 Algebra I

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	646-644	643-642	641	640-639
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score from SATP2 Algebra I is 647.

APPENDIX A-5

SATP2 Biology I

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	644-640	639-637	636-635	634-632
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for SATP2 Biology I is 645.

SATP2 U.S. History

Concordance Table	Scale Score			
Grade	640-637	636-635	634-633	632-631
A	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
B	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL
C	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
D	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

The passing score for SATP2 U.S. History is 641.

7 MISS. ADMIN. CODE PT. 3, CH. 36, R. 36.3 (EFFECTIVE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR)

Composite (Combined) Score

Composite (Combined) Score Calculations provide opportunities for students who do not obtain a passing score on one or more EOC assessments. Students may utilize an additional graduation option by taking the average of all EOC assessments and achieving a minimal combined score of 646. Scale scores from the PARCC and MAP assessments will need to be transformed according to the guidance provided in Sections 1, 3, and 4.

Section 1 (PARCC and SATP2 Assessments)

- I. Calculate the Transformed Score for the PARCC assessments by using the following formulas:
 - To transform a PARCC Algebra I Score:
Student's PARCC Algebra I Scale Score – 78 points
 - To transform a PARCC English II Score:
Student's PARCC English II Scale Score – 80 points
- II. Calculate the student's composite (combined) score by determining the average score across all four assessments.

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Test	Score	Transformation	Transformed Score
Algebra I (PARCC)	723	$723 - 78 =$	645
English II (PARCC)	724	$724 - 80 =$	644
Biology I (SATP2)	652		652
U.S. History (SATP2)	644		644

$$\text{Average Composite (Combined) Score} = \frac{645 + 644 + 652 + 644}{4} = \frac{2585}{4} = 646.25 = 646$$

Section 2 (Only SATP2 Assessments)

- I. Calculate the student's composite (combined) score by determining the average score across all four assessments.

Test	Score
Algebra I (SATP2)	650
English II (SATP2)	647
Biology I (SATP2)	656
U.S. History (SATP2)	638

$$\text{Average Composite (Combined) Score} = \frac{650 + 647 + 656 + 638}{4} = \frac{2591}{4} = 647.75 = 648$$

Section 3 (MAP and SATP2 Assessments)

- I. Calculate the Transformed Score for the MAP assessments by using the following formulas:
 - To transform a MAP Algebra I Score:
Student's MAP Algebra I Scale Score – 403 points
 - To transform a MAP English II Score:
Student's MAP English II Scale Score – 405 points
- II. Calculate the student's composite (combined) score by determining the average score across all four assessments.

Test	Score	Transformation	Transformed Score
Algebra I (MAP)	1048	$1048 - 403 =$	645
English II (MAP)	1049	$1049 - 405 =$	644
Biology I (SATP2)	652		652
U.S. History (SATP2)	644		644

$$\text{Average Composite (Combined) Score} = \frac{645 + 644 + 652 + 644}{4} = \frac{2585}{4} = 646.25 = 646$$

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Section 4 (PARCC, MAP, and SATP2 Assessments)

I. Calculate the Transformed Score for the PARCC and MAP assessments by using the following formulas:

- To transform a PARCC Algebra I Score:
Student's PARCC Algebra I Scale Score – 78 points
- To transform a PARCC English II Score
Student's PARCC English II Scale Score – 80 points
- To transform a MAP Algebra I Score
Student's MAP Algebra I Scale Score – 403 points
- To transform a MAP English II Score
Student's MAP English II Scale Score – 405 points

Calculate the student's composite (combined) score by determining the average score across all four assessments.

Test	Score	Transformation	Transformed Score
Algebra I (PARCC)	723	$723 - 78 =$	645
English II (MAP)	1049	$1049 - 405 =$	644
Biology I (SATP2)	652		652
U.S. History (SATP2)	644		644

$$\text{Average Composite (Combined) Score} = \frac{645 + 644 + 652 + 644}{4} = \frac{2585}{4} = 646.25 = 646$$

Calculate the student's composite (combined) score by determining the average score across all four assessments.

Test	Score	Transformation	Transformed Score
Algebra I (MAP)	1048	$1048 - 403 =$	645
English II (PARCC)	724	$724 - 80 =$	644
Biology I (SATP2)	652		652
U.S. History (SATP2)	644		644

$$\text{Average Composite (Combined) Score} = \frac{645 + 644 + 652 + 644}{4} = \frac{2585}{4} = 646.25 = 646$$

APPENDIX A-5

Other Graduation Options

The following graduation options provide opportunities for students to obtain a certain score or level on the ACT, ASVAB, ACT WorkKeys, MS-CPAS2, or other state-approved industry certifications. Students who may obtain a grade of "C" or higher in a dual credit dual enrollment course, corresponding to the EOC assessment that was not passed.

Assessment Options	Algebra I	Biology I	English II	U.S. History
ACT	+7 (ACT Math Sub-Score)	+7 (ACT Science Sub-Score)	+7 (ACT English Sub-Score)	+7 (ACT Reading Sub-Score)
Dual Credit Dual Enrollment College Credit	C or higher in MAT credit-bearing course	C or higher in BIO credit-bearing course	C or higher in ENG credit-bearing course	C or higher in HIS credit-bearing course

Notes:

- ACT sub-scores resulting from non-college-reportable accommodations can be used for graduation options, but the scores are non-college-reportable.
- ACT sub-scores resulting from Residual ACT Testing cannot be used for graduation options.
- This option is available regardless of when the student took the SAT/PSAT, PARCC, or MAP assessments.

The Graduation Options listed below are applicable to any Subject Area Testing Program assessment.

ASVAB	Must have an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 plus one of the following: 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements (Year 1 and 2 combined for an average of 60 or above) OR
MS-CPAS or Industry Certification	2. Industry certification attainment based upon industry standards (only MDE approved certifications may be used)
ACT WorkKeys + MS-CPAS2 or Industry Certification	Must have a WorkKeys Silver Level plus one of the following: 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements (Year 1 and 2 combined for an average of 60 or above) OR 2. Industry certification attainment based upon industry standards (only MDE approved certifications may be used)

Note: The college credit option is only applicable if the student is enrolled in high school and college at the same time.

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APPENDIX A-6 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the *Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards*. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi*. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the *Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual*. Enrollment in online courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has met the requirements for each of the required high school assessments is eligible to receive a high school diploma. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

Beginning school year 2018-2019 and thereafter, all entering ninth graders will be required to have a minimum of 24 Carnegie units as specified below. Student may earn one of the following endorsements to be added to the traditional diploma: Career and Technical Endorsement, Academic Endorsement, and/or Distinguished Academic Endorsement. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra I
SCIENCE	3 ³	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3.5	1 World History ⁴ 1 U.S. History ⁴ ½ U.S. Government ⁴ ½ Economics ⁵ ½ Mississippi Studies ⁶
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	.5 ⁷	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	.5 ⁸	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1 ⁹	
THE ARTS	1 ¹⁰	
COLLEGE and CAREER READINESS	1 ¹¹	
ELECTIVES	5.5	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	24 ^{12&13}	

APPENDIX A-6

APPENDIX A-6 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

¹Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) English Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory English may be taken only if a credit bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.

²Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) Math Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory Mathematics may be taken only if a credit-bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics Grade 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course. At least two (2) of the four (4) required mathematics Carnegie units must be earned in courses higher than the CCR Algebra I course. The Ready for High School Mathematics course shall only be available for 8th grade or 9th grade students. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for 9th grade students. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB DP Mathematics I, IB DP Mathematics II, IB DP Mathematical Studies I, and IB DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One (1) of the four (4) required Carnegie units for mathematics may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II.

³For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences, Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and —Sports Medicine Theory and Application II. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁴Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. IB DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

⁵Carnegie credit earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one-half (½) unit in Economics. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course.

APPENDIX A-6

APPENDIX A-6 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

⁶The Carnegie credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one-half (½) unit social studies course. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program.

⁷The graduation requirement for one half (½) unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association. Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, show choir, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

⁸Carnegie credit earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one half (½) Carnegie unit in Health. Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.

⁹The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses. Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science.

¹⁰Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹¹The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year, to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence and the student completes all four years.

¹²Additional requirements above the 24 Carnegie Units and the assessment requirements include:

- Students must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission this includes dropping the endorsement to earn only the Traditional diploma
- For early release, students must meet College or Career Readiness Benchmarks that allow students to attend postsecondary without remediation or demonstrate work-ready requirements students must meet College and Career Readiness benchmarks of 17 in English and 19 in Math on the ACT sub-score OR earn

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a Silver level on the ACT WorkKeys suite of assessments. For seniors that have not meet the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements:

- Have a GPA of 2.5 and have passed or meet the assessment option requirements for all four end-of-course assessments
- Are on track to meet the diploma requirements
- Are concurrently enrolled in the appropriate Essentials for College and Career Readiness Class

Additional recommendations (not requirements) above the 24 Carnegie Units and assessment requirements include:

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement
- Student should take a math or math equivalency senior year

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APPENDIX A-7 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT (Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the *Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards*. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi*. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the *Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual*. Enrollment in online courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal.

In order to earn the Career and Technical Endorsement, a student must complete the minimum graduation requirements as specified below, meet the requirements for each of the required high school assessments and complete all career and technical endorsement additional requirements. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

Beginning school year 2018-2019 and thereafter, all entering ninth graders will be required to have a minimum of 26 Carnegie units as specified below to earn a Traditional Diploma with a Career and Technical Endorsement. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra I
SCIENCE	3 ³	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3.5	1 World History ⁴ 1 U.S. History ⁴ ½ U.S. Government ⁴ ½ Economics ⁵ ½ Mississippi Studies ⁶
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	.5 ⁷	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	.5 ⁸	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1 ⁹	
THE ARTS	1 ¹⁰	Any approved 500 course
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS	1 ¹¹	
CAREER and TECHNICAL	4	
ELECTIVES	3.5	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	26 ^{12&13}	

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APPENDIX A-7 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

¹Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) English Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory English may be taken only if a credit bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.

²Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) Math Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory Mathematics may be taken only if a credit bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics Grade 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course. At least two (2) of the four (4) required mathematics Carnegie units must be earned in courses higher than the CCR Algebra I course. The Ready for High School Mathematics course shall only be available for 8th grade or 9th grade students. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for 9th grade students. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB DP Mathematics I, IB DP Mathematics II, IB DP Mathematical Studies I, and IB DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One (1) of the four (4) required Carnegie units for mathematics may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II.

³For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences, Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine Theory and Application II. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁴For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁵Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. IB DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB DP History of the Americas II is

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accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

⁵Carnegie credit earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one half (½) unit in Economics, A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course.

APPENDIX A-7 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

⁴The Carnegie credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out of state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one-half (½) unit social studies course. IB DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program.

²The graduation requirement for one half (½) unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the Fitness through Physical Education Framework and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association. Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, show choir, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the Fitness through Physical Education Framework and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

³Carnegie credit earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health. Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.

⁶The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses—Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science.

¹⁰Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹¹The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year, to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved

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through the Mississippi Department of Education. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence and the student completes all four years.

⁹The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science:

ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.

¹⁰Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹¹The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to this student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year.

¹²Additional requirements above Traditional Diploma Option and the 26 Carnegie Units and the assessment requirements include:

- Students must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.
- For early release, students must meet College or Career Readiness Benchmarks that allow students to attend postsecondary without remediation or demonstrate work-ready requirements.
- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5
- Earn silver level on ACT WorkKeys
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One CTE dual credit
 - A Career Pathway Experience
 - Earn a State Board of Education approved national credential

APPENDIX A-7 (Continued) **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

¹³Additional recommendations (not requirements) above 26 Carnegie Units and assessment requirements include:

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement
- Student should take a math or math equivalency senior year

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APPENDIX A-8 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with an ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT (Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the *Mississippi College and Career-Readiness Standards*. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi*. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Enrollment in online courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has met requirements for each of the required high school assessments is eligible to receive a high school diploma. Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the *Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual*.

Beginning school year 2018-2019 and thereafter, all entering ninth graders will be required to have a minimum of 26 Carnegie units as specified below to earn a Traditional Diploma with an Academic Endorsement. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II Two additional English Courses above English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra I Two additional Math Courses above Algebra I
SCIENCE	3 ³	Biology I Two additional science courses above Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3.5	1 World History ⁴ 1 U.S. History ⁴ ½ U.S. Government ⁴ ½ Economics ⁵ ½ Mississippi Studies ⁶
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	.5 ⁷	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	.5 ⁸	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1 ⁹	
THE ARTS	1 ¹⁰	Any approved 500 course
COLLEGE and CAREER READINESS	1 ¹¹	
ELECTIVES	7.5	Must Include College Preparatory curriculum requirements
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	26 ^{12&13}	

APPENDIX A-8 (Continued)
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with an ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

¹Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) English Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory English may be taken only if a credit bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.

²Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) Math Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory Mathematics may be taken only if a credit bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics Grade 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course. At least two (2) of the four (4) required mathematics Carnegie units must be earned in courses higher than the CCR Algebra I course. The Ready for High School Mathematics course shall only be available for 8th grade or 9th grade students. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for 9th grade students. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB DP Mathematics I, IB DP Mathematics II, IB DP Mathematical Studies I, and IB DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One (1) of the four (4) required Carnegie units for mathematics may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two-course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II.

³For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences, Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine Theory and Application II. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁴For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁵Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. IB-DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students

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enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

⁷Carnegie credit earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one half (½) unit in Economics. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course

APPENDIX A-8 (Continued)

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with an ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

⁸The Carnegie credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out of state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one half (½) unit social studies course. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program.

⁷The graduation requirement for one-half (½) unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the Fitness through Physical Education Framework and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association. Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, show choir, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the Fitness through Physical Education Framework and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

⁸Carnegie credit earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health. Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one-half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.

⁹The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses: Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science.

¹⁰Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹¹The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year, to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four-year sequence and the student completes all four years.

APPENDIX A-8

The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.

Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year.

Additional requirements above the Traditional Diploma Option, the 26 Carnegie Units and the assessment requirements include:

- Students must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.
- For early release, students must meet College or Career Readiness Benchmarks that allow students to attend postsecondary without remediation or demonstrate work-ready requirements.
- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5
- Courses must meet MS IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC) requirements
- Earn MS college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores of 17 in English and 19 in Math or completion of appropriate Essentials of College Math or Essentials of College Literacy with and ≥80 or above college-ready courses in senior year) or on the SAT as defined by IHL.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One dual credit course and earn a non-weighted C or higher in the course

APPENDIX A-8 (Continued)

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with an ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

Additional recommendations (not requirements) above 26 Carnegie Units and assessment requirements include:

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement.
- Student should take a math or math equivalency senior year

APPENDIX A-9

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with a DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Enrollment in online courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has met the requirements for each of the required high school assessments is eligible to receive a high school diploma. Students enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual.

Beginning school year 2018-2019 and thereafter, all entering ninth graders will be required to have a minimum of 28 Carnegie units as specified below to earn a Traditional Diploma with a Distinguished Academic Endorsement. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

APPENDIX A-9

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I English II Two additional English Courses above English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra I Two additional Math Courses above Algebra I
SCIENCE	4 ³	Biology I Two additional science courses above Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	4	1 World History ⁴ 1 U.S. History ⁴ ½ U.S. Government ⁴ ½ Economics ⁵ ½ Mississippi Studies ⁶
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	.5 ⁷	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	.5 ⁸	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1 ⁹	
THE ARTS	1 ¹⁰	
COLLEGE and CAREER READINESS	1 ¹¹	
ELECTIVES	7.5	Must include two IHL advanced electives Must meet College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC)
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	28 ^{12&13}	

APPENDIX A-9 (Continued)
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with a DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

¹Carnegie units earned for Compensatory English courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) English Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory English may be taken only if a credit-bearing English course is taken in the same school year. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.

²Carnegie units earned for Compensatory Mathematics courses cannot be included as any of the four (4) Math Carnegie units required for graduation; however, Carnegie units earned for these courses may be included in the general elective graduation requirements. Compensatory Mathematics may be taken only if a credit-bearing Math course is taken in the same school year. CCR Mathematics Grade 8, Ready for High School Mathematics, and Foundations of Algebra cannot be taken after a student has received a Carnegie unit in the CCR Algebra I course. At least two (2) of the four (4) required mathematics Carnegie units must be earned in courses higher than the CCR Algebra I course. The Ready for High School Mathematics course shall only be available for 8th grade or 9th grade students. Foundations of Algebra shall only be available for 9th grade students. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB DP Mathematics I, IB DP Mathematics II, IB DP Mathematical Studies I, and IB DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One (1) of the four (4) required Carnegie units for mathematics may be in Architecture & Drafting if the student completes the two course sequence for Architecture & Drafting I & II.

³For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences, Sports Medicine or Sports Medicine Theory and Application I and Sports Medicine Theory and Application II. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁴For science Carnegie units, the following Career and Technical (CTE) courses may be used to fulfill science requirements for graduation: one (1) unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience or Introduction to Agriscience, and a second unit may be earned by completing two (2) of the following three (3) courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two (2) units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Healthcare & Clinical Services II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Robotics/Engineering II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turf grass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences. A maximum of two (2) of the four (4) required science units (excluding Biology I) may be earned by completing Agriculture and Natural Resources I & II.

⁵Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies Framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. IB DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

APPENDIX A-9

Carnegie credit earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of one-half (½) unit in Economics. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course.

APPENDIX A-9 (Continued)
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 14

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with a DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT
(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

⁸The Carnegie credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other one-half (½) unit social studies course may be accepted. An out of state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other one half (½) unit social studies course. IB DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program.

⁹The graduation requirement for one-half (½) unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, show choir, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association. Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, show choir, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

⁹Carnegie credit earned in Healthcare & Clinical Services I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one half (½) Carnegie unit in Health. Successful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Contemporary Health to meet the graduation requirement for one half (½) Carnegie unit in Health.

⁹The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses: Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science.

¹⁰Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹¹The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year. to provide planning and instruction for postsecondary transition. Courses that meet College and Career Readiness must be approved through the Mississippi Department of Education. Courses may be taught during the junior or senior year unless the course is taught through a four year sequence and the student completes all four years.

⁹The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.

¹⁰Digital Media may be accepted in lieu of the art requirement for students.

¹¹The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year.

APPENDIX A-9

¹²Additional requirements above the Traditional Diploma Option, the 28 Carnegie Units and the assessment requirements include:

- ~~Students must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.~~
- ~~For early release, students must meet College or Career Readiness Benchmarks that allow students to attend postsecondary without remediation or demonstrate work-ready requirements.~~
- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0
- Courses must meet MS IHL CPC recommended requirements
- Earn national college readiness benchmarks on each subtest established by ACT of 18 in English and 22 in Math or on the SAT as defined by IHL.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One dual credit course earning a non-weighted B or higher in the course

¹³Additional recommendations (not requirements) above 28 Carnegie Units and assessment requirements include:

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement
- Student should take a math or math equivalency senior year

APPENDIX A-10
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
ALTERNATE DIPLOMA OPTION

NOTE: This option may be offered by districts for incoming ninth graders of 2018-2019 for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Only students identified by their Individualized Education Program Committee as having a significant cognitive disability, as defined by the Testing Students with Disabilities Regulations and State Board Policy Chapter 78, Rule 78.1, may be eligible to earn the Alternate Diploma. Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district with the Alternate Diploma will have earned the required credits as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the State Board approved Alternate Academic Achievement Standards. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi. (See 7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 28, R. 28.2, R. 28.3.) Students with significant cognitive disabilities enrolled in grades 7 – 12 may be awarded a credit provided the course content is a credit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual.

Any student with a significant cognitive disability who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has achieved a score of 3 (to be determined) or higher on each of the required high school alternate assessments is eligible to receive an Alternate Diploma. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CREDITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
<u>ENGLISH</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Alternate English I-IV</u>
<u>MATHEMATICS</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Alternate Math I-III,</u> <u>Alternate Algebra</u>
<u>SCIENCE</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Alternate Biology</u> <u>Alternate Science II</u>
<u>SOCIAL STUDIES</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Alternate History</u> <u>Alternate Social Studies</u>
<u>HEALTH</u>	<u>½</u>	<u>Alternate Health</u>
<u>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</u>	<u>1¹</u>	<u>Physical Education</u>
<u>VOCATIONAL READINESS</u>	<u>4²</u>	<u>Career Readiness I-IV</u>
<u>LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Life Skills Development I-IV</u>
<u>THE ARTS</u>	<u>1</u>	
<u>ELECTIVES</u>	<u>2³</u>	

APPENDIX A-10

<u>TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED</u>	<u>24</u>	
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APPENDIX A-10

APPENDIX A-10 (Continued) GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ALTERNATE DIPLOMA OPTION

NOTE: This option may be offered by districts for incoming ninth graders of 2018-2019 for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

¹Elective units in physical education include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

²Evidence of proficiency in technology is embedded in the course strands for both Career Readiness and Life Skills Development so that students with significant cognitive disabilities may be taught these skills within the natural environment assuring greater application and generalization of the skills.

³Only one (1) elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements, they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

APPENDIX A-1111

APPENDIX A-11

Certificate of Completion

Note: This option may be offered by districts for incoming freshmen beginning in 2017-2018

A Certificate of Completion is not a high school diploma or an Alternate Diploma, but rather an acknowledgement of the child's participation in and completion of his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion are:

- The student with an IEP has been unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of either the Traditional Diploma or the Alternate Diploma, and
- Student with an IEP has reached the maximum age of service under IDEA, which in Mississippi is age 20.

The student's IEP Committee determines the course of study for the Certificate of Completion. Areas of instruction should be developed based on the needs of the individual student.

All students are required to participate in the Mississippi Assessment Program.

Item E

**Public Comments from the Administrative Procedures
Act (APA) Process**

**REVISION OF STANDARD 14,
APPENDICES A AND G OF THE
MS PUBLIC SCHOOL
ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS,
2016**

APA COMMENTS

July 20, 2017 – August 31, 2017

Rule	Narrative of Rule	Topic	Comments		
			Supporting	Concerns	Total
MS Public School Accountability Standards, 2016	Revise Standard 14, Appendices A and G: Graduation requirements	Graduation Requirements	12	118	130
	TOTAL COMMENTS		12	118	130

REVISION OF MS PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS, 2016

APA Comments Summary Chart

Role	Number of Commenters
Superintendents/Conservators	10
Assistant Superintendents	1
District School Board Members	--
Teachers	28
Librarians/Media Specialists	1
Federal Programs Directors	--
Curriculum Directors	1
Special Education Directors	2
Principals	29
Assistant Principals	--
Vocational School Directors	1
Other District Personnel	11
Instructional Specialists/Academic Coaches	1
Advocacy Groups	--
MDE Offices	--
Citizens (Parents)	39
Unknown	--
State Organizations	6
TOTAL	130

Thirty (30) school districts were represented through the APA comments received.

From: Sarah Foster [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 22, 2017 5:22 PM
To: Paula Vanderford <PAVanderford@mdck12.org>
Subject: 21'st Century Skills

Dr. Vanderford,

I know you have a lot on your plate right now, but I wanted to pass along some input I received from our local interventionist at the high school. We were talking about the proposed 21st Century Skills course, and she said students were DESPERATE for study skills. She said the majority of her students have never been taught how to study for tests. I don't know if this would fall under critical thinking of Learning Skills, but it should really be considered. Come to think of it, I don't think I was ever taught how to study. LOL!

Please pass along if you feel it has merit.

Sincerely,

Sarah Foster

From: Chasity Lane
To: Uicensura
Subject: New Diploma Options
Date: Thursday, July 13, 2017 2:53:35 PM

I am writing to express my backing of the new proposed diploma options. As a mother of a child with Autism, my biggest fear is that my child will not get to graduate and go on to college. Currently, he is a SPED self contained classroom. My child is well capable of doing the work, he may just need to take a different route to get there. I'd like to know that he has a different option other than a MOD track. The new proposed diploma option will give many many special needs students the ability to go to college and continue their education. This will allow them to reach their full. This proposal could have a huge impact on the lives of these children. I sincerely pray that this proposal gets the attention and backing that it needs.

Sincerely,
Chasity Lane
Mother of a child with autism

From: KAY Patterson
To: Licensure
Subject: Comments on new diploma requirement
Date: Friday, July 14, 2017 4:13:12 AM

I disagree with this new educational step for a diploma. I do therefore understand the reason it would be good for the student. I disagree because it is to much for these students to be having to do to acquire a diploma. There is so much now these children are having to do now and are already stressed out with new ways of learning as it is that have been put in them with common core.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Darrell Crum [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2017 at 11:43 AM
To: Carey Wright <CWright@mdek12.org>, Washington Cole <WCole@mdek12.org>, Rachael Ellis <REllis@mdek12.org>, Deborah Ware <DWare@mdek12.org>
Cc: Cheryl Crum [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

Dear MDE K12,

I just read the following:

Mississippi State Board of Education Proposes New Diploma Options to Expand College and Career Opportunities for All Students

I commend these efforts but more work is needed because there are children currently in the system that will not benefit from this work. My daughter [REDACTED] is one of the students who will not benefit. She will be entering the [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] this fall and I have grave concerns for her ability to be self-sufficient later in life due to the occupational diploma she'll receive. So many (too many) employers require the traditional diploma to even be considered for employment and that is a dream crusher for these kids. This will persist to hinder them into and throughout adulthood unless "YOU" intervene. This is so extremely important that it is worth repeating that if left in its current form it will affect [REDACTED] throughout her LIFETIME. These children have enough struggles in life and are overlooked both socially and academically for the most part. Let's not put lifelong obstacles in their way. Their inability to compete academically within our traditional educational system should not hinder their chances of employment. Their jobs will never be glamorous but they can be fulfilling and allow them a sense of validation through being self-sufficient ~ Don't hinder, but rather enable this. As a parent and [REDACTED] father my heart goes out to [REDACTED] and all children who search to just fit in on the fragile edges of society. Any efforts to not over-look these children already in high school is greatly appreciated. We hope for a voice and pray for someone in MDE K12 to champion these efforts and be the tip of the spear for these beautiful but forgotten kids. May God Bless,

Darrell Crum
[REDACTED]

From: Lundy Brantley [<mailto:lbrantley@neshobacentral.com>]
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2017 4:36 PM
To: Paula Vanderford <PAVanderford@mdck12.org>
Cc: John Bowen <jbowen@neshobacentral.com>
Subject: APA

Dr. Vanderford,

I hope you are doing well! I could not find the APA link for the grad options. Will you report my comments?

- The CCR benchmarks should not be used to determine Senior leave. This will cost us a large sum of money to be able to offer more classes. This is over-reach.
- Adding a CCR class as a Senior is the same scenario as listed above. While we are being cut dollars, we are being asked to add classes.
- We need the 21 credit option back for our students.

From: [Malik Pernell](#)
To: [Licensure](#)
Subject: Reading and Basic Math
Date: Monday, July 24, 2017 1:31:41 PM

There should be a program that makes sure that students with special needs know how to read and do basic math by the time they complete high school. Many of the students that were on the MOD track and exited high school are not able to read and comprehend a first grade level passage.

Maybe a scripted reading and math program could help. Especially with the high turnover rate of special education teachers. If a teacher left, maybe the new teacher can pick up where the last teacher left off.

I'm pretty sure if you looked at the data of high school mild/moderate special needs students, it will show that they cannot read well enough to complete a job application. This includes MOD and some standard diploma track students. This is the main reason that the MOD program did not work. How can you prepare students for jobs when they are not able to read the applications that they are required to complete?

Please put something in place that will ensure that the students are able to read and perform basic math before exiting high school. Maybe they can be required to take a reading and a math class every year where they will be able to learn at their own pace until they are able to test out at a least an 8th grade level.

If the students at least know how to read and perform basic math, it will be easier for them to learn all of the other stuff.

From: Dina Holland
To: Accreditation
Date: Thursday, July 27, 2017 2:05:45 PM

We have chewed on the, and here is a list of our concerns:

Traditional diploma-career and college readiness-not all students are going to college-how will that affect them? What does the 1 Carnegie unit consist of? Is it a course-obviously we are a bit confused about that. The traditional diploma, students lose the opportunity to take 2 additional units of electives. We do believe that a basic diploma is still necessary-21 Carnegie units. We are also genuinely concerned with resource students who do not earn a traditional diploma and do not qualify for an alternate diploma will be left out of the graduation process. Some resource students are not capable of obtaining a traditional diploma, unfortunately.

No issues with the alternate diploma

Career and Technical-limited spots for students-same question-what is the career and college readiness credit?

Academic endorsement-with career and college readiness having to occur within one semester of graduation-need explanation on that

Geography not required for any diploma? We believe that it is an important part to a student's course of study.

Dina Holland
St. Martin High School, principal

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: Billy R. Jones
To: Accreditation
Cc: Tommy Parker; Sharon Grasha
Subject: Feedback on Graduation Options
Date: Thursday, July 27, 2017 9:15:46 AM

Dear MDE,

In reviewing the proposed diploma options for Mississippi Public Schools I would like to express my concern about items being included that are not under the direct authority of the local school district to control. This is relation to having students be required to do one of the following for the Academic and the Distinguished Academic Diplomas, respectively:

Must successfully complete one of the following:

- One AP course and take the appropriate AP exam
- One IB course and take the appropriate IB exams
- One dual credit course with a non-weighted C or higher in the course

Must successfully complete one of the following:

- One AP course and take the appropriate AP exam
- One IB course and take the appropriate IB exams
- One dual credit course with a non-weighted B or higher

This appears to create the same conundrum that we have in the accountability system with the acceleration piece being tied to AP exams or Dual Credit. We should not require as a part of Mississippi Public Education – anything, diploma-wise or accountability-wise, that will require a cost to the student or that is related to a student's ability to pay. In this case, there is a cost for taking AP exams, and a cost for students to take a Dual Credit course. There is great variation on this cost depending where a student lives. This is not fair and I believe that it goes against the spirit of what is meant by a Free and Appropriate Public Education. We have been saying that this would be remedied, but I have been hearing this argument for many years now.

Last, I am also concerned with the requirement of having children that have exhausted all other options for the traditional diploma and then move on to earn a Certificate of Completion having to remain in school until they are age 20, regardless of the circumstances. This policy could seem to promote retention of students in the earlier grades. Of the many interventions that we utilize in schooling, "Retention" is one of the few that we continue to promote and utilize that has yet to show anything but a negative impact on student achievement and/or school completion.

Thank you for your consideration and all that you do to help support our kids being successful.

Respectfully,

BR Jones, PhD

Supervising Principal
South Jones High School

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From: Clemmons, Meredith M [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 02, 2017 9:01 AM
To: Accreditation <accred@mdek12.org>
Subject: Diploma options

I am the mother of a child with a 504 Plan at school. He qualifies for the 504 because of a seizure disorder he has had at birth. Despite multiple seizure medications [REDACTED] continues to have breakthrough and reflex seizures at school. The actual seizures are usually brief but have potential to be longer in duration. The post ictal phase after a seizure can include lethargy, mild confusion, nausea and even mild agitation. [REDACTED] also experiences Todd's Palsy after some seizure, which leaves his extremities temporarily paralyzed. This interferes with his ability to get schoolwork done in a timely fashion at times. While there are interventions written into his 504 to allow extra time for work completion, the two current graduation option options do not meet [REDACTED] needs. He is a child that has significant challenges at times, but he is a child who has a chance to attend junior college and become a productive citizen.

The diploma track has requirements that would be impossible for [REDACTED] to complete because of his challenges. The certificate track can alleviate some of those challenges but would not allow for any higher education without the completion of a GED. The certificate option would cancel out all hard work done in high school; none of it would be recognized without a GED. I am looking for a third graduation option that would count as a diploma with necessary adjustments for those kids who suffer from a disability or medical condition. My child is one who can complete his work and be successful in the classroom with lots of extra time and assistance from teachers and parents. [REDACTED] has been and can be successful, and as parents we are committed to his success. It is my hope that his State will be willing to invest in his future by allowing options that are feasible for a graduation that will contribute to his future.

Respectfully,

Meredith Clemmons

Meredith Clemmons, LCSW, CCM | Optum
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#TeamTammy

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From: Latasha Reddick
To: Accreditation
Subject: Traditional Diplomas for kids with Disabilities
Date: Thursday, August 03, 2017 2:58:40 PM

Good evening! I am the proud parent of two JPS students. One of my children has a disability called Sotos Syndrome which effects cognitive skills. For the most part, she is very functional. She is a hard worker, very respectful, and at times, shy. Currently, she has a 504 plan. Often, I have to remind her that she is normal like her peers (even when she's bullied by them). I think kids with disabilities should not be overlooked when getting a traditional diploma. In some cases, teachers may have been bombarded with meetings and paperwork, which unintentionally causes them to not give a struggling student extra teaching time. This past school year, I found myself tutoring my child 3-4hrs daily once school was out. This made both of us tired. My child didn't get a 504 plan until a couple of weeks before school got out. No one from the exceptional ed department would give me a call back after I was told to bring more information back. I wrestled with visits and calls since September of 2016. Now, finally, my child has accommodations that will be given. As a tenth grader, I pray she is given all the help she needs because she has the potential to be great like any other student. Although her reading is great, she struggles a little with comprehension and greatly in algebra. However, she has made great growth, especially since I've had a few appointments with the 9th grade principal and her English teacher. There's no limit in what a child can do when great people encourage and seek the best! I wholeheartedly propose that students with disabilities be given a chance to earn a traditional diploma. This will boost the confidence and self esteem of those students. They, too, deserve to be rewarded for their dedication to an education.

Proud parent,
Latasha Smith
Sent from my iPhone

From: Morogno, Ray
To: Accreditation; Paula Vanderford
Subject: Diploma Options
Date: Friday, August 04, 2017 12:22:04 PM

Dr. Malone & Dr. Vanderford

Thank you for the work that has been done on the different diploma options. After meeting with our staff here in the district and also meeting with our board at MASA, I wanted to share many of the concerns that I and others have. First, I have financial concerns as this appears to be an unfunded mandate. I say this because it requires all high schools to offer a new course, potentially add additional staff, and so forth. To require a new course means we are going to be taking kids out of another subject and putting them in a new college and career readiness class, with not much of a framework developed. I would think each class already should be helping kids reach college and career readiness. However, the big one is no work release for seniors that have not met the College/Career Ready benchmarks. While this is very well intentioned, there are some major flaws. First, as you both know, only around 11% of our students in MS meet all four benchmarks. So, think about how many seniors are not going to have work release and the number of classes that will be added at each high school. Thus the additional teacher units/unfunded mandate. Next, I really am concerned about our kids that have to work to help their families make ends meet. The concern is some of them will just drop out if they are not allowed a work release. I also strongly believe that this should be a local board decision. Quite frankly, working a job is career training. Next, for our struggling kids that are working, the 21 credit local option diploma has been very helpful in certain situations. We have been able to keep some of our over age children coming up from Junior High in school by having them on this track. Basically, when they realize there is a chance that they can finish in three years and graduate closer to their appropriate class, they are more likely to not dropout. This has been a viable option by having the 21 credit local option. Again, I worry about unintended consequences. Next are the small ones. Many districts already have diploma endorsements with honors, special honors, Mississippi scholars, etc. I really don't understand the need to have all of these different state endorsements. Next, it does not say what a capstone experience is for the distinguished academic endorsement. Again, doing a senior project or whatever is a local decision. Next, I disagree with requiring a non-weighted C or higher grade in College Dual Credit Courses to meet the Academic Endorsement diploma, yet not requiring the same non-weighted C or higher for AP or IB courses. The same non-weighted discrepancy is found in the Distinguished Academic Endorsement. I believe this is not really fair. Once again, districts have already developed graduating with honors, distinguished grads, etc. I figure individual colleges set their own distinguished diplomas as well. Again, I see state overreach.

I just wanted to point out that there are still a good bit of questions and concerns out there right now on this particular proposal. Also, we have gone to road shows on these proposals for the past two years, given feedback, and we continue to see much of the same stuff being proposed so I figure it is not changing a whole lot. Now, all of this rant to say, we will roll with whatever comes down and do it with a smile. Please just consider the unintended consequences that some of these things can have on children and school districts. We are excited about the alternate diploma option for our severely profound students that is proposed and appreciate the work that has been done. Thank you for the efforts that you guys give each day in trying to continue to move our state forward.

Thanks,

Raymond C. Morgigno, Ph.D.
Superintend, Pearl Public School District
(601) 932-7916

From: Katina Hill
To: Accreditation
Date: Monday, August 07, 2017 2:16:33 PM

I DO NOT like the new law about special education students that have went twelve years with their classmates not being allowed to walk in the graduation with their peers. This is the class that they are a part of. I believe it should be a choice for them to walk with their peers and come back the following year until the age of 21.

From: Suzanne Wooley [mailto:wooleys@stippah.k12.ms.us]
Sent: Tuesday, August 08, 2017 12:57 PM
To: Accreditation <accred@mdek12.org>
Subject: Proposed diploma options

To whom it may concern:

I would like to voice my opinion regarding the new proposed diploma options, as it pertains to special education students. I will have to say this was very shocking information to me, as a special education teacher and as a friend to many individuals with special needs. I am blessed with very healthy children, but can't imagine in the event that something should happen to them to render them with special challenges that might require special education that they would not be allowed to participate in a graduation ceremony with the rest of their peers they have been with since kindergarten, but would only be awarded a certificate once they have "aged out". I think this is very heartbreaking and should NOT happen to young people who have quite possibly had to fight their ENTIRE lives to be successful!

I would love to also give an example of a young man named [REDACTED] who is a very good friend of mine who has Down Syndrome. [REDACTED] was born when I was 8 years old (I am now 45 years old). Because our parents were good friends, my younger brother and I spent a lot of time with [REDACTED]. We still refer to him as our "other brother". [REDACTED] attended a different public school than the one my brother and I attended, but because our families were so close, we were well aware of [REDACTED] daily life. [REDACTED] went through school with a phenomenal group of "kids" who loved him, protected him, encouraged him, and helped him succeed. One of the proudest moments of our lives was the night we got to see [REDACTED] walk across that stage and receive his diploma with the peers he had loved and had been loved by for 13 years. Those "kids" would not have been any more proud had he been a movie star. I dare say there was not a dry eye in that building. I feel as if those "kids", as well as my brother and I, were changed people because of [REDACTED] and his place in our hearts and in our lives. To think that young people would be robbed of the opportunity to see "special" students grow and learn, and to be a vital part of that growth greatly saddens me. It also saddens me to think that we, as adults would say to these same young people that their "special" peers are not important enough to be on that stage with them on one of the greatest nights of their lives. I hope we, as adults, will provide a better example of compassion, love, and doing what is right than keeping these students from receiving a certificate until they have "aged out". Please, think of this as your friend, or as your child, just as I am, and make the right choice for these students. Each and every one of them is someone's "[REDACTED]"...someone's whole world! I believe graduation night would hold a lot of heartache for parents, students, peers, and the whole community should a special needs child not be allowed to graduate with his/her "class", their friends and protectors for 13 years!

I would also love to brag on [REDACTED] and say he is a HIGHLY successful young man who has a part-time job and brings joy and love to each and every person he meets! He is who he is today because of God's wonderful grace, a fantastic family, and the BEST friends from his childhood, who STILL love him, check in on him, and encourage him! It just doesn't get any better than that!

Thank you so much for taking the time to read these words from my heart! If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me at any time!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Wooley



Dear Dr. Jo Ann Malone,

I would like to express my concern about the "certificate of attendance" graduation option being only for students who have reached the age of 20 years old by September 1st. Special Education students seem to be being placed on the back burner with the state of Mississippi Department of Education. If a student has completed his "attendance" years K-12 with his peers why can he/she not graduate with their peers? These students have a disability, as defined by IDEA, and deserve, in my opinion, to be treated like peers that they have gone to school with.

Please reconsider removing the age 20 by September 1st statement for students who graduate with a certificate of attendance.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Goodrich

From: Dillard, Susan
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation Options
Date: Friday, August 11, 2017 10:35:27 AM

I'm concerned about the requirement of an AP Class/exam or DC Course to graduate with the Distinguished Diploma. I'm not sure we can require students to pay for the AP exam or DC Course in order to receive a Diploma unless the State is going to fund these requirements. There are students who will have difficulty paying for these options and they shouldn't be reduced to a Traditional Diploma based on their finances. Thanks for your consideration!

Susan Dillard, MEd, NCC, NCSC

Saltillo High School

Counselor

(662) 869-5466

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From: Leslie Horton [mailto:leslie.horton@copiah.ms]
Sent: Saturday, August 12, 2017 7:46 PM
To: Accreditation <accred@mdek12.org>
Subject: Comments on Proposed Graduation Requirements and Other Topics

Greetings,

1. Please do not eliminate the World Geography requirement.
Our students need to know about the world beyond the USA.
2. Please add a fourth science and require chemistry or physics.
 - a) Jobs are plentiful in the STEM fields. (The S stands for science.)
 - b) Our students need to know about more than the biological sciences.
3. Please shorten the school year for successful students.
 - a) Test scores were higher on the sixties and seventies when students only went to school 160 days.
 - b) Students who are deficient could come to school for remediation in August and stay later in May.
 - c) Some teachers could be paid extra to come in August and stay in May to work with these students.
 - d) All teachers would get a "raise" since they would work fewer days for the same pay.
 - e) More college graduates would be attracted to the teaching profession.
 - f) Students who had succeeded at their "job" would get a longer summer.
4. Please reconsider "inclusion" for students with disruptive behaviors.
 - a) These behaviors destroy the learning environment.
 - b) They are an infringement on the rights of other students in the class.
 - c) Students who will not remain in the classroom under the supervision of a teacher are endangered.

Thank you for your work,

Dr. Leslie Horton

Copiah County School District
Crystal Springs High School
201 Newton Street
Crystal Springs, MS 39059
601-892-4791

leslie.horton@copiah.ms

The Copiah County School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities without regard to race, national origin, sex, or handicap. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our district's Title IX and Section 504 coordinator. This office is located at the Copiah County School District's office in Hazlehurst, MS at 224 West Calhoun Street. Phone (601) 892-4791.

*** This Email was sent by an educator at Crystal Springs High School in Copiah County School District.

From: Boyd, Susan
To: Accreditation
Subject: Proposed Graduation Options Feedback
Date: Monday, August 14, 2017 7:51:44 AM

To Whom it May Concern:

I am troubled and bothered by the Proposed Diploma and Graduation Requirements as proposed by the offices of Secondary Education and Special Education. In my experience as an educator and as a leader in my district, I believe this revision will negatively impact all of our students in Mississippi public schools. While I understand the goal of the proposed revisions is to "ensure that the majority of students with disabilities earn a traditional diploma" I do not believe these changes will have the desired outcome. I believe that these revisions do not expand the opportunities for our students with disabilities rather limit them.

According to the vision statement of the Mississippi Board of Education, we as educators are "to create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens". In order to achieve this vision we must provide an educational system to which all students have access. It is unbearable to watch the repeated failures of a fourteen year-old student on a first grade level struggle and work with all of her might in a secondary math classroom. By eliminating other graduation options and forcing this student in a one-and-only structure our educational system is not giving that "student the knowledge and skills to be successful" rather we are the cause for her failure. And, because the teachers of Mississippi work tirelessly to support the needs of all of their students, I fear that the quality and rigor of instruction will be lessened as a whole in order to support, accommodate, and encourage struggling learners. Thus, our students without disabilities will not be appropriately challenged nor encouraged to grow in their knowledge. If we are to prepare students to be successful in college and the workforce then we should equip each student with an appropriate education with which every child can succeed.

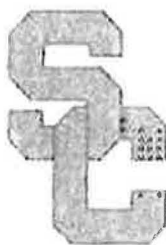
In light of the needs of our students I ask that the Proposed Diploma and Graduation Requirements be rejected.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Susan Boyd
District Math Coach
Pearl Public School District

SOUTHAVEN HIGH SCHOOL

735 RASCO ROAD WEST
SOUTHAVEN, MS 38671



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CAITLIN PAINTER
LATAUSHA WILLIAMS
SHANNON WILLIAMSON

TEST COORDINATOR
MATTHEW YARDLEY

PROVIDING A PATH TO SUCCESS

SHANE JONES
PRINCIPAL

August 14, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

After reviewing the State's proposals for students concerning the issuing work releases, I felt compelled to speak out on behalf of our students. I feel our school, Southaven High School, is a snapshot of a lot of suburban schools across the country. We are almost split down the middle as far as demographics, and we have a large proportion of Hispanic students as well. My concerns about the new policy are stated below, and they are from real conversations with students that have attended or are currently attending our school.

Some of our students need to work to provide for their families. I have had countless conversations with students in which they tell me a parent has been laid off, cannot find a job, or simply refuses to work, and they (the high school student) are the only person currently earning a paycheck in the household. Moreover, students often work to save money for college. I can easily identify with these students, as I had to save money throughout high school to pay for my higher education as well. Additionally, many students have to use this time to care for and tend to younger siblings. They blend their schedule at school with a parent's work schedule to watch a toddler or baby because the family cannot afford daycare. If these new policies are implemented, I am afraid it will force a junior or senior to choose between working to help the family or being able to watch a brother and sister, and staying in school.

Furthermore, I know of many students who use this time to seek out remediation for state assessments and tutoring in classes they are currently struggling in. I have seen this amongst our highest achievers, students taking Advanced Placement or Dual Credit classes, and those need additional time with their teacher to grasp concepts or score well on AP assessments. Likewise, I have seen students use this time for tutoring or auditing a class, especially in our classes in which the students still need to pass a state assessment in order to graduate. You eliminate a student's ability to have these opportunities with this new policy.

Lastly, I worry about the effects on extra-curricular activities this would cause. More often than not, clubs, sports, band, etc. keep students in school. Again, I am afraid this will force students to choose between these activities and working. I know, and I think you will agree, we will lose students if these extra-curriculars are no longer a possibility for them.

As a principal of a large high school in the state, often times I am forced to rethink decisions I have made after seeing the real life consequences my decision caused on our student body. I am afraid that the unintended consequences of this new policy may affect students in a real way. I am afraid it will actually do more to hurt our graduation rate than it will help. When 21st century students are forced to choose between helping their family by working or watching a sibling, and school, I think the family will win more often than

not. Furthermore, if you take a student's sport or extra-curricular activity away from a student, these were often the activities that were keeping the student in school to begin with. I ask you to reconsider this policy that I know was drafted with good intentions, before it causes real life damage to students and schools that I know is not intended.

Sincerely,

Shane Jones
Principal

From: Thomas Knight
To: Accreditation
Subject: New Diploma Types
Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 5:01:09 PM

I think that doing away with the occupational diploma does a great disservice to the children that have been in self contained special education classes. Unfortunately these children lack the skills necessary to function successfully in an academic classroom. I am currently witnessing firsthand the frustration of three of my students that have been thrust into an environment that they are totally unprepared for. One of these students was in my classes last year, however, he did not receive a grade. He was just about to the point of tears today trying to complete a simple worksheet. Even after several attempts to help him understand the process necessary to complete the work he still is writing answers at random that have no context to the assigned task. In my opinion it is completely unfair to subject him to this sort of stress two years in a row.

Thomas Knight

TK

From: Turner, Ginny
To: Accreditation
Subject: Proposed Graduation Requirements
Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 10:08:39 AM

Good morning!

I am a school counselor at a high school and I am writing to express my concerns with the proposed graduation options that would begin the 2018-2019 school year. Most of this information would be my responsibility to keep current for students and parents. Let me start by saying this proposal raised a good number of questions.

Is the Career Pathway Diploma (21 credits with 4 CTE credits) still going to be a graduation option?

Are current students 9-11 going to be expected to add an endorsement for the 2018-2019 school year? Or can they fall under current graduation requirements?

Who will be expected to teach the College and Career Readiness course? Will those teachers be required to have that endorsement on their educator license?

Since the College and Career Readiness course has to be taken within one semester of graduation, how are the larger schools (5A and 6A) going to be able to handle this load of students?

Since the endorsement has to be selected prior to entering 9th grade, will middle school and junior high schools be penalized for students who did not select an endorsement?

If the students does not select an endorsement prior to 9th grade, will they be allowed to select one after entering 9th grade (since endorsements can be changed with parental permission)?

Is there going to be a limit on how many times an endorsement can be changed? Does this change need to be required at a certain time of year? There is not easy way to keep up with constant endorsement changes if you work at a larger school.

Is there a difference between early release and early graduation?

Are ALL regular education students required to have an endorsement or is the endorsement optional?

Is the 2.5 overall GPA only required if your choose to graduate with an endorsement?

What happens if a student does not earn a 2.5 overall GPA? Does that student not graduate? Or would they remove their endorsement?

For student athletes, the NCAA requires a 2.3 overall GPA for a full qualifier at a division I school, which is lower than the 2.5 overall GPA proposed for the endorsements. If we are talking IHL requirements, which NCAA follows, why is the graduation GPA higher than the full qualifier eligibility requirement GPA for NCAA?

This proposal is supposed to help increase the graduation rate and give special education students an opportunity to graduate with a traditional diploma. Most of our special education students would want to choose the CTE endorsement in order to participate in vocational classes, but most will never be able to reach the 2.5 GPA graduation requirement. How will this help graduation rates if students are unable to meet the GPA requirement?

What is a Career-Pathway experience and how is it different than the CTE classes?

If the student chose to take a CTE dual credit class, will that class count for one of the 4 required credits?

Who will be expected to pay for the credentialing exam for CTE endorsement students or the dual credit course if the student were to choose one of these options?

Can students participate in required endorsement classes if they do not fall under that endorsement?

For the academic and distinguished endorsements, students must either take and pass one AP course and take the appropriate AP exam, one IB course and take the appropriate IB exams, or one dual credit course earning a non-weighted C or higher. Who will be expected to pay for the AP exams, the IB exams, or the dual credit course? What if students cannot afford any of these options? Will they just not be eligible for this endorsements based on their inability to pay for one of these options?

For the alternate diploma option for students with SCD, the alternate courses were considered courses for MOD (Employment English, Life Skills Science, Employment Math, etc). Will the courses for this new option be similar to these current courses taught by an MOD teacher?

As you can see, there is much to be clarified before this new graduation option should be put into place. Please consider all parties involved, including faculty and staff like school counselors. Counselors are overloaded as it is, then to add more to keep up with will not help the situation. Not to mention, some of our regular education students will never be able to meet the overall 2.5 GPA requirement. I can only see this option as a negative option, based on what little information we have about it.

Respectfully,

--
Ginny Turner, MS, NCC
Saltillo High School
School Counselor for:
10th Grade K - Z and 11th Grade
Phone: (662) 869 - 5466
Fax: (662) 869 - 7229

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From: Duke, Michelle
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation Options Comment
Date: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 4:04:05 PM

I am very concerned about the proposed graduation options that are currently being looked at. There is an entire population of students being left out of consideration. A good portion of the students receiving services are significantly behind in reading and math skills. This group of student also struggle with completing things in the time frame given by regular teachers. Students in this gap group are higher functioning than SCD students but not capable of regular classes. However, these gap students are capable of becoming productive citizens, getting jobs and contributing to society. By ignoring this group of students we are setting them up for failure, increasing our drop out rate and offering them nothing for all the years they stayed in school. By not giving them something they can use to become productive citizens, we will be increasing the number of people in the state of Mississippi on Welfare because these students won't even be able to get a job without a diploma. The MOD program wasn't perfect but it was an option. Now we have no options for this group of students.

Michelle Duke
Special Education Teacher
Pearl Junior High

From: Leslie Hand
To: Accreditation
Subject: Occupational Diploma
Date: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 7:37:44 AM

As a former Occupational Diploma English teacher I am glad to see our state move to adopt new tracks for our students. The occupational diploma is not accepted into trade schools or junior colleges; it is little more than a certificate of completion. Many of the students I taught made the mistake of deciding to take the occupational diploma route rather than repeating classes or because they did not want to work as hard. I am hopeful that the new options will open up more doors for Mississippi's students with I.E.P.'s, as well as other students that may struggle but did not have special services.

Thank you,

Leslie Hand

Leslie W. Hand
West Jones High School
9th & 10th Inclusion
Dyslexia Therapist
254 Springhill Road, Laurel, MS 39443
school # - 601.729.8144/ fax # - 601.729.8148
lwcraft@jones.k12.ms.us

From: Ruth Jinkiri
To: Accreditation
Subject: New Diploma Option
Date: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 11:53:16 AM

Good morning. I am in support for the new diploma options for all. I am working with Libraries and Autism We're Connected in Eudora Welty Library. I am working with all ages and doing everything from providing resources, literacy, transition, transaction, reinforcing IEP's and implementing parents and caregivers desires. I am working with children, young adults and adults with autism and other disabilities that are very intelligent (in different area of their ability and intellectual), if given that option they would had been employed in technology or other advance areas of their ability and intelligent. I am seeing break through in my program at the library with all ages. Giving that option will increase their desire to look for the goal of better employment and better advancement in life. It will encourage them to have the desire of putting more effort in all that they will be doing; because there will be a better light at the end the tunnel. Seeing the break through in our program within the library system encouraged me to earn my certification in autism (so that I can be more equip in assisting them). I had been working with children with special needs for the last 16 years, but the last 3 years has been directly with all population that have autism and other special needs. Thank you in advance.

Ruth Jinkiri

From: Lindley Jones
To: Accreditation
Subject: graduation options
Date: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 1:11:22 PM

If you scan the overview of the plan, it appears to be an improvement; however, I know from deeper reading this plan would not be an improvement for those with IEPs. The IDEA of No Child Left Behind and similar programs is not a bad idea. Unfortunately, how these programs are implemented is beyond anything I could ever imagine. The government, most of who have never worked a day as a teacher, much less a special education teacher, decides students with learning disabilities should be able to perform as their peers. What is INSANE to me is the definition of learning disabilities would allow anyone with any understanding above an 8th grade level to see that asking a student to with this disability to perform at the same level of his or her peers is only setting this child up for failure. Would you allow me to perform open heart surgery on you? I hope the answer is NO because I am not competent enough to do so, nor do I have the mental knowledge and understanding that would enable me to perform this task. Although I am bright, ranked in the top ten percent of my graduating class, graduated college with distinguished honors, and earned my masters degree while maintaining a 4.0, I would not be able to complete medical school because I truly believe I am not intelligent enough to understand the material and perform the actions required of me, and I almost faint at the sight of a needle. These two issues stem from the way my BRAIN FUNCTIONS. I might want to be a heart surgeon with every part of my soul, but due to my brain's ability, I will never be able have that title. Although this may seem like a stretch, the example I'm giving you is how a child with a learning disability feels when told they must pass tests, classes, graduation exams, etc. which are on at least an 11th grade level. Can you imagine the stress and embarrassment teenagers who understand no more than an 8 or 9 year old feel when placed in classes with kids their age and expected to perform the same as their peers? YOUR PLAN REQUIRING THESE STUDENTS TO SIT IN ALL COURSES AND TAKE ALL EXAMS IS NOT ONLY RIDICULOUS, IT IS HEARTBREAKING FOR THOSE CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY WILL NEVER EXPERIENCE SUCCESS OUTSIDE OF THE LEVEL AT WHICH THEIR BRAIN FUNCTIONS.

From: [Phillip Solkov](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Diploma change comments
Date: Thursday, August 17, 2017 12:36:27 PM

We are fairly recent transplants to Mississippi and after our child started school he was diagnosed with high functioning autism. I am deeply concerned by Mississippi's current diploma system with the notion that there is a high chance my child would be forced to get a diploma that would essentially be worthless to him for trying to go to college or getting a good job. Our child may not be the fastest at learning certain subjects, but in no way is he not capable and should not get held back in life because of Mississippi's current way of doing things. I am glad to hear about the proposed diploma changes. However, if this does not pass and something doesn't change, as a resident who lives in Desoto County, I will make the decision to move my family to the TN side in order for my child to have a better chance in life post graduation.

From: Miller, Laura
To: Accreditation
Subject: Diploma changes
Date: Friday, August 18, 2017 12:01:19 PM

Hello! I am an educator in Madison County Schools, and I do not agree with the proposed changes to our current diploma system. Specifically, I do not agree with the elimination of the MOD category. Most students in our MOD program will NOT be able to succeed in the regular classroom; moreover, they will NOT be able to secure passing scores on the SATP tests (or the alternative methods) in order to graduate. As a result, these students will not receive a diploma. I understand that the MOD certification is not a diploma, but these students learn valuable skills in a setting that allows them to be successful; they can then earn employment based on this certification. IF they are required to enroll in regular classes, they will not be successful and will not have a diploma, the lack of which will probably preclude gainful employment.

Again, please reconsider the elimination of the MOD program; certain students NEED this program in order to be successful.

Laura Miller, NBCT
Madison Central High School
Madison, MS
Acc Eng II
Mentoring
PSAT



Post Office Box 1359 • Brandon, MS 39043 • p 601.825.5590 • f 601.825.2618 • www.rcsd.ms

August 18, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771

Re: Proposed Revisions to Standard 14, Appendix A and Appendix G (Graduation Requirements)

Dr. Malone,

I am writing in regard to the proposed graduation requirements to begin with the 2018-2019 school year. Our team has reviewed the proposed endorsement options, and we have the following concerns and/or questions:

1. The proposal includes limitations to students eligible for early release. In the "Standards Edits" document, for all proposed diplomas (traditional and endorsements) footnote 12 has identical language as follows: *For early release, students must meet College or Career Readiness Benchmarks that allow students to attend postsecondary without remediation or demonstrate work ready requirements.* Please clarify if the required benchmarks refer to the ACT CCR Benchmarks (English: 18, Math: 22, Reading: 22, Science: 23) or the MS IHL and Community college readiness benchmarks (English: 17 and Math: 19).
2. The footnote related to Technology reads as follows: *The following courses meet the Carnegie unit requirement for Technology and Computer Science: ICT II (Information & Communication Technology II), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), Keystone, Technology Foundations, Information & Communication Technology, Project Lead the Way Computer Science Essentials, Project Lead the Way Introduction to Computer Science and Project Lead the Way Introduction to Engineering, and any other computer science courses.* Given that the named courses are all taught in the ninth grade or lower, students transferring in tenth grade or higher are limited in course opportunities. Districts need additional flexibility and/or state-approved online opportunities to assist upper-level students who transfer and need the credits.
3. The proposed Appendix A-6 for Traditional Diploma includes the following text: *Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has met the requirements for each of the required high school assessments is eligible to receive a high school diploma. The local school district may establish*

Dr. Sue Townsend
Superintendent of Education



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additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-16-

7. This statement seems to be contradicted later in the same Appendix A-6 by Footnote 12: *Students must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.* Please clarify that students are not required to declare an endorsement above a Traditional Diploma. Further please clarify that students who may not successfully complete the identified endorsement will still be eligible to receive a Traditional Diploma, provided the student meets the minimum requirements for a Traditional Diploma.

4. Please reconsider the GPA requirement for the Career and Technical Endorsement. Some students will struggle to attain a 2.5 GPA, but still meet all other qualifications. We believe students who meet the rigors of the other noted CTE endorsement requirements should be recognized regardless of their overall GPA.
5. Given the costs related to all the additional requirements, will funding be available to support the efforts? Specifically, will the state or other grant sources provide the ACT WorkKeys?
6. In Appendix A-7 and Appendix A-9, Footnote 12, both reference "non-weighted" grades for dual credit. Given the variance across districts in weighting procedures, how will the state ensure that the non-weighted grades are used? Further, the district and school accountability model does not include the same language. Currently, MSIS and school packages do not have a mechanism to track both weighted and non-weighted grades, which could lead to the appearance of inconsistency in school records.
7. The existing standard diploma, as outlined in Appendix A-2, requires four credits for English, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, the proposed Traditional Diploma requires only three credits for science and three and a half credits for social studies, removing the geography requirement. What is the logic behind reducing requirements in the four core content areas?

Thank you for your work in the effort to raise standards for Mississippi's students and for the opportunity to provide input into the proposed revisions.

Sincerely,

Sue Townsend, Ph. D.
Superintendent of Education
Rankin County School District

Dr. Sue Townsend
Superintendent of Education

From: Laura Cameron
To: Accreditation
Subject: New Graduation Requirements
Date: Monday, August 21, 2017 8:08:57 AM

I am so deeply disturbed by the new diploma options. I have been a CTE Counselor for over 25 years and I have seen so many new initiatives come and go. I understand that in a perfect world ALL students would graduate and become productive citizens. Unfortunately we do not live in a perfect world. It is completely unrealistic, in my opinion, to believe that the majority of special education students can graduate with a traditional high school diploma. We at the career and technical education level have been penalized every year because of students being on a diploma track when they come to us but are switched back to a certificate of completion track during the last semester of their senior year because they are unable to pass the subject area tests. Since they are on a diploma track during their time at my center I must test them on the MSCPAS. The majority do not pass it. This puts my programs in immediate program improval status because it hits us on the graduation component and the state assessment component. The 21 credit career pathway diploma, if used correctly, was a huge asset to those students who wished to go on to a CTE program after graduation. Used incorrectly it just allowed a bunch of students who failed too many classes to graduate with their peers. We operate three small schools in this district and our students often have a difficult time obtaining a schedule that allows them to enroll in a CTE program. Adding additional credits at the high school level and requiring a certain GPA to obtain the CTE pathway diploma is basically going to ensure that those students who truly would benefit from learning a skill are going to be unable to. I wish a group of people who was still "in the trenches" would make these kind of decisions. If you haven't been in CTE, SPED, or the regular classroom in the past 5 years then it's impossible for you to understand how things have changed. Maybe the larger districts would benefit from these graduation requirement changes but the smaller districts are having one more nail driven into their coffin.

Laura U. Cameron Ed.S., NCC, NCSC
Counselor
Covington County CTE Complex
P.O. Box 1268
Collins, MS 39428
Phone: (601) 765-8253
Fax: (601) 765-9120

From: Suzanne Kelly
To: Accreditation
Subject: Re: Comments on Graduation Options
Date: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 2:45:25 PM

I apologize for the typographical errors in my first email. Below is the corrected version of the comments I would like to submit in reference to the proposed changes in the Mississippi Diploma options. The current Graduation Pathway options positively impacted the graduation rate for many Mississippi schools over the past several years as is the case with Forrest County Agricultural High School. I strongly believe the increase in the graduation rate is a direct result of efforts to decrease the number of student dropouts. Our efforts to assist at-risk students on our campus by offering them the current graduation pathway District Option or Career Pathway Option were crucial in many students' decisions to stay in school. Both of these options currently require a minimum of 21 credits for a high school diploma. Also, Forrest County AHS was recognized with the highest percentage of Special Education students completing high school with a high school diploma during the 2016 school year. Many of our at-risk Special Education students were also able to accomplish earning a high school diploma using the 21 credit options that best fit their situation. The current proposed Mississippi Diploma options have taken these options away from districts and I strongly believe we will see a decrease in the graduation rate and increase in the dropout rate once again if the proposed options are implemented this year. As for the CTE Endorsement, I have several concerns: 1. The requirement for an overall 2.5 GPA is not friendly to students who struggle academically but may excel in a hands-on CTE program. Also, will there be a potential for CTE programs to be penalized for accepting students with a GPA of 2.4 or below knowing in advance that the student may not be able to earn the CTE Endorsement? 2. The ACT WorkKeys is not offered on our school campus. Where will the resources come from to administer this test and will it be required by all CTE students? 3. The credit requirements increased from 21 to 26 along with adding additional required academic courses for the CTE pathway endorsement; therefore, CTE will no longer offer valid options to students who are at-risk. 4. Will CTE programs without dual credit and/or national credentials suffer because of the current lack of options to meet the additional requirements for the CTE endorsement? Raising the bar can be good. However, if students' perception is that the bar is no longer attainable; will at-risk students revert to dropping out of high school once again? Sincerely, Suzanne Kelly

On Mon, Aug 21, 2017 at 5:34 PM, Suzanne Kelly <skelly@forrestcountyahs.com> wrote:
The current Graduation Pathway options positively impacted the graduation rate for many Mississippi schools over the past several year as is the case with Forrest County Agricultural

High School. I strongly believe the increase in the graduation rate is a direct result of efforts to decrease the number of student drop outs. Our efforts to assist at-risk students on our campus by offering them the current graduation pathway District Option and Career Pathway Option were crucial in many students decision to stay in school. Both of these options require a 21 minimum credits for a high school diploma.

Also, Forrest County AHS was recognized with the highest percentage of Special Education students completing high school with a high school diploma during the 2016 school year. Many of our at-risk Special Education students were also able to accomplishment earning a high school diploma using the 21 credit options that best fit their situation.

The current proposed Mississippi Diploma options have taken these options away from districts and I strongly believe we will see a decrease in the graduation rate and increase in the drop out rate once again if the proposed options are implemented this year.

As for the CTE Endorsement, I have several concerns:

1. The requirement for an overall 2.5 GPA is not friendly to students who struggle academically but may excel in a hands on CTE program, and will CTE program be penalized for accepting students with GPA of 2.4 or below knowing the student will be able to earn the CTE Endorsement.
2. The ACT WorkKeys is not offered on our school campus. Where will the resources come from to administer this test and will be required by all CTE students?
3. The credit requirements increased from 21 to 26 along with adding additional required academic courses for the CTE pathway; therefore, it will no longer offer valid options to students who are at-risk.
4. Programs without dual credit and/or national credentials will also suffer because of the lack of options to meet the additional requirements for the CTE endorsement.

Raising the bar can be good; however, if students perception is that the bar is no longer attainable will they revert to dropping out of high school once again? I believe we may see an increase in the drop out rate once again.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Kelly

Thanks,

Suzanne Kelly, M.Ed. NBCT
CTE Director
Forrest County A.H.S.
(O): 601-582-4741
(F): 601-582-9031

From: Rutledge, Gabriela
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation options
Date: Monday, August 21, 2017 12:41:38 PM

Dear MDE representative,

I am a SPED teacher, and I am really concerned about the new proposal for MS graduation options. If I understand it correctly, it seems like there are only 2 options- 1. either pass all SAT tests and HS curriculum and graduate with regular diploma, or 2. have and SCD ruling and take alternate assessments. But what about the middle group of SPED students who are not SCD, yet can never complete the full curriculum or SAT assessments? They would stay till 20 years old just to walk a stage with a group of kids that are younger than them, and do you actually think they will stay? We have many students who want to quit school because they know they can't do the work. There has to be some other graduating option for students who are not capable academically to meet the requirements, but could get some vocational training to be productive citizens with some kind of diploma of completion. The MOD was an option; now it was taken away with really not good replacement. It is hard to understand.

Please consider making some changes and updates to help the middle group of SPED students to finish HS on time and with some kind of credit.

Thank you. Sincerely, Gabriela Rutledge

From: Tony Cook <tcCook@houston.k12.ms.us>
Date: August 21, 2017 at 12:25:44 PM CDT
To: Jean Massey <jmassey@mdek12.org>, pvanderford@mdek12.org
Subject: Early graduates

When I got here, we had 50+ students in grades 9-12 who were 2+ grade levels behind. We started encouraging those students to take advantage of the 21 Carnegie unit district option. As more students have become aware of the option, the requests for early graduation has greatly increased. We have students who are on grade level and on track to graduate with a traditional 24 unit diploma, but are requesting the 21 unit option so they can graduate in 3 years. I have some concerns and questions concerning this issue.

#1- Exactly how will this affect our graduation cohort calculations?

#2- How will this affect our CCR component of the Accountability Model? Other districts have said that these students did not show at all in the CCR component.

#3- Once we approve them for the 21 unit option, should we immediately code them as seniors in SAMS?

Please give your opinion, as well as guidance. I've never encountered this amount of interest. In my opinion, it should be only for students who are behind, or have some sort of home-based hardship.

Thanks for any guidance you can give.
Tony Cook

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From: [Golden, Cale](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Comments on proposed diploma option proposal
Date: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 1:03:25 PM

Good afternoon –

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comments on the newly proposed diploma options for expanding college and career opportunities for Mississippi students. Please see the following:

- The Mississippi Department of Education proposed new high school diploma options that include an academic endorsement or a distinguished academic endorsement.
- Currently, the academic endorsement requires students earn ACT sub scores of 17 in English and 19 in Math. The distinguished academic endorsement requires that students earn national college readiness benchmarks on each subset established by ACT or SAT.
- The College Board would like to respectfully encourage the Mississippi Department of Education to include equivalent SAT scores for students to earn the traditional diploma as well as the academic endorsement. Including the SAT in these would maintain consistency with the distinguished academic endorsement, which currently includes college readiness on either the ACT or SAT.
- As it reads now, the suggested directive for academic endorsement reads *Earn MS IHL and Community college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math as approved by postsecondary for non-remediation at most Community Colleges and IHL college-ready courses in senior year)*. Our request would be to add the wording “or the SAT equivalent” into the guidelines*.
 - Other ACT Admin. States (2016-17):
 - **South Carolina:** For students to receive a South Carolina Academic Achievement Honors Award, students must meet certain benchmarks on the SAT or ACT ([source](#)).
 - **Tennessee (ACT/SAT choice):** In order to earn a regular high school diploma, students must complete the ACT or SAT in order to fulfill the graduation requirement. ([source](#))

**MS IHL currently uses a concordance score for the SAT using a College Board and ACT, Inc. agreed-upon concordance for the old SAT scores and the ACT scores. The College Board has released a derived [concordance table](#) for revised SAT scores to old SAT scores. We anticipate an updated concordance between ACT and SAT by mid-2018.*

On behalf of The College Board, thank you for your consideration. Please contact me should you need anything further.

Cale Golden, Director, K-12
State and District Partnerships

The College Board
3700 Crestwood Parkway NW, Suite 700, Duluth, GA 30096
T 770.225.4055 | **M** 404.841.3641
cgolden@collegeboard.org

Clearing a path for all students to own their future

From: Melissa Graham
To: Accreditation
Cc: Suzanne Kelly
Subject: Comments on Proposed Diploma Options
Date: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 10:35:32 AM

To Whom it May Concern:

I have several areas of concern over the elimination of current diploma options and the proposal of diploma endorsements that many students will not be able to achieve. Being a CTE counselor at a small, rural public high school, I have seen many students graduate with the 21 credit Career Pathway Diploma. At Forrest County Agricultural High School, we have many at risk students utilize this diploma option to graduate and pursue college/career plans. I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, without this option available, we will have students drop out. This is a tragedy. I know we need to increase expectations of students, but there comes a point when this practice hurts students who are at risk of dropping out. Taking away the 21 credit Career Pathway Diploma is a mistake.

1. The 26 credit CTE endorsement will be difficult for average to below-average students to achieve because many of them are re-taking state tests and struggling with academics. We encourage students to take CTE courses, but then make the CTE endorsement option so difficult to achieve that it is discriminatory to at risk students.
2. Is MDE going to make ACT WorkKeys available on high school campuses, for free, to all CTE students wishing to take it?
3. Will MDE work with community colleges to make sure there are CTE dual credit classes available to all CTE students choosing to pursue this option?
4. What about CTE programs that do not offer a national credential option for CTE students?

Only the brightest and best students will have the determination and resources to pursue the CTE endorsement on their diploma. I think a lot of work needs to be done by MDE to ensure opportunities are available for students to achieve this endorsement before it is offered.

Thank you,

Melissa Graham

CTE Counselor
Forrest County Agricultural High School
601-582-4741
mgraham@forrestcountyahs.com



SCOTT COUNTY SCHOOLS

Dr. John Mark Cain
Deputy Superintendent

Courthouse Annex
110 Commerce Loop
Forest, MS 39074
Telephone: 601-469-3861
Facsimile: 601-469-3874

8-23-17

To Whom It May Concern:

After careful review of the proposed changes to the Mississippi high school diploma, I believe these changes aim to increase the readiness of our students. I think students should be recognized for their academic achievements and the endorsement track method lends itself to providing more assistance and support for students without such mechanisms within the home.

I am equally concerned about a few portions of the proposal as it relates to funding and unintentional consequence to local districts and families. My concerns are as followed:

- More clarity if the new "Traditional Diploma" can stand alone if a student failed to reach his/her endorsement option. (e.g., in Career and Tech Endorsement says students must earn a GPA 2.5 and there are many who do not.)
- Who will fund the required AP exams for the Academic Endorsement? Will this be a state funded mandate or will local districts have to absorb this cost? Worst yet, will students/parents be responsible for paying for it?
- Why is no pass score required for the AP test but students must score a "C" or higher for the Academic Endorsement? This appears to be dual-system of judging student performance and will benefit schools with more dual credit certified instructors or with students abler to financially take advantage of these courses.
- Can a district's local option remain (e.g., 21 credits)? Should there be a case for local control? Many students who are behind use this option as a final catch up to a cohort. I fear local school districts will produce more drop-outs if this option is stricken from the local district's discretion in special circumstances.
- Regarding the CCR component, the proposal outlines the unknown course must occur within one semester of graduation. Why? What courses will qualify? What if the student enrolls late or transfers in needing other courses in lieu of this course? Can smaller districts accommodate the time frame due to limited personnel or scheduling issues?
- In low SES districts with students who must work to support families, the inability to leave school early (no early dismissal without MS-CCR scores) will force hardships on struggling families and inadvertently cause more high school dropouts. Students will be forced to help provide for their families or finish school.
- Fewer students with early dismissal and additional classes may force more teacher units to be filled/hired as more students are present for a longer portion of the day. This will cause more budgetary hardships on less affluent districts.
- Are there any concerns how IHL or the Mississippi Community Colleges may interpret these endorsements in the future? Will students from less affluent districts without these options be given less academic or financial opportunities versus their peers who do?

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these proposed changes and it is my hope this process will produce more valuable dialogue amongst the decision makers who pass new education reforms in our great state.

Sincerely,

John-Mark Cain, Ph. D.

Deputy Superintendent, Scott County Schools

From: Sarah Landry
To: Accreditation
Subject: public comments
Date: Wednesday, August 23, 2017 3:29:02 PM

I have the following concerns with the proposed guidelines:

It's my understanding that special education students have three options:

- earn a traditional diploma
- earn an Alternate diploma or
- Certificate of Completion upon reaching age 20.

However, it is my understanding that a student who is neither eligible for Alternate Assessment because of SCD or a regular diploma cannot participate in the **graduation ceremony** unless he/she reaches the maximum age of service under IDEA.

There are not meaningful programs in place for those students who cannot receive a regular diploma nor are in need of alternate assessments to remain in school until age 20. Many of these students are frustrated by age 17 or 18 (if not before that) and don't want to continue participating in what has been a frustrating environment. Efforts are made to assist with appropriately determining what the next steps are for these students once they exit high school. Insisting that they remain in school with no hope of receiving any form of diploma is demoralizing and impractical. It is important to these students and their parents, however, that they participate in graduation ceremonies with their peers.

To deny these students the opportunity to participate in the graduation ceremony with their peers is inappropriate.

Sarah Landry

Sarah Landry

***Transition Coordinator
Biloxi Schools
1845 Richard Drive
Biloxi MS 39532
(228) 435-6105 Ext 2162***

**Comments for Oral Proceeding Regarding Graduation
Requirements Effective for the 2018-2019 Academic Year**

During the 2001 legislative session, a man observed that the diploma system was failing some students with disabilities. At that time, there were only two options for students with disabilities to exit high school, a traditional diploma or a certificate of completion. He worked with a mother and legislators to introduce SB 2578. This legislation passed and was signed by the Governor, establishing the Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD). These people gave my child the opportunity to receive an MOD in 2008. The MOD program prepared him in academic and work skills to become employed. He exited school with a job where he is still employed, 9 years later. These people helped my son and many other students and we thank them for their insight. I am here today asking that you not eliminate the MOD, which is both useful and beneficial for many students with disabilities and enhances their lives in ways that will be lost if the MOD is no longer an option.

During the 2017 legislative session, sixteen years after the MOD was adopted, SB 2432 was introduced, amended in conference, passed the Senate and the House and was signed by the Governor on April 14, 2017. The bill stated:

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.**

At this current time, the State Board of Education has not approved any new graduation options so by the letter of the law, the MOD should still be offered to students entering the ninth grade for the 2017-2018 school year. However, during IEP meetings held during spring of 2017 for students entering the ninth grade, parents and advocates were told the MOD was no longer an option. This was occurring before the law went into effect and prior to State Board of Education approval of new graduation options and requirements.

On August 6, 2017, the *Clarion Ledger* published an article under the headline: "Advocates worry diploma elimination will edge out special-ed students". This article states: "The state Board of Education put new diploma options out for comment in July. The procedure is required by state law before making certain changes in education policy. But in some ways, the elimination of the occupational diploma is already a done deal." The APA process is required by state law before certain types of changes can be made in state policies and is required in connection with elimination of the MOD. In practical application, the MOD has already been eliminated. Elimination of the MOD started months ago in connection with MDE training reflected in: "Guidance for the Discontinuation of the Mississippi Occupational Diploma" an MDE publication dated May 1, 2017.

If this is how the process operates, State Board of Education members should have put out a statement stating, if you are planning to submit public comments regarding the MOD, don't waste your time because elimination of the MOD started months ago. As of today, the State Board of Education has not approved any new graduation options, thus leaving students who entered the ninth grade this year without the option to pursue the MOD. Today, as it was 16 years ago, the only options which will be available to students with an IEP are a traditional diploma or a certificate of completion. Eliminating the MOD before State Board of Education approval is offensive, demeaning, and disrespectful. If MDE is going to implement programs without the approval of the State Board of Education, what purpose does this board serve?

I reviewed the membership of the Graduation Requirements Diploma Options Steering Committee and was disappointed to see that this committee does not include any disability organization and only one parent and one special education teacher. At a minimum, this committee should have included the MS Parent Training and Information Center which educates and advocates for students with disabilities and their parents.

In considering diploma options, MDE conducted a survey but I am unaware of any advocate or parent included in the survey. Significantly, the survey does not include a single question regarding the MOD which further reflects the bias against the MOD. Survey comments include: "I think more input is needed from teachers and parents." I certainly agree with this comment and believe that process, more input from teachers and parents, should be carried out before the MOD is eliminated.

"Guidance for the Discontinuation of the Mississippi Occupational Diploma" and other news articles state that elimination of the MOD provides more opportunities for students with disabilities to earn a standard high school diploma. Students with disabilities **have always** had the opportunity to earn a standard high school diploma--some just require appropriate support and services to do so. In fact, under IDEA, the first option for students with disabilities should be the path to a traditional diploma. We all want students to graduate with a traditional diploma but for some students that is not a realistic goal.

The MOD was developed and implemented because some students were being left out. We know improvements are needed to the MOD and a committee of all stakeholders should have been established to address the needed changes. In a section on the MOD, changes have either already been made or proposed where the requirement of 540 hours of paid employment has been or will be revised to include unpaid or paid employment, paid or unpaid internships or apprenticeships but this information was not included in the May 1, 2017 Guidance for the Discontinue of the MS Occupational Diploma document. This should be a start.

To earn a MOD requires the student to receive credits in the areas of academic and occupational skills. Surely there is a way these students can also be counted in the

graduation rates. Even though it seems too late, I am asking you to reconsider eliminating the MOD and keep this program in place for the 9th graders this year. If too many students were being placed on the MOD track, then appoint a committee to develop criteria for students, just like the criteria being recommended with the new alternate diploma.

When students with disabilities receive appropriate supports and services, we will see an increase in these students receiving traditional diplomas. We will also see an increase in our graduation numbers due to the inclusion of students who have a label of Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) in graduation rates. What concerns me is the number of students who drop out because of the lack of an appropriate program for them. Just like 16 years ago, we have a group of students who are once again being excluded.

Mandy Rogers

From: [Bill Renick](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Cc: [Jean Massey](#); [Mike Mulvihill](#)
Subject: Diploma options and changes proposed by MDE
Date: Thursday, August 24, 2017 2:44:34 PM

Dr. Jo Ann Malone
Office of Accreditation
State Department of Education

Dr. Malone,

Please accept this email as my wholehearted endorsement of the Graduation Task Force's recommendations for diploma options. As the Fiscal and Administrative agent for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, our mission is to provide opportunity for our citizens to get the best job possible through education and training. We are excited about the new options that recognize different paths to earning a diploma and the inclusion of mandatory courses in career readiness that include specific life skills such as work ethics. Having just completed our Sector Strategy Plan for the 27 county Mississippi Partnership Local Workforce Development Area, it is inspiring to me to see our State Department of Education's willingness to adapt to meet the needs of students and businesses as we develop Mississippi's future workforce. I appreciate the leadership, dedication and the passion that people like Dr. Jean Massey and the MDE team exemplify for our state. I look forward to these recommendations being approved and implemented.

Bill Renick
WIOA Division Director
Three Rivers PDD
P.O. Box 690
Pontotoc, Ms. 38863
662-489-2415
brenick@trpdd.com

From: Rivers Gilder
To: Accreditation
Subject: Pending Changes Regarding Special Education Diploma Options
Date: Friday, August 25, 2017 3:37:50 PM

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to plead with you to consider a graduation option to replace the Mississippi Occupational Diploma. I am currently an Occupational Diploma teacher and I am heartbroken about this option being taken away. The incoming 9th grade class this year has a definite need for another option other than a certificate or a traditional diploma.

Taking the Occupational Diploma away might be a money saving option for MDE but it is without a doubt in the worst interest of the students. In the long run, it will be less expensive for our government to support this diploma option for our students now. The alternative is going to be having the government financially support all of these students and their future families when they are not able to gain competitive employment after high school!

I'm all for a new structure for the Occupational Diploma but it should not just go away altogether. North West Community College in Mississippi recently started a program to continue education for Occupational Diploma students and others who don't receive a traditional diploma. The program is called Mi-Best and it is a perfect fit for MOD students planning to get some post-secondary education. I have already seen a success story from Mi-Best with one of my MOD students and I want to see many more success stories in the future.

Please reconsider and do what is truly best for the students.

Best,

Rivers Gilder
Desoto Central High School
SPED-MOD

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From: Lacell Moore
To: Accreditation
Subject: Special Needs Diploma Change
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 1:01:17 PM

We need to reinforce to our special needs community that although they are different they are NOT less than any other person allowed to walk across that stage. They should be allowed to walk proudly with their classmates.

Sincerely,

A Mississippi Graduate

From: John Griffin
To: Accreditation
Subject: Reading and Math Program
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 2:29:57 PM

Greetings,

Many children in special education who were and still are on the Mississippi Occupational Diploma track do not have basic reading and math skills. It is my suggestion that whatever program you replace the MOD curriculum with involves and intense reading and math program that is progress monitored. Parents have been told that some colleges accept the MOD, and then they were told that in order to go to college students would have to get their GED first. However, they are rarely told that their child lacks the basic reading and math skills needed to obtain the GED.

The MOD program was designed to prepare student for the world of work, and the reason why it did not work is because whe the MOD teachers started to teach the students how to complete an application. The students could not read the application. Everything objective that had to be taught by the MOD teacher had to be lectured, every quiz, test, assignment had to be read, and if the student did not have anybody at home that could help them with homework. The homework did not get done.

The special education program needs an overhaul. Too many children are exiting high school not knowing how to read or perform basic mathematic operations. The special education teachers are overwhelmed. I would suggest allowing the special education teachers to teach and collect data, and hire someone else that gather the data from the special education teacher, write the IEPs, and conduct the IEP meetings.

I believe that their should be a systematic program from elementary all the way through high school that will ensure that by the time a student exits or graduates high school that they are able to read, write, and perform basic math at least up to an 8th grade level. The students want to learn. They sometimes feel like they are not smart, something is wrong with them, and they can't learn because no one is helping them.

Also, some parents think that their children are supposed to automatically pass because their children are in special education. That perception has to change. The parents need to understand that accommodations and modifications are in place to help the child, but their are still things that must be accomplished by the student if the student is the pass to the next grade. All the accommodations and modifications in the world will not help a child to pass if they do not pay attention in class, if they don't attempt to complete class assignments, and if they don't study the material.

Starting in first grade their should be a reading and math class that students in special education are required to take every year until they have mastered grade level skills.

I am proposing that the state of Mississippi implement a comprehensive reading and math program for all mild/moderate special education students.

Look at the data and you will find that the children can't read and perform basic math and even some of them who exited school with the MOD are reading at extremely low grade levels.

Teach the children reading and math. Then they will be more interested in learning other things.

From: Letitia Eubanks Eubanks
To: Accreditation
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 3:10:15 PM

Kids that attend school that has special needs should be able to get there diploma my daughter was one of those kids she didn't get hers it's not right they work hard to

From: Cheree Bullock
To: Accreditation
Subject: Special Education Diploma Options
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 6:21:59 PM

Dr. Malone,

I have been an educator for 24 years, having spent the last six years in Special Education. I have always been a huge advocate for special education students. As a general education teacher, the special education students were always welcomed into my class with open arms and with no discrimination. They were always treated as equally as possible. I knew they had limitations but I always focused on their strengths and worked closely with the special education teacher to make sure they were as successful as possible.

In my current position, I am the special education teacher. Sometimes, I am the child's only advocate. Not all students have a support system at home that encourages them to be successful. We, as teachers, work with these students to take them as far as they can possibly go academically. Not all special education students will succeed enough to pass the subject area tests and in turn receive a standard diploma. At my high school, we keep the students on the diploma track until it is obvious the student will not pass the tests in order to graduate. These students have worked hard and have attended school for thirteen years, but because of some disability that is no fault of their own, the educational system says they can't walk and "graduate" with their peers. These students and their parents know they are receiving a certificate of attendance but it is still just as important to them.

Please do not take away that milestone for these students. Not ALL children are college bound and a significant amount need technical or vocational skills where a diploma is not always necessarily needed. "Graduation" may be the only significant milestone some of these students ever achieve in their lifetime. Please don't take it away from them.

Sincerely,

Cheree Bullock

From: Carrie Bullock
To: Accreditation
Subject: Proposed Legislature for Students with Disabilities
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 8:59:43 PM

Mrs. Malone,

It has been brought to my attention that there is a piece of legislature floating around out there that would hinder a child with a certificate to walk with their graduating class. This idea has got to be one of the most idiotic things the state department has ever thought up. My mother is a special education teacher. She's served hundreds of children over her 25 years in education, and continues to serve those who need her help. I've grown up knowing that some children have special needs; but that does not make them any different from me. Instead of tearing these kids down any more than we already are, how about we make more vocational classes and programs available to them? Let's help them find a trade or skill that will help them succeed in the real world. If we're really truthful with ourselves, we know college is not for everyone. It just isn't for everyone. Why do we measure our kids on one standardized level? Children are not all on the same level. All children will NEVER be on the same level.

If we're really honest, once a student leaves high school, those test don't matter one bit. I'll give you an example. I was blessed with the ability to make good grades throughout my school career. I was in "Alpha" in elementary and middle schools, and even made a perfect score on the dreaded U.S. History state test in high school. Do you want to know what that's gotten me so far? Not a single thing. I have nice little mementos to remind me of my accomplishments, but none of those things have any value in the real world. We label a child as being one of three categories: gifted, average, or special education. The gifted kids are rewarded with groups like "alpha", or some different program. The average kids are just kind of hanging out until graduation. The special education kids, however, are labeled as stupid, ignorant, and less of a student because of their disabilities. We as a state have got to do better.

Some children comprehend verbal instructions better than written. Let's do our best to accommodate that. Some children can't read as fast as their classmate beside them. Instead of timing them, let's figure out a way to improve their reading skills. The majority of children with disabilities say, "I'm going to fail anyway, so I will just rush through this." Let's give them a reason to care. There are so many "disabilities" out there that are seen as an automatic failure. This isn't the case. While most teachers do their best, there are others who toss a special education kid to the curb. That's a teacher problem, not a student problem. Educate more teachers on how to handle different aspects of a child's disability. Educate the educators first, and then you can find where the real problem lies.

By not allowing these special education students to walk with their classmates, you're demeaning them in the worst way. You're telling them, "I'm sorry, Charlie. You weren't worth our time or money while you were here. You not only wasted our time, but yours as well. Good luck out in the real world." Just because a child needs special accommodations to make good grades, should not prevent them from experiencing one of life's greatest goals. You're taking that away from them if this passes. The Mississippi Department of Education, and MDE alone, will be taking a child's life achievement away from them. That's something to think about.

I've contacted my local senators and representatives, as well as those from other areas across Mississippi. I am also prepared to speak with our representatives in Washington on this matter. I would also like to extend an invitation to visit Mississippi schools. Go outside the four walls of your Jackson office, and see what a difference these children and teachers are making in the lives of those around them. You only see scores instead of faces. Start looking at the bigger picture. There is no reason that any of God's children should be made a mockery of, for needing help.

Best regards,

Carrie Bullock
[REDACTED]

From: April Klug
To: Accreditation
Subject: New graduation requirements
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 9:38:20 PM

I do not agree that kids with IEPs should not being able to graduate with their class. These children deserve the same graduation experience as their peers. They should not be penalized because they do not learn according to the same standards as their peers do. This law would punish those children with IEPs adding more struggles to their schooling process.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Gussie Farris
To: Accreditation
Subject: Occupational Diploma
Date: Sunday, August 27, 2017 11:02:56 PM

To whom It May Concern:

My name is Gussie Farris. I am a retired Sped Director. I worked 40 years in the Coahoma County School System, as a Sped Teacher, School Psychologist and Sped Director. I also worked five more years in Memphis City Schools, Quitman County Schools and in a private special school. I worked for Delta Manor ICF, Region I Mental Health and as an adjunct at Delta State University.

Let's just say that I have been around.

When the OD came out, I was excited. I thought it would be great for the kids. It sounded great. However, in practice it was a total disaster. It was called a "Diploma", which was a mistake, because it was not. It was accepted nowhere for nothing. One child who got it, might be very capable, another might be the opposite. I saw huge variation across districts, which meant it was meaningless.

All the OD did, was to dumb down the 99% of Sped kids who had a real shot at a regular Diploma. The vast majority of Sped kids have a mild disability, relatively speaking, and with the right help, could get a regular diploma. When you give regular ed a way to dump kids somewhere, they will do it. That is the bitter truth. The concern of regular ed is looking good on paper. Regular Ed used Sped for years, as a place to get rid of kids that were going to make them look bad on tests. When I was a Sped Director, I was notorious for raising hell about all the kids called SCD to get them out of the regular tests.

I am thrilled that they are proposing to do away with the OD. It harmed vastly more kids than it helped. It sounded good but it was awful in practice. All it did was create a separate and unequal path to graduation. It wasn't any better than getting a Certificate.

The best place for non-SCD kids is in the regular classroom. The best thing for a non- SCD kid is a real diploma. Someone once said to me, people only care about what gets counted. Make ALL kids count. With the right help, these kids most certainly can get a diploma. Frankly, I was in public education, before 94-142, and ALL kids were in the regular class and got diplomas, except for the SCD kids, though, that's not a term that was used then. Teachers used to teach everybody and everybody learned.

Currently, I am doing volunteer work with some of my former students. It has hit me in the face, with where I failed these kids. Do you really truly want to help kids? I can tell you how.

1. Keep all kids except SCD in the regular Diploma track.
 2. Police who can be dubbed "SCD", because I promise you, some administrators would call their mother SCD.
 3. Have a year round after school program and esy for kids with a sped ruling.
 4. Pay for Sped kids to take summer school regular ed classes to help them get the credits to graduate.
- (These next are imperative for helping kids get jobs)
5. Grade each district on how many sped kids have a state ID, before they graduate.
 6. Grade each district on how many Sped kids have a Driver's License before they graduate.
 7. Grade each district on how many kids have an open case with Vocational Rehab before they graduate.
 8. Grade each district on how many Sped kids have an acceptance letter from a higher ed entity.
 9. Grade each district on how many SCD kids have an acceptance letter for a work center or Adult Daycare.
 10. Of course, grade them on how many Sped kids got a regular diploma.

Please do NOT say it should be on the IEP and that is the proof. An IEP is the most overrated document in the world. Unless you have a very savvy and diligent parent, an IEP is worthless. I have seen it over and over, all this great stuff is put on the IEP and none of it is done. Or if it is done, it's done poorly. Ask for Proof, acceptance letters, copies of the ID, copies of the license, etc. Then and only then will you know it has truly been done.

Doing away with the OD will be a great first step in helping Mississippi Sped kids get a real education.

Sincerely,
Gussie Farris

From: Shirley Thomas
To: Accreditation
Subject: Re: Special Needs diploma
Date: Monday, August 28, 2017 8:45:18 AM

In reply to the previous email I sent - I went back and reread the statement. I believe I misunderstood it initially. If I understand it right, special needs students can get a traditional diploma. That is what I want. I want my grandson to have all opportunities he can achieve.

Sorry to the inconvenience with your time.

God bless. Have a good day.

Shirley Thomas

On Mon, Aug 28, 2017 at 8:37 AM, Shirley Thomas <sthomas@houston.k12.ms.us> wrote:
I am **against** "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."

I have a special needs grandson who is trying very hard to meet normal standards. He is a ninth grader. Is slightly handicapped in some areas. Sometimes he makes the grade and sometimes he does not. If you take away the option for a diploma in the 9th, 10th or 11th grade why should he try at all? I want his future to be as bright as the "normal" students future. Even though he is a little slower doesn't mean he doesn't get it.

Please don't allow this to happen.

--
Shirley Thomas

--
Shirley Thomas

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From: cheryle
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation for students with disabilities
Date: Monday, August 28, 2017 10:19:09 AM

Denial graduation and the celebration of 12 or more years of hard work is wrong on so many levels. As a retired educator, I have witnessed the growth and decline of services to students with disabilities. This current measure will be a huge deterrent to any child and parent for a public education. Why bother? This will lead to why bother trying to develop a skill for employment, just draw a check. If anyone completes the requirements for a certificate, diploma, or whatever you want to label the current certificate, then they have earned the privilege of the ceremony. Denial of this privilege invokes the belief of a cast of lesser human beings therefore unworthy of achieving in life.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Saleemah Wheeler
To: Accreditation
Subject: Diploma options for children with special needs
Date: Monday, August 28, 2017 11:15:04 AM

To Whom it May Concern:

As both a parent of a special needs child and a Special Education teacher I think that it is unfair that the Mississippi Occupational Diploma option is being taken away. I know that we have students that are able to function on their own that still require services. But, what about those students that don't qualify for SCD, but they are still very low and may never pass the state test (we have students in the General Education classes that can't pass the state test) how is this fair. Our students need another option, at this point I am having to transition my child into a regular ED classroom so that she will be on the high school diploma track, and she still may not pass the required test.

Please take into consideration the needs of those students that may not be one or the other, but fall in between.

Thank you,
Saleemah Wheeler, a concerned parent and teacher

From: Connie Smith
To: Accreditation
Subject: SCD endorsements
Date: Monday, August 28, 2017 12:06:27 PM

Good Afternoon,

As a veteran teacher of 40 years, I am excited to see a new option for the SCD students who are able to succeed in the areas of the new Alternative Diploma Option. I am however disappointed that a child who receives a certificate of work or presence is not allowed to walk across the stage with their class. It is important to these students to be apart of the class and walking across the stage gives them a sense of importance no matter what their disability is.

Thank you,
Mrs. Connie Smith

*** This Email was sent by a staff member at Mason Elementary School in Laurel School District MS.

From: Amanda Gines
To: Accreditation
Cc: Tate Reeves; williams-barnes@house.ms.gov; ddawkins@senate.ms.gov
Subject: Please do not take away option for high school diploma for MY special needs child
Date: Monday, August 28, 2017 12:29:49 PM

Amanda Gines


Office of Accreditation
Dr Jo Ann Malone
P O BOX 771
JACKSON MS 39205-0771

Dear Office of Accreditation:

I am the parent of a 9 yr old special needs child. He and I have been on a mission for these past nine years working on the possibility of him **receiving** a high school diploma. So this legislation being passed that makes a high school diploma unavailable to him is taking away our mission, our rights to full access to this public education that is afforded to all. What reason would any sort of legislation be need to be enacted to limit any childs pursuits of that high school diploma that this public education system promotes?

So a child of special needs will be limited? Where we continue to promote that there are no limits.

I respectfully ask that all special needs children be given the opportunity to earn a high school diploma as Every student has the opportunity. Because this promotes the idea that this state could care less about the society of its disabled populations therein.

Thank you for your time and I pray the best decisions are implemented.

Sincerely,

Amanda Gines

cc: Governor Phil Bryant

Lt Gov Tate Reeves

Representative Sonya Williams-Barnes

Senator Debora Dawkins

From: Chism, Chris
To: Accreditation
Subject: Diploma Options
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 8:37:08 AM

Good afternoon.

I have several issues with the new proposed diploma options, early dismissal requirements, and the loss of a special education option.

First, the loss of a path for special education students will ultimately be detrimental for many students across the state. It is very frustrating for all of us to sit in meetings with parents and student and tell them we have no options. You either get a diploma or a certificate in four years. We, as a state, keep trying to put square pegs in round holes. In this case, and with many special education situations, this idea simply doesn't work. I met with a student and his parent a couple of weeks ago. This student has autism, but he is also very intelligent. The class LOAD and the stress levels in state tested subjects caused his tics to worsen. The parents and the student's doctor asked that he be removed from those classes. Medication could not control his tics anymore, because of the added stress. There is no option for this student now. This is not a student with a low IQ. He is very capable, but even with accommodations, the load the student had to bear was too much. You see, every case in special education is different. If we, as a state, are smart enough to figure out that students with disabilities need individualized services, surely we are smart enough to figure out that a single diploma option is not always the best case for these students. Truthfully, this student will be working with his family when he leaves Pearl High School. He won't have a need for college. However, we could be giving him some wonderful job and life training at this time. That option is being taken off the table. There are also several students that are just above SCD this discussion applies to as well. If our goal as a state is to be COLLEGE or CAREER ready, why are we taking away an option for special education students to be CAREER ready? This makes no ethical or logistical sense.

Next, I want to address the early release idea. This will ultimately cost the school district extra teacher units. (another unfunded mandate) We are also a very blue collar town. Many of our students hold down jobs to help their parents make ends meet. Again, we are working to get students college and/or CAREER ready. Is there a better way to prepare for a career than working? I understand the point, but I do not feel this fits every school district. It certainly does not fit ours. This also directly conflicts with what our schools and our state say we are trying to accomplish. .

Next, taking away our local option will cause the dropout rate here to rise. As it stands now, students that are over the required age do not have to be at school. We can currently "dangle the carrot" in front of them and talk them into coming back by being very creative with their schedule. Adding more required classes and taking this option away will certainly impact these students.

Next, why do we have a non-weighted credit for DC classes and we don't have the same requirement for AP or IB? Who pays for these tests? Again, I see this as an equity issue for many districts.

Last, I feel like the state is overreaching with this plan. Many districts have their own

diplomas with their own requirements. That should be a local issue, rather than a state issues. In one major action, you are going to destroy many traditions in several school districts. Along these lines, IHL is not going to care about "which" diploma option a student receives. Both our in-state and out-of-state colleges will continue to focus on GPA – along with associated transcript and a student's ACT/SAT score. They will not be concerned with our state sanctioned diplomas. Therefore, I don't understand the purpose of this change.

In going to meetings over the last several years, the one constant I have heard from the MDE is this: "We are listening." In all of my contact with principals across the state, I am yet to find a single administrator that is in favor of this change. They all outline the same issues I brought out in the ideas above. In the opinion of myself and many of my colleagues, these diplomas are going to be pushed through regardless of what is said or what issues are brought forward. I certainly hope you are reading these comments and taking them to heart. We are talking about a drastic change to the daily lives of our students and families – and not for the better.

Thank you,

Chris Chism

Principal - Pearl High School

(C) 601-932-7931

(C) 602-549-0257

(F) 601-932-7992



The Mission of Pearl Public School District is to prepare each student to become a lifelong learner, achieve individual goals, and positively impact a global society.

From: Ginger Cockrell
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation Options public comment
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 9:22:30 AM

My thoughts on the topic are many, but my main concern is the idea that the changes are proposing that the students that exit with a Certificate of Completion must stay until age 20 to obtain the Certificate. The students that are on the track to receive a Certificate of Completion that do not stay until age 20 should not count on our drop out rate. I do not agree with this. In the past, many times these have been your students who are on the Traditional Diploma track and can't pass the subject area tests, therefore have to exit with a Certificate or not exit/graduate. These students usually will not choose to stay until they are age 20. These students shouldn't count against our drop out rate. Your SCD (self-contained) students are the ones who will generally stay until age 20. They should be the students to receive a Certificate of Completion. However, this proposal is designed for ONLY SCD (self-contained) students to have an alternate diploma that certifies that they have successfully completed a study aligned to academic standards. I don't understand why the SCD students will receive an alternate diploma instead of the ones who just can't complete a Traditional Diploma. In my opinion, it's backwards. This proposal doesn't allow for an alternate diploma for the students who just can't complete the Traditional diploma track, and it requires them to stay until age 20. I do not agree with the way this is set up. This is my opinion only.

From: Georganna McLain
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation policy
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 10:41:35 AM

Please allow students with an IEP who have met requirements for certificate to participate in graduations ceremonies. It is unfair to keep them from participating in a ceremony when they have met all that is required of them. Different standards does not mean exclusiveness. You want us to work with inclusion situations all day, all year. Don't operate under a double standard.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Mitzi Woods](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Diploma Requirements
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 10:33:00 AM

Dr. Malone;

I am writing this email in support of the new recommendations by the Graduation Task Force for high school diploma requirements; which include the traditional diploma with the opportunity to add career and technical, academic or distinguished academic endorsements; and the Alternate Diploma option for students with cognitive disabilities.

I think these recommended changes will be very beneficial to the workforce population we serve in the Delta.

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Mitzi Woods
Workforce Director
South Delta PDD
Delta Workforce Development Area
PO Box 1776
Greenville, MS 38702
662-335-6889
mwoods@sdpdd.com
www.sdpdd.com

From: Scott Cantrell [mailto:scottcantrell@mcsd.us]
Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 11:45 AM
To: Accreditation <accred@mdek12.org>
Subject: Comments pertaining to potential graduation options

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on potential graduation requirement options.

Concerns and Questions:

1. Might it be possible for the College and Career Ready course to be a 1/2 credit course instead of a full credit course? Financially speaking, the addition of this course as a full credit course could be considered an unfunded mandate. It is my understanding that any certified teacher will be allowed to teach the CCR course, but our teachers already have a full schedule with their current course loads. If our teachers continue to teach their current course loads, another employee to teach the CCR class to all seniors would then be necessary. I believe the need for another teacher could be eliminated though with the reduction of the CCR course to 1/2 credit. The reduction would allow schools to pair MS Studies (traditional 9th grade course that has traditionally paired with geography, which has been eliminated as a requirement) with Economics (traditionally paired with Govt. during the senior year). 10th graders could continue to take World History, and 11th graders could continue to take U.S. History. Seniors would then continue to take Govt. for 1/2 credit, along with CCR as a 1/2 credit also. This would reduce the 24 credit limit to 23.5, but to offset this and keep the minimum at 24 credits, I would recommend 6 credits of electives instead of 5.5.

2. Pertaining to early release, I realize the minimum ACT scores of 17 in English and 19 in math coincide with minimum college requirements for Comp. I and College Algebra. I also realize that the high cost of remediation for incoming college freshmen is hotbed issue. It is good to hear that community colleges have now given incoming freshmen who have not achieved these benchmarks the opportunity to take the course as a 4 hour course instead of a 3 hour course though, with the additional hour being intervention / remediation. This should reduce the amount of money spent for remediation by 2/3, as students will not be required to take a 3 hour remediation course in advance of Comp. I or College Algebra. Basing our estimates on last February's ACT data, some 1/3 of our graduating seniors in 2018 would not have met these minimum thresholds, thus we would have been required to place these students in courses for another 1/2 of the school day. This will require that additional courses be offered, which in turn would require additional teaching positions. With no additional funding from the state for the additional staff, this could also be considered an unfunded mandate. Districts are currently financially concerned as to possible additional staff members needed surrounding the Essentials for College Math and Literacy courses required in SY 2018-2019. Eliminating early release adds more concern as to possible additional teacher hires. Many seniors also have jobs that begin shortly after lunch each day, and I would venture that a significant number of these students actually are "career ready", no matter their ACT score, and will have actually begun their careers with the job opportunity that early release afforded them. Please consider leaving this issue as one of local control, where seniors and their parents are afforded the opportunity for early release should they so choose.

Scott Cantrell
Superintendent of Education
Monroe County School District

From: [Heather Ferrell](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Proposed Graduation Options
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 11:49:59 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

I have many concerns about the new diploma options that are being proposed in the state of MS.

The new diploma offerings are not suitable for children with IEPs. When a student qualifies for special education and/or related services, the IEP team develops an Individualized Education Plan to meet the need INDIVIDUAL NEEDS of the student. The proposed option does not allow for those INDIVIDUAL NEEDS to be met. The students have to fit the "cookie cutter" mold that all students must adhere too. If the proposed legislation is passed, it is basically saying that the IEP means nothing. We will not be individualizing anything anymore. We are just setting these students up for failure. As special educators, we will no longer be able to work on building skills, we will have to work on classwork for classes that are way above the student's ability levels.

It is common knowledge, based on the 3rd grade reading gate, that if a student is unable to read at grade level in the 3rd grade it is unlikely that they will make huge gains after that. They will just fall further and further behind because special educators won't have the time to do any skill building. Well, a lot of students with IEPs begin 9th grade and are reading on a 4-5 grade level. There is no way that those students can be successful in 9th or 10th grade English classes when they are reading and comprehending 5 grades below their peers. A teacher cannot accommodate this kind of deficit. Those students need MODIFICATIONS. And there is NO WAY to get a regular diploma when tests/assignments are MODIFIED.

By placing students that are performing so far below grade level on a general education track, we will be setting them up for FAILURE. They will see very little success. The students that will be placed on the "NEW" Traditional Option track will be so frustrated because they cannot do the coursework. Many will act out and become behavior issues. Especially, the ones that have to stay until they are 20 just to earn a certificate of attendance.

The teachers will have to handle behavior issues and this will take he/she away from the other students.

There has to be a Pre GED/GED option for students. They have to have a goal other

than the proposed "Traditional Diploma Option." Or the SCD description needs to be changed. If we don't address one of these options, there will be a huge population of students with an IQ range of 70-90 that will fall through the cracks.

To me, it seems as if, people who have never set foot in a classroom created this legislation. It is so unrealistic to think that everyone can get a high school diploma. We hope that everyone can, but there has to be options for those few that can't. And it has to be something more than a CERTIFICATE at the age of 20. Not all students have to be the same or earn the same degree/diploma. Just like not all students have to go to college. Going to college does not determine a student's success! All kinds make up our diverse workforce. If we don't provide this, we are limiting the futures of so many! The state of MS is creating /allowing a grave injustice for those students who are unable to meet the new requirements.

Thanks,

Heather Ferrell,

National Board Certified Teacher

From: Keena Burns
To: Accreditation
Subject: Exit Options
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 2:38:58 PM

It's my understanding that under these new policies students who have disabilities will not be able to receive a certificate of completion until they age out of the Mississippi Public School System. Further research tells me that this will be the school year a child turns 20 as of September 1, meaning that most of these students will be 21 years old before they can walk across the stage at their local high school as graduates. I respectfully ask that this particular part of the policy be reconsidered. I believe that it's important for students who have disabilities to experience school and graduation with their same age peers. I also understand that under current policy, students who exit with a certificate have the opportunity to re-enroll and attend school until they age out or receive a standard high school diploma. In other words, this new policy is totally unnecessary.

Thanks for your consideration into this matter.

Respectfully,
Rep. Steve Massengill

From: Shelly Collums
To: Accreditation
Subject: Public comment regarding Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 3:21:10 PM

Greetings,

Our concern is regarding students with disabilities being able to graduate (with a Certificate of Completion) along with their cohort. What would be the plans for them for an additional one to three years of school?

Thank you,

--

Shelly Collums
Special Education Director
Monroe County School District

From: Lauren Johnson
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 3:22:21 PM

I have recently read MDE's proposed graduation options for students with disabilities. My main concern is that the students that exit with a Certificate of Completion must stay until age 20 in order to obtain the Certificate. Those that do not stay until age 20 would be counted as a drop out. I do not agree with this at all. These students will not choose to stay until they are age 20, therefore should not count as our drop out rate. These students are usually ones who cannot pass the subject area tests therefore must exit with this. I feel that we are punishing those who just simply cannot pass the state test. Why would only SCD students have an alternate diploma instead of the ones who just can't complete a Traditional Diploma? In my opinion, this is completely backwards. Many of my students who have exited with a MOD/Certificate can obtain their GED in order to take vocational classes at the college level. This tells me that it is simply those mandated state tests they cannot pass. Why wouldn't an alternate diploma be available for the students who can't complete a Traditional Diploma? It seems to me that our students are going to be set up for failure, therefore increasing the drop out rate among not only districts, but Mississippi as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lauren Johnson
Special Education Case Manager 7th-12th
Sebastopol High School
phone: (601) 625-8654
fax: (601) 625-9426

From: Gwen Hitt
To: Accreditation
Subject: Comments Regarding Graduation Options
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 3:37:33 PM

My suggestion is that this change be tabled until more information can be sought from the primary stakeholders: parents of IEP students, teachers of IEP students, and administrators. Schools should receive some consideration on accountability standards for IEP students. The progress these students make should be recognized! Gwen Hitt, Collins, MS

From: Dorothy Jacobs
To: Accreditation
Subject: Diploma changes
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 5:28:27 PM

Dear Madam:

My daughter is a highly functioning autistic who attends 6th grade at North New Summit School in Greenwood, MS. She is in a regular classroom with her peers of different skill and academic levels. We chose not to place her in public school due to the fact that she would be placed in SPED with no chance of a diploma of any sort ever being earned.

With the "career" diploma option available, she would at least be able to attend community college. Without it, she would not be able to pursue further education.

Please do not remove this opportunity from my child and other children in her class.

Dr. Erin Jacobs Stagner, DC, MS, MSHAPI

Sent from my iPhone

From: MaryLynn Crotwell
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation Requirements
Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 7:12:03 PM

My main concern with the recommended graduation requirements is the idea that the changes are proposing that the students that exit with a Certificate of Completion must stay until age 20 to obtain the Certificate. In doing this, I believe our drop out rate would increase.

--

MaryLynn Crotwell
Morton Elementary School, Principal

"I'm rockin' in my school shoes...because it's all good!" -Pete the Cat

From: [Kaleb Smith](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Comments Provided: Proposed Changes to Graduation Options for Students With Disabilities
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 6:57:55 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

I have read the proposed changes to the graduation options for students with disabilities. There is one major change that concerns me as a high school principal.

Under the proposed system, a student who finishes with a certificate of completion must stay to age 20. I believe this is unfair in multiple ways. Students that stay until age 20 are usually those that are (SCD). Yet, students with disabilities that have had issues with passing state assessments have also used this to complete high school. If this rule change occurs, students that do not stay until age 20 will be counted as drop outs instead of completers as in the past. The only choice they would have is to stay until age 20 or drop out. In my experience, I can predict the majority of choices they will make. This will surely increase the drop out rate at schools across the state of those students that use it as an option to complete high school and gain a certificate.

In the new accountability model, dropout rate is so very important. This rule change would hurt, but not just once. It would hurt the student, the family supporting, and school accountability.

I believe that this rule change will adversely affect our ability to provide options and better serve our students with learning disabilities.

Thank you for allowing us to share our comments.

—
Kaleb Smith
Principal
Sebastopol High School

"The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you." B.B. King

From: Drummond, Rhonda
To: undisclosed for privacy
Subject: the special MS Occupational Diploma
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 8:00:22 AM

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, I am writing in reference to the special MS Occupational Diploma for students with disabilities. It has come to my attention that any student entering the 9th grade in the 2017-2018 school year or thereafter will no longer receive this diploma. They will instead receive a certificate of attendance. This is devastating! Just because these students need additional help in certain areas does not mean they are not able to attend certain colleges or hold certain jobs that they can not get with out the diploma! Please, do what you can to get this aborted!!! I have a personal interest in this, also for my friends children!

Thanks, Rhonda Drummond
18950 Hwy 7-N
Greenwood, MS 38930

Rhonda Drummond
Sr. Branch Office Administrator for
Rob Spiller
Edward Jones
☎: 125 Howard St, Greenwood, MS 38930
☎: 662-455-5383/fax 877-222-2853
✉: Rhonda.Drummond@Edwardjones.com

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Rhonda Drummond
Senior Branch Office Administrator
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August 30, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771


Dear Dr. Malone:

On behalf of the nearly 13,800 members of the Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) and our Board of Directors, please accept these comments in response to the proposed revisions to Standard 14, Appendix A and Appendix G of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016: Graduation Requirements* as proposed by the offices of Secondary Education and Special Education. While MPE supports the State Board of Education's goal of every student graduating from high school ready for college and career, we present the following questions and concerns we have received regarding the proposed revisions:

- **Fiscal Impact on Districts:** The proposed revisions eliminate early release for students unless they meet Institutions of Higher Learning and Community College Readiness Benchmarks. This may result in increased teacher units related to those students not eligible for early release who must remain in school the entire school day. Additional teacher units may also be required for those IEP students who stay in the system until they are 20 years old in order to earn a Certificate of Completion.
- **Fiscal Impact on Students:** According to the most recent *KIDS COUNT* report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, more than a third of Mississippi children live in poverty. Some students have early release from school so that they may work and contribute to their family's income. I have received several concerns that such students may choose to drop out of school if they are unable to work due to the elimination of early release. This would certainly contradict the State Board's goals and could increase our state's drop out rate.
- **IB or AP Exams for Academic and Distinguished Endorsements:** The proposed requirements for an Academic or Distinguished Endorsement require the student to take one AP course and exam or one IB course and exam. The state does not provide funding for these exams; thus, this financial burden falls to the student and their family unless another funding source is identified by the district. If their families cannot afford these exams, some students may be denied access to these courses and these endorsements which will appear more favorable on their transcripts.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns, as well as your efforts on behalf of the students and educators of Mississippi.

Sincerely,


Kelly L. Riley
Executive Director

8-30-2017

Dr. Jo Anne Malone and/ or MDE members,

I am writing to you as a parent, as a Special Education Assistant, as a taxpayer, and as registered voter who loves and cares about my kids future. I do not know where 1 percent comes from , because I have seen an increase not a decrease in Special Education students , since Common Core.

I know Common Core has caused a lot of kids, including my own, not to do well. I think Common Core should be thrown out and replaced with Good "Old Fashioned " Education, what existed before Common Core. Where real life skills were on a Kindergarten report card. When Kids had Great teachers , who could pull them in and interest them on subjects and future hobbies, so they could go into life after graduation with a grasp on reality, not just learning material for a test. Where if a teachers's class didn't get it she or he could go over it again, not be on a schedule to take a test when told to by someone who has never seen these kids. There are so many kids who struggle. They are Great kids who just need more time. They do not need to be given a test to pass school or a subject when the material was taught over 3 months ago. The kids struggle is real.

It Is Great to have High Expectations as long as they are Reasonable. Lawmakers must realize our children are not Robots. Kids usually do not like tests unless they are Sheldon Cooper from the TV show THE Big Bang Theory. I think that without this Occupational Diploma the dropout rate will increase, and Hopes and Dreams will be squashed.

Our children are our future, even our special education kids, even the ones who slip through the cracks. Please Give them the chance to Graduate High School.

If you are trying to Raise the Bar on education numbers, You should spend two whole months in a special education classroom , participating and helping the teacher to help these kids learn. Everytime they seem to struggle to get ahead their path is blocked by a legislative decision. You are important to their lives!!!! Please keep this Diploma as an option. What if you were in the shoes of their parents, grandparents or guardians. What if you are the Hope between a Diploma, even if it is occupational or Nothing?, Just Frustration!!!! A wasted twelve or twelve plus years because someone lacked the experience of the situation.

Signed by a Loving, Caring, Parent and Assistant Teacher

Who Cares,

Julie Ring

Dr. Dorothey Pernell, D.C



August 30, 2017

*Accreditation
MS Dept. of Education
Jackson, MS*

Re: Diploma changes for special needs children

Dear Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to be the grandmother of a special needs child who is highly functional autistic. [REDACTED] is currently in the [REDACTED] at North New Summit school here in Greenwood. She has been able to maintain her normal course of study with assist and even outside programs. She struggles with spelling and at times math, but she is doing better with the occurrence of her meltdowns.

[REDACTED] is on no medication and is not enrolled in any disability programs. It is our desire to not limit her by labeling her as a special needs child. To have her reach her full potential is paramount to us. We have enriched her education process by utilizing reading programs, computer educational programs, and any source available within the south.

It grieves my heart that MDE is now considering limiting her opportunity to pursue whatever goals she may set for herself. I am not sure a degree from a university is possible but a community college is well within her boundaries. I am strongly urging MDE to not consider changing the diploma recommendations. I fell this action is discriminating against my granddaughter due to her acknowledged special need.

If I can be of assistance please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

Dr. Dottie Pernell, D.C.

From: Helen Milloy
To: Accreditation
Subject: IEP Students Not Allowed To March At Graduation
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 11:23:31 AM

I think it is shameful to take the honor of marching at graduation from IEP students that earn certificates. If they have earned certificates, they are doing the best that their abilities allow. Why would anyone propose discriminating against them that way? Who does it hurt for them to March? This is ridiculous. I am totally against this.

From: [Leandra Hubbard](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Exit options for Certificate of completion
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 12:34:33 PM

I am Leandra Hubbard and I teach at Pine Grove High School. This is my 16th year teaching with 5 of those being in special education. I have seen a number of students walk across our gym floor wearing their bright red caps and gowns who received nothing more than a certificate of completion, a handshake from the superintendent and principal, and photos of the occasion. These children with special needs who walked across that gym floor would be denied that right until they are age 20 if the new exit options are agreed upon by the Mississippi Department of Education. This proposal is absurd for three reasons. First of all, this proposal is setting up certificate route students to drop out. By eliminating the right to participate with their cohort group in the graduation ceremony, these students may just opt to drop out at age 17 when they are no longer under the compulsory attendance law. Secondly, this law is unnecessary because students with IEPs can receive special education services until they are age 21. Even though they could participate in graduation with their cohort group, they can return to school the following semester. Lastly, all special education teachers know that no student with special needs can be disallowed to participate with his/her non-disabled peers by law. This proposal is suggesting that schools do exactly that. These students need to be allowed to participate with their class in graduation that they have ate lunch with in the cafeteria, played with in the gym and recess, sat with at the pep rallies, went with on field trips, made lifelong friendships with for their 12 years of school. I hope that you will reconsider changing the exit options so that these special needs students will be allowed to participate in their class graduation. For many of these students on certificate route, their lives may not be filled with many memorable events, therefore a graduation ceremony should not be denied to them. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

--
Leandra Hubbard
Pine Grove High School
Special Education

From: [Joshua Rowe](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: IEP Diploma/Certificate
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 1:14:56 PM

As a uncle with a niece that suffers from a mild learning disability, this disgust me. This bill is no different than the bullying they experience in their everyday lives. They deserve to walk on that stage or field just like everyone else. They completed K-12 just like every other graduate. This is discrimination against individuals with learning disabilities. They are human and have a heart just like me and you. Could you imagine your own child experiencing this type of situation, the feeling of defeat, no voice, stereotyping and legal bullying? I don't think so. These children are gifts from God and are just as important to society. Please reconsider this bill. I'm begging you on behalf of every student with a learning disability.

Joshua Rowe

Sent from my iPhone

From: bobbyjo [REDACTED]
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Students with disabilities
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 1:34:14 PM

This is discrimination..! What happened to no Child left behind? These kids have attended school K-12 as well as the other students and should have the same opportunities.. This is ridiculous I'll be praying for MDE and who all stands behind this
Sent from my iPhone

From: Amee Cox
To: Accreditation
Subject: Proposed Changes in Graduation Options
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 1:48:27 PM

August 30, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been teaching Special Education in Mississippi for over 19 years, and in that time I have seen many changes aimed at improving positive outcomes for students with disabilities. However, I have never seen an action so potentially detrimental to our Special Education population as the proposed change in diploma options. Please allow me to outline not only my concerns but also the concerns of other teachers and parents that I have spoken to.

1. A lack of graduation options will cause a mass dropout of Special Education students who are unable to complete the requirements of the Traditional Diploma. Students will not accept going to school through the age of 20, only to receive a certificate.
2. Holding all students responsible to the same criteria will cause an unprecedented amount of failures.
3. The Career and Technical Diploma is no longer an option, instead 3 additional units are required for a Traditional Diploma.
4. There will be a large of group of students "caught in the middle." Students who formally qualified for MOD do not meet the criteria for SCD but do not have the skills to be successful in higher-level math and English classes.
5. There are no contingencies for students who do not meet regular education goals.
6. The Alternate Diploma option excludes students with the most severe disabilities. While I agree that there needs to be a more comprehensive and logically sequenced curriculum for SCD students to work through, many in our severe/profound and multiple disabilities population may be unable to fully participate in this curriculum or complete the MAP-A with a score of 3 or higher.
7. The Alternate Diploma option also excludes students who don't qualify for SCD. Students in the IQ range of 70-80 will find the new traditional diploma guidelines extremely difficult, or they will find that they are not adequately prepared. These students may not be capable of completing the required 24 units.

8. In addition, not all of this year's 9th graders are prepared to be in all regular classes. Many of them were in resource classes for math and English in the 8th grade. Instead of phasing out MOD at this time, we need to be starting at the lower grades with phasing in total inclusion and not allowing children to be sent to resource instructional rooms. Students can hardly be expected to be successful when they have not been previously exposed to regular curriculum on a full time basis.

Special Education was originally established to meet the *individual needs* of students with disabilities in the public school setting. We are required by law to provide these students with an *Individualized Education Plan*, yet this proposed action removes all traces of *individualization*. In essence, the State of Mississippi is saying that all students can compete at the same level and can be successful in completing the same set of requirements in the same "cookie cutter" fashion. It does not take into consideration the vast array of differences in our students, their individual disabilities, or their particular set of circumstances.

Sincerely,

Amec N. Cox

New Albany High School

New Albany, MS

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: HI
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 2:08:32 PM

I'm a Grandmother and a mother and this is wrong . Handicap have the same rights to Graduate and walk with there class. They went took school k-12 they might have special needs but they deserve the same as the others . This is discrimination. We fight for our children and grandchildren .

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Diploma options for children with IEP
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 2:27:35 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Rebecca Smith and I have a child in the 5th grade that has been diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia since he was in 2nd grade. For parents who don't have a child with a learning disability let me just break it down for you how a normal day after school is for me and my child. After being in school all day and then sent home to finish work not completed during class along with studying EVERYTHING they went over that day and the previous days. I have to check everything he does in school to make sure he is getting it right and understands what he is doing. We spend hours upon hours doing homework and studying. We can't wait till the day before a test to study, it is a daily thing for us. We also do dyslexia therapy 3 times a week for an hour. As a parent I do everything I can for my child to make sure he does the very best he can. I've been told by all his teachers in the past that he is a child that really tries hard and gets upset and discouraged if he doesn't get it right or understands it. So what do you think telling him that no matter what you do and how hard you try you will never be enough and we are going to show you that by making you stay behind while the rest of your class gets a diploma and walks across the stage? Even though you took the same classes as them, took the same test, and completed high school. He will be defeated before he even starts and will most likely not even finish. I will fight this for my child and do everything in my power to not have this passed and if it does get passed I will pull him from the public school system and place him at a private school. I would rather pay a bunch of money to a school that will stand for my child then have him attend a school that has written him off!!
Sent from my iPhone

From: Kathy Hill
To: Accreditation
Subject: Diploma
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 2:33:18 PM

I have an 7th grader and 6th grader that this decision is going to affect. I do think they should be able to walk with their class just like a regular student. My children have the RIP because of dyslexia which just means they learn different. My boys still learn and study nightly. It is hard struggling with my oldest because he missed the special education by 2 points in the 4th grade

His younger brother can read so much more fluent than my 7th grader. My son in the 7th grade was almost held back again but was allowed to be put forward with the IEP. I am so thankful for the teachers he has. They work so good with him and me. I just wish he was able to get this kind of help sooner.

I think there should be an alteration of the diploma but the student still goes to class and learn therefore they should be treated as the same. No child left behind is the motto.

Thank you

From: [melissaharveyt](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Special needs graduation
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 2:49:34 PM

This is discrimination against children with learning disabilities. These children deserve the same opportunities as every other student. They completed K-12 just like every other graduate. Not only is this discrimination, it's legal bullying! I thought no child would be left behind???

From: Liza Pannell
To: Accreditation
Subject: revision
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 2:51:00 PM

My name is Liza Pannell. I have been a teacher for 16 years, with 9 of those spent in Special Education. For years, we as teachers, have been preached to that children with disabilities should not be excluded from participating with their non-disabled peers. However, this proposal is demanding that we do exactly that. This proposal would deny a student the chance to walk across the stage with their cohort group. Students are allowed the right to come back until they are 21 years of age. Those that are interested in this will come back. The other students will view this as a time to drop out when their cohort group is leaving to continue school or to find jobs. For some students with disabilities, it is impossible for them to master grade level curriculum. In my experience, these children are not interested in continuing school until they are 20 years of age. Most are ready to be on their own and learn job skills. These students again should be allowed to continue with their lives, whether at age 17 or 20. I feel that this should be their choice, not the law. Please consider these points when making your decision.

Thank you,

Liza Pannell

From: Ruby
To: Accreditation
Subject: Iep students
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 2:58:13 PM

How could you do this to students with an iep. My son finished school almost 2 years ago with a certificate. He worked very hard for that. Most of these kids work harder than ones that finish with a diploma. The right to walk with their senior class at graduation should not be taken away from them. All you are doing by taken this right away is telling them that they are not as good as the other kids that don't have a learning problem. I no longer have kids in school and I will sure fight for the kids that have just as much right as the kids that not have a learning problem.

Thanks
Ruby brock

Sent from my iPhone

From: Amanda Walters
To: Accreditation
Subject: plan to change the diploma options available to students with disabilities
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 4:33:16 PM

In my opinion, this is discrimination against children with learning disabilities. Everyone learns in a different way! My son deserves every opportunity as much as any other student. He works hard in school and deserves to march with his graduating class. If you take this away from him and others with a learning disability, then you are teaching them that no amount of hard work will get you anything you want in life. How can that be the right thing to do?

Sincerely,

Amanda Overstreet

From: Brenda
To: Accreditation
Subject: No child left behind
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 5:05:34 PM

I'm a parent of a child with a disability. I don't agree with y'all why treat our children different y'all say bullying is wrong Well y'all are bullying our children. We send our children to school to get education and they are trying there best some children learn different. My child was diagnosed with dyslexic when he was in 2nd grade he struggle to make it to the 2nd grade not knowing how to read at all because of his disability well because he was so far behind the other children they put him in iep where he receives help from teacher to help him read and goes to dyslexic tutor 4 days a week to learn to read. It will not be fair to these children to work this hard just as hard and the other child not to walk with there class this will be a reason most children will drop out of school because of you all.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Barbara Rockingham Shelton
To: Accreditation
Subject: Diploma Options
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 7:06:27 PM

Attention Dr. JoAnn Malone my name is Barbara Rockingham my son [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] at age [REDACTED] was diagnosed with Autism spectrum disorder. As a mother of 3 girls and my only son I was truly hurt it was very hard to except that your only son will never be able to do certain things. I moved from Brookhaven to Jackson [REDACTED] attended [REDACTED] there he went through all sort of miss treatment from teacher and students and did not learn anything. I work really hard and I moved to [REDACTED] were he attends [REDACTED] Dr D'Amico principal and Mrs. Reid made me believe that my son could have a normal life the he could learn to read and be a productive part of society. For once my son loved going to school he was excited about learning he stared to read to me my heart was filled with so my joy and my my son had so much pride in himself. He was not having melt downs and crying breaking pencils out of frustration. Now he is back in regular class all day and he can't keep up completely he gets frustrated and I don't want this experience to break him when he doesn't do well and has a melt down and get frustrated it breaks my heart I feel helpless I can't help my son along. My son special needs will not go away and even with medication I know he will never be able to do everything other kids do but that doesn't me he doesn't have a skill to offer to society. I ask that state reconsider taking the special Mississippi Occupational Diploma just because he has a disability doesn't mean he doesn't has pride in himself and he want to feel like he is no different from everyone else. If you take it away what are children with autism, ADHD, etc to do just stop going to school and give up because they can't perform on that level? Please don't take my son self confident he will need it in this world. If it were your child how would you feel? Right now I am worried about my sons future.

Thank you
Barbara Rockingham

Sent from my iPad

Sent from my iPad

From: Sandy
To: Accreditation
Subject: accreditation
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 7:30:40 PM

I believe this is wrong to discriminate against a certain select group. Education preaches inclusion but now you are trying to exclude which is what you have been fighting against. This would be a travesty to all special needs students.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Karen Churchill](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: Exit Options
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 8:07:09 PM

As a special educator for over 25 years, my heart is hurting over the proposed change regarding the awarding of certificates for students who have disabilities. I find the proposed change to be in contradiction with the "age appropriateness" and inclusion we have promoted my entire career. To deny an 18 year old the privilege of being a part of his/her senior year and walking across his/her high school stage to graduate with the peers who have been a part of his/her life since kindergarten is being viewed by many parents as blatant discrimination against kids who have disabilities. Considering students who receive a certificate always have the option of returning to school until they age out or obtain a traditional diploma, this new policy is unnecessary. I do believe that the new policy will create a large population of drop outs and will have a detrimental effect on our public school system. Students who have disabilities already face more challenges than most. It would be a shame to make matters worse for them.

Respectfully,
Karen Churchill
25+ years as a Mississippi Special Educator

From: [geneva.pernell](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: alternate diploma
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 8:32:27 PM

To whom it may concern:

We do wish to add our names to those who desire the proposal for the alternate diploma for students not capable to earn the present requirements. All children who wish to stay in school until they have learned all they are capable of should have the right to do so. Please add our names to the list. Thank you for your help in this so worthy effort.

Geneva Pernell
[REDACTED]

Prentiss Pernell, Sr.
[REDACTED]



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August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771

Re: Proposed Revisions to Standard 14, Appendix A and Appendix G (Graduation Requirements)

Dr. Malone,

We are writing regarding the proposed graduation requirements to begin with the 2018-2019 school year. We agree with the comments submitted on August 18, 2017, by our Superintendent Sue Townsend, and we have additional questions and/or concerns for consideration:

1. The proposal includes limitations to students eligible for early release. In the proposed Accountability Standards draft all proposed diplomas include footnote twelve (12): *For early release, students must meet College or Career Readiness Benchmarks that allow students to attend postsecondary without remediation or demonstrate work ready requirements.* While presentations about this requirement have indicated that the MS IHL readiness benchmarks (English: 17 and Math: 19) and ACT WorkKeys Silver meet the requirements for CCR Benchmarks and work-ready requirements, respectively, the proposed Accountability Standards draft does not include the specific Benchmarks/requirements. The expectations should be specified in final Standards.

However, we respectfully ask that this requirement be reconsidered. While we appreciate the need for students to meet entry-level benchmarks for college and career readiness, we believe that limiting student's ability to leave school early would create unintended consequences. Requiring students to stay at school for an entire school day when they are already enrolled in the courses needed for graduation will lead to increased absenteeism and/or increased discipline referrals, and could even increase the school's dropout rate. Many of our low-income students provide needed income for their families; therefore, restricting students from early release could have a negative economic impact on their families and the community. For example, in our McLaurin attendance zone, seniors receive early release to work at the elementary school as after-school tutors, where they provide academic and child care support.

Additionally, keeping these students in school for an additional class each day will increase teacher unit needs for schools. For example, Rankin County's senior class currently includes over 1300 students districtwide. Of these students, over 740 do not meet one or both of the

Dr. Sue Townsend
Superintendent of Education



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IHL's ACT benchmarks. If these students were denied early release, each of the eight high schools would be required to hire at least one additional teacher, but probably more, depending upon the electives the student's select. Thus, the cost of 8-10 additional teachers would mean over \$500,000 in employment costs for the district.

To that end, we make the following suggestion. For any student who has not met the IHL's ACT Benchmarks (i.e., 17 in English, 19 in Math), the restriction for early release will be waived if the student is meeting all other requirements for the selected diploma endorsement and the student is enrolled in the appropriate SREB Essentials course or ACT Readiness/Preparation course.

2. Any requirements should be state funded. While a one-time administration of the ACT is currently funded by the state, ACT WorkKeys, AP exams, IB programs/exams, and dual credit options are not. These requirements could result in the Traditional Diploma as the only option for low-income students, which would create inequity for our students. While some Title I schools may elect to use federal dollars to assist low-income students with the fees, non-Title I schools may not, creating further inequities not only within districts but across the state. Additionally, transfer students coming from private and/or out-of-state schools who have not had access to some of these programs could be denied an endorsement simply due to timing of the student's transfer. Creating barriers and inequities are not in the best interest of our students.
3. We are concerned by the potential barriers to the College and Career Readiness course requirement. The proposed footnote eleven (11) indicates, *The College and Career Readiness course is for seniors only, unless a student is graduating prior to the student's graduation cohort. For early graduates, this course may be taught during the spring semester of the junior year. Courses that meet this requirement will be identified during the 2018-19 school year.* How can a full-credit course be gained during the spring semester, except on 4x4 block scheduling? Similarly, some students may not plan to be early graduates but life changes make early completion an option. This requirement for a full credit taken only the senior year could quickly become a barrier for student success. As noted with the early release concerns, transfer students—particularly those transferring in from out-of-state—could receive unintended consequences if they have not had an opportunity to take the course prior to transfer. To this end, we recommend that students be exempt from the CCR course requirement if they meet certain requirements. The exemptions could be from a list of options, to include successful enrollment in dual credit, advanced placement, or other comparable coursework.
4. We are concerned that the 2.5 GPA requirement for CTE endorsement might be a barrier for students pursuing this diploma track. We believe that a 2.0, which is the equivalent of a "C" average, should be the requirement for this endorsement.

Dr. Sue Townsend

Superintendent of Education



RANKIN COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
GREAT TO BEST

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5. We are very concerned by the potential training and paperwork burden being created for school staff at both the high school and middle school counselors. Specifically in middle schools, students need high quality guidance on how choices in the middle school will impact the student's diploma track throughout high school. Administrators, counselors, and teachers will be required to have a deep understanding of all the curricular options at middle school as well as high school.

In this same vein, the expectations for documentation related to changing diploma tracks should be made clear. Students and school staff should understand what impact an endorsement will have in the post-secondary realm. The value of an endorsement (or multiple endorsements, if possible) should be clearly articulated at the state level in order to provide consistency across the state. Otherwise the value of the endorsement is greatly diminished.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the proposed revisions.

Thank you,

Robert Crain

Robert Crain
Principal, Puckett High School

Jammy Crosetti

Jammy Crosetti
Principal, McLaurin High School

Charles Frazier

Dr. Charles Frazier
Principal, Brandon High School

Ch. Scott Smith for Jessica Hodges

Jessica Hodges
Principal, Florence Middle School

George E. Jones, III

George E. Jones, III
Principal, The Learning Center

Bryan Marshall

Dr. Bryan Marshall
Principal, Pelahatchie High School

Tony Martin

Tony Martin
Principal, Florence High School

Trey Rein

Trey Rein
Principal, Brandon Middle School

Dr. Scott Rimes

Dr. Scott Rimes
Principal, Richland High School

Ben Stein

Ben Stein
Principal, Northwest Rankin High School

Shea Taylor

Shea Taylor
Principal, Northwest Rankin Middle School

Craig Yates

Craig Yates
Principal, Pisgah High School

Dr. Scott Rimes
Superintendent of Education

From: [Shannon Cox](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: concerns
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 7:56:16 AM

First of all, I want to thank you for giving parents and educators the opportunity to voice our opinions and concerns regarding the upcoming suggested graduation changes. I have the upmost respect for you and what you do. It is certainly a daunting task to lead the state's education system.

I have the unique opportunity of being a mother of a 5th grader with an IEP and I have been a high school counselor in Mississippi's public schools for 19 years. For the last 15 years, I have been blessed to be a lead counselor in Madison County.

As a counselor, I have been in small, closed meetings with MDE discussing the upcoming changes, and I honestly am struggling to get on board with the suggestions. We often joke in our office that we are counselors not "magicians". It often feels that MDE thinks we are "magicians" as well. The longer I work in this field, the more I understand why we cannot retain and recruit good quality teachers and administrators. Counselors alone have so many unrealistic expectations of us, that I can hardly even counsel students anymore. The mental health of the students I see is becoming more and more extreme and I cannot help them for all my other duties. All this to say, keeping up with all of the proposed endorsements is going to be a major undertaking on top of all of our other expectations.

However, my main concern is for my students. By removing the MOD program, I truly feel that we are setting this group of students up for failure. As much as I hate to say it, there is no way these students will be able to perform well enough to obtain a traditional diploma. I have administered the ACT to our MOD students ever since we began the State ACT. The average ACT for these students (at a top rated high school) is a 14. I do not feel that these students will be successful on our state tests nor the ACT. This will cause major frustration and therefore an increase in our dropout rate. Why not add more exemption policies for our students with an IEP?

My son is lucky. His academic ability keeps him on the traditional diploma track. However, because of his diagnosis, has never felt successful and has very low self-esteem. School has always been, and will always be a struggle. With the new endorsements, my youngest will once again feel as if he isn't "good enough" if he cannot obtain the same endorsements as his friends and sibling. Don't these students with an IEP struggle enough by being made to feel "different". Why add one more thing?

As you can see, I am frustrated as a counselor and as a mother. I beg you

reconsider your plans for these graduation changes and endorsements!

Thank you for your time,

Shannon Cox

From: Isolde Barachina
To: Accreditation
Subject: Changes regarding Special Education Diploma Options
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 8:51:16 AM

Dear Sir or Madam

my 10-year old daughter is on the autism spectrum and has an IEP since she is 3-years old. With her IEP and modified classroom option she was able to attend a regular classroom setting and have modified classes for the math lessons she is struggling in.

Proposing new graduation options will leave children with learning disabilities, like my daughter, behind the current curriculum and fighting to keep up with their classmates in lessons they have problems with.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to restrict the availability of the special MS Occupational Diploma for students with disabilities entering the Ninth Grade.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Respectfully

Isolde Barachina



Clinton Public School District

P. O. Box 300
Clinton, Mississippi 39060

Tim L. Martin, Ed.D.
Superintendent

August 30, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Re: Proposed Revisions to Graduation Requirements

Dr. Malone,

I am writing in regard to the proposed graduation requirements for the 2018-2019 school year. My leadership team has reviewed the proposed requirements and would like to share the following concerns we have with these proposed requirements:

1. The proposal creates the need for additional classes to be offered at the high school level in order to account for the dramatic decrease proposed for senior work release. Currently, only 11% of students in MS meet all four College/Career Ready benchmarks. This will involve the need for additional teachers for the classes offered to these students. This will essentially result in an unfunded mandate to districts. Senior work release has not only become a "rite of passage" for most seniors, but in many cases a necessity for students to work in order to help pay the upcoming expenses of college.
2. The requirement of a 2.5 GPA for the Career and Technical Endorsement will leave out many deserving students from receiving this distinction that otherwise meet all of the other requirements. We feel if a student meets all other CTE endorsement requirements they should receive this distinction regardless of having obtained a 2.5 GPA.
3. The capstone experience required for the distinguished academic endorsement is a worthy goal, but many smaller districts and communities will find it very difficult to arrange and maintain the necessary involvement needed to include all students in this process.
4. The requirement for a non-weighted grade of C or higher in College Dual Enrollment courses, but not for AP or IB courses is a discrepancy we found for both the Academic and Distinguished Endorsement proposals.

5. The reduction in credit requirements for the Traditional Diploma in science and social studies is a concern. We have been successful in getting all of our graduates to earn the existing standard of four credits and feel lowering it to three is a step in the wrong direction by reducing standards.
6. Lastly, but certainly not least is the affect this proposal will have on our special education population. The removal of the MOD is having serious consequences already with us having to push students to fit into one of two boxes, either a regular diploma or a certificate. Most of these students have been pushed in their earlier years to try and stay on the regular diploma track but have been unsuccessful and the MOD diploma was a wonderful compromise between the two.

We are thankful for the opportunity to provide our input in this important decision and are appreciative of the hard work from MDE staff in making this proposal. We all want what is best for all students and hope our input will be used to help guide this decision.

Sincerely,



Tim L. Martin
Superintendent of Education
Clinton Public School District

From: Alisa Bourne
To: Accreditation
Subject: Proposed Graduation Requirements
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 10:01:43 AM

I have so many concerns about the proposed graduation requirements, I don't know exactly where to begin!

First of all - where is Geography? I just can't imagine that MDE would remove this course as a requirement! *Why, just why?*

Second of all - you must want our dropout rate to go up!? Removing the Career Path and District Options will take away the "fall-back" or "safety net" for so many students. And, only SCD kids can use the proposed Alternate Diploma?! The SCD kids are the ones who simply receive a certificate of attendance in the districts for which I have worked, not Miss Occupational Diplomas, so suggesting that this Alternate Diploma is a substitute for MOD is not the case for a lot of schools. Or we will just see the number of SCDs kids go up.

Next - I urge you, implore you, BEG you - if you are going to tie GPAs to graduation requirements - PLEASE DICTATE TO DISTRICTS HOW GPAs ARE TO BE CALCULATED! **There are as many different ways to calculate GPAs in this state as there are high schools.** If you don't believe me, call Chris Jennings at Central Access. He knows because most schools use SAM as their SIS, and he has been responsible for programming it to calculate GPAs. I am a Counselor who has worked for 3 different high schools, and they all calculate GPAs differently. And yes, it makes a HUGE difference. Let me give you an example - the district I currently work for says that they are on a 4.0 scale, but, they also say in their board policy that if a student receives a grade of 100 in a course (a course worth 1 Carnegie unit), they will receive 5.0 points toward their GPA calculation. AND, if that class is "weighted" (and they have a long list of weighted classes), the student will receive an additional point, making the GPA 6.0! And because their grading scale is 10-point, a student receiving a 70 in a weighted class (which is the lowest passing grade at some schools) will receive 3.0 points toward their GPA - that's a B. *Kids get Bs for 70s, which are Ds in other districts!* I am not making this up. You guys are opening a huge can of worms with this. You currently don't dictate a universal grading scale or GPA calculation. **And if you are putting GPAs into graduation requirements - you simply must!**

Lastly - I am concerned about schools who are not able to offer all of the options to their students. Let me explain. The high school I work for lost their Spanish teacher this year, and was not able to replace her. That was the only foreign language we had. And we don't know if we can replace her next year. We talked to Ole Miss about offering our students Spanish through their online high school, but it is just too expensive. We have tried Miss Virtual Public School, but they fill up too fast, and so many of our kids don't have internet at home. (We can't devote a computer lab to this all day either.). We are trying to make it work through long-distance with another school, but this is not ideal. And what about the schools who can't do this? How can we say that they must take foreign languages to get these academic diplomas and then not offer the foreign languages? I'm not saying I don't like the diploma option - what I'm saying is that MDE will need to help us. Can you get more MVPS slots for us? Can you make a deal with Ole Miss and Miss State to let us use their online high schools? Something! Just please, don't put in a mandate without creating a plan to help small, rural, poor schools (most of Mississippi)!

How will I know that my comments are presented to the board/committee? How will I know the decision?

Thank you,

Alisa A Boume,
SPHS Counselor
Office - 662.489.5925
Fax - 662.489.8598

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From: Cheryl Malone
To: Accreditation
Subject: new graduation requirements proposal
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 10:47:39 AM

I would like to voice my concerns over the proposed new graduation requirements for our state. To my understanding, Mississippi has one of the higher sets of graduation requirements NOW. I firmly believe that increasing our requirements will cause more stress on students, leading to burnout, and eventually causing our dropout rate to increase. Our school offers very few electives due to lack of staff; so increasing the required number of electives puts a strain not only on the students but also on the district financially. Please reconsider increasing the requirements. I'm not alone in feeling this would be detrimental to our schools. Thank you for your consideration.

Cheryl Malone
South Pontotoc High School

--
Cheryl Malone, NBCT
Technology Education Teacher
South Pontotoc High School
662.489.5925 (Ext. 1825)



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Germantown High School

409 Calhoun Station Parkway
Madison, Mississippi 39110
Phone: 601.359.6130 Fax: 601.359.0389
Wesley Quick, Principal
Brent Brownelee, Assistant Principal
Syl Burrell, Assistant Principal
Nason Lollar, Assistant Principal

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education

RE: Comments Regarding Proposed Revisions to Mississippi High School Graduation Requirements

This letter addresses the concerns that I have regarding the new proposed revisions to the Mississippi high school graduation requirements.

1. Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE) 5-Year Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 lists the following as a goal--Every student graduates high school and is ready for college and career. I feel that these new revisions contradict that goal. If the goal is for every student to graduate, which I fully support, I believe that there has to be more options for students who have academic struggles. I feel that the graduation requirements target the student that has average or above average abilities and leaves those students who may struggle behind. While there are options to satisfy the requirements of the required high school assessments, what happens when a student cannot satisfy all of the required assessments? All of the assessment options other than the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program assessments cost additional money for the students. Who would provide the funding for those options?
2. Another concern is the clarification of wording. Throughout the memorandum provided by MDE, there appears to be contradictory wording. In one figure, the Traditional Diploma states that it is for all students. On the very next page, it states that all students pursuing a Traditional Diploma must identify an endorsement prior to entering 9th grade. Is there an option for the Traditional Diploma to be a "stand alone" diploma?
3. When considering the endorsements that may be added to the Traditional Diploma, all require a certification, a dual credit course, or some type of corresponding exam. Who will provide the funding for those requirements? Also, the verbiage states that the student must "successfully complete" certain exams. What will determine successful completion? Still considering the endorsements, one of the requirements for them is a minimum 2.5 GPA. What happens when a student has completed all requirements but has fallen just short of the GPA requirement?
4. Another concern regards the College and Career Ready course. I think that the content seems valuable but the prescribed time period in which to teach the course is not realistic



Germantown High School

409 Calhoun Station Parkway
Madison, Mississippi 39110
Phone: 601.859.6150 Fax: 601.859.0389

Wesley Quick, Principal
Brent Brownlee, Assistant Principal
Syl Burrell, Assistant Principal
Nason Lollar, Assistant Principal

There are instances when students have circumstances that necessitate an unexpected early exit of high school but if we have not been able to teach them the College and Career Ready course, they would not be able to graduate. Also, what would high schools do about students who are classified as seniors and transfer into a Mississippi high school during their senior year and have not been enrolled in a corresponding course? I am requesting some flexibility in the timetable for instruction of this course.

5. Another topic that is related to the proposed graduation revisions is the double testing of students who take Algebra I prior to their 9th grade year. Instead of mandating another test that must be taken for graduation requirements but does not have to be passed yet will still count in our accountability ratings, could we use an assessment that all students are already taking such as the ACT? This would only make sense so as not to "punish" those students and districts who choose to offer Algebra I prior to the 9th grade.
6. Lastly, in all of the appendices of the proposed revisions, footnote 1 has a statement that confuses me. The statement is "Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II." Does this mean that if a student chooses to take Accelerated English 10 but chooses not to take AP English Language Composition, they will not receive credit for having completed English II? If this is so, I disagree with this requirement. If this is not the case, then I suggest that the wording be changed to promote clarity of the statement.

In conclusion, I do not believe that the revisions should be approved as proposed. Having first heard about the revisions back in September 2015 and reading the current proposed memorandum, I do not feel that much has changed nor has input provided by practitioners been considered. As a high school principal, I implore you to pause the revision process and please revise the proposal after carefully considering the suggestions of those who are with the students on a daily basis.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wesley Quick



SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Ronnie McGehee

BOARD OF EDUCATION
William Grissett, President
Philip Huskey, Secretary
Dr. Pollia Griffin
Wayne Jimenez
Sam Kelly

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education

RE: Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process Response for the Proposed Mississippi Diploma Options

Dr. Malone,

We are writing this letter in support of the comments submitted on August 31, 2017, by Dr. Ronnie McGehee, our Superintendent of Madison County Schools. We also have additional questions and/or concerns for consideration:

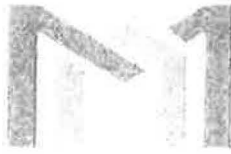
1. We are concerned by the training and paperwork burden being created for school staff and counselors at both the high school and middle schools. Specifically in middle schools, students and parents need high quality guidance on how choices in the middle school will impact the student's diploma track throughout high school. Administrators, counselors, and teachers will be required to have a deep understanding of all the curricular options at middle school as well as high school. Along the same lines, the expectations for documentation related to changing diploma tracks should be made clear. Students & school staff should understand what impact an endorsement will have in the post-secondary realm. The value of an endorsement (or multiple endorsements, if allowed) should be clearly articulated at the state level in order to provide consistency across the state. Otherwise, the value of the endorsement is greatly diminished.
2. Regarding endorsements, do students have to declare an endorsement? Throughout the memorandum provided by MDE, there appears to be contradictory wording. In one figure, the Traditional Diploma states that it is for all students. On the very next page, it states that all students pursuing a Traditional Diploma must identify an endorsement prior to entering 9th grade. Is there an option for the Traditional Diploma to be a "stand alone" diploma? Is there the possibility to continue to utilize a "District Option" diploma?
3. Another great concern is the inequity across the state regarding grading scales. What happens when a student has met the Carnegie unit requirement for their particular endorsement but not the GPA requirement; do they not graduate? In addition, we are concerned that the 2.5 GPA requirement for the CTE endorsement will be a barrier for students pursuing this diploma track. We believe that a 2.0 GPA (equivalent to a "C" average) would make a more attainable and more realistic goal.



SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Ronnie McGehee

BOARD OF EDUCATION
William Grissett, President
Philip Huskey, Secretary
Dr. Pollia Griffin
Wayne Jimenez
Sam Kelly

4. From the high school perspective, Early Release has long been an incentive during a student's first three years of high school to earn their credits as well as opportunity for work-based experiences (some of which are crucial for family survival). If Early Release is withheld due to not meeting the College or Career Readiness Benchmarks, how are students going to be able to obtain those lost career experiences and missed earnings? Furthermore, we believe that unintended consequences will occur. Consequences such as increased absenteeism, increased discipline referrals, and the need for additional teacher units which poses additional funding needs for school districts. And while the intended goal is to increase graduation rates, this requirement could have a negative effect and increase the dropout rate.
5. When considering the endorsements that may be added to the Traditional Diploma, all require a certification, a dual credit course, or some type of corresponding exam. Who will provide the funding for those requirements?
6. Another concern regards the College and Career Ready course. We agree that the content seems valuable but the prescribed time period in which to teach the course is not realistic. There are instances when students have circumstances that necessitate an unexpected early exit of high school but if we have not been able to teach them the College and Career Ready course, they would not be able to graduate. Also, what would high schools do about students who are classified as seniors and transfer into a Mississippi high school during their senior year and have not been enrolled in a corresponding course? And how can a one-credit course be gained during the spring semester, except during a 4x4 block scheduling situation. We are requesting some flexibility in the timetable for instruction of this course as well as exemption from the course if certain requirements (to be determined) are met.
7. Another topic that is related to the proposed graduation revisions is the double testing of students who take Algebra I prior to their 9th grade year. Instead of mandating another test that must be taken for graduation requirements but does not have to be passed yet will still count in our accountability ratings, could we use an assessment that all students are already taking such as the ACT? This would only make sense so as not to "punish" those students and districts who choose to offer Algebra I prior to the 9th grade.
8. Lastly, in all of the appendices of the proposed revisions, footnote 1 has a statement that confuses us. The statement is "Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II." Does this mean that if a student chooses to take Accelerated English 10 but chooses not to take AP English Language Composition, they will not receive credit for having completed English II? If this is so, we disagree with this requirement. If this is not the case, then we suggest that the wording be changed to promote clarity of the statement.



SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Ronnie McGehee

BOARD OF EDUCATION
William Grissett, President
Philip Huskey, Secretary
Dr. Pollia Griffin
Wayne Jimenez
Sam Kelly

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important decision which will have lasting impact on the current and future students of Mississippi.

Austin Brown
Principal, Madison Central High School

Leatha Phillips
Principal, Madison Middle School

Sean Brewer
Principal, Rosa Scott School

Carey Kirkland
Principal, Velma Jackson High School

Kelvin Griffin
Principal, Shirley D. Simmons Middle School

Tim Dowdy
Principal, Ridgeland High School

Crystal Chase
Principal, Olde Towne Middle School

Wesley Quick
Principal, Germantown High School

Chris Perritt
Principal, Germantown Middle School

Dr. Aimee Brown
Director/Principal, Madison County
Career & Technical Center

From: [Amanda Henderson](#)
To: [Accreditation](#)
Subject: My son
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 11:08:44 AM

My son can not help that he was born with dyslexia and he is pulled for help in special education everyday, which he needs. He is smart, does this mean he will not get a diploma, he is in 7 th grade now?
A very concerned parent

Sent from my iPhone

**Rosa Scott School
200 Crawford Street
Madison, MS 39110
601-605-0054**

To: Dr. Jo Ann Malone
Bureau Director
Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Accreditation

From: Jayme Sullivan, Ed.S., NCC, NCSC, LPC
Counselor
Past President of Mississippi Counseling Association

Date: August 31, 2017

Subject: Proposed Revisions to Mississippi High School Graduation
Requirements/Diploma Options, Standard 14, Appendix A and G

Dear Dr. Malone:

I am writing the letter in concern of the proposed graduation requirements that will begin in the 2018-2019 school year. Throughout the memorandum provided by MDE, there seems to be concern over the wording and conflict throughout. Traditional Diploma is for all students but it looks as if students must identify before entering the 9th grade. Do students declare an endorsement, or can they select a Traditional Diploma track? The language states throughout the student must complete certain exams. How will this be determined? There is major concern over the GPA requirement due to the variations of how this is determined across our state. Each district sets a grading scale to determine GPA. It is not the same across the state. District establish the number of Carnegie Units for graduation. I feel this will have unintended consequences. I have seen the issue of GPA difference with students applying for scholarships at the Universities. What happens to a student when they meet the requirements, but does not make the GPA requirement?

I feel Career and College Ready is imperative in our state, but how do we address the many student that move into our systems from out of state or private institutions junior or senior year and have not enrolled in a corresponding course? Some students for reason will need an early exit from high school, that may now not be possible if they have not completed the College and Career Ready Course. The wording states the course may be taught during the spring semester of junior year, however, unless the school district is on 4 X 4, a year- long course may not be taught in semester. The proposal limitation to students eligible for early release should be reconsidered. Student should meet College and Career Readiness Benchmarks, but to restrict students from early release where they are going to work sites could not only have a negative impact on the student that will not receive the work experience/training, but could have a negative economic impact on communities and families. School will have to increase teacher units and classes to accommodate these revisions. This will increase the employment costs for each district. What about the students that would have been Mississippi Occupational Diploma

track that no longer will have this as an option. They had a work experience requirement in the program, but not if they are not able to meet the 2.5 GPA requirement where will they have the opportunity to receive experience when they may not be able to reach the 2.5 requirement but are meeting the minimum requirements for graduation.

As a school counselor, we have made steps to increase the time available to spend with students to address academic, personal/social, and career interest of our populations. These recommended changes will cause our school systems to take steps backwards due to the potential training and paperwork that will be created for middle and high school counselors. Choices in middle school will impact the student's diploma track throughout high school. Counselors, Administrators, and teachers will be required to have a deep understanding of all the options starting with middle school. Monitoring the paperwork to complete each student will have an impact on how school counselor may stay in compliance with the State Law of spending 80% of the time in direct contact. Counselors will require more than 20% of a time tracking the courses if they have a large number of students assigned to each counselor.

Information should be made clear to the students and the parents what is the expectations of changing diploma track. Students and school staff must understand clearly the impact it will have on the student's post-secondary choices.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my thoughts,



TO: Dr. JoAnn Malone
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Accreditation

FROM: Cassandra Williams, Superintendent of Canton Public School District

DATE: August 31, 2017

SUBJECT: Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process Response

Proposed Revisions to Standard 14 Graduation Requirements, Appendix A and G

Issue # 1 The GPA of 2.5 Requirement in the CTE Option

The requirement for CTE students to obtain a 2.5 GPA is too high under the CTE Diploma Option. Many students who participate in the CTE program may or may not go to college, and some are special needs students. Requiring a 2.5 GPA will be too much for these students. Requiring no specific GPA, or at most a 2.0, would be a better and a more realistic requirement.

Issue #2 Declaring a Graduation Option

Will MDE require students to declare an endorsement above the Traditional Diploma? Some students may fall short in pursuit of a specific diploma option because of the additional GPA requirement or the advanced coursework requirements. If this happens, are students locked into completing the original diploma track, or can students change their diploma track as needed? Our opinion is that students should not be locked into a specific diploma track without the option of changing it as needed.

Issue #3 The Traditional Diploma

During the 2016-17 school year, our district implemented a requirement to hold seniors accountable for obtaining a higher ACT score their senior year by withholding the early release program and requiring them to participate in an ACT prep course. We attempted to withhold the early release option until the student received a higher ACT score. This process was not effective for a majority of our student population because of the level of poverty that we have and the financial need for those students to be part of the early release work program. We had an outcry from parents because this local requirement impacted the family's household income and caused unexpected burdens on families. We had to immediately rethink this requirement and relax it to accommodate the needs of our students and community. In addition, we had to consider the fact that not all of our students are going to college. Please consider committing the CCR ACT benchmark to determine early release for seniors.

Hinds County School District

Dr. Delesicia M. Martin
Superintendent of Education

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Hinds County School Board

Timothy Burnett — District 1

Robbie Anderson — District 2

Dr. Linda Laws, President — District 3

Bill Elkins — District 4

Carolyn Samuel — District 5

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 30205-0771

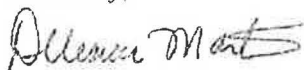
Dear Dr. Malone,

I have reviewed the Proposed Mississippi Diploma Options, which will begin in the 2018-2019 school year and have the following concerns/questions:

1. Will funding be provided by the state to fund the administration of the ACT WorkKeys for students selecting the Career and Technical Endorsement?
2. What is the rationale for students being required to take their Career and College Readiness credit within one semester of graduation? This is a scheduling concern.
3. The GPA requirement for the Career and Technical Endorsement is not realistic. Many students will struggle to achieve the 2.5 GPA, but still meet all of the other requirements.
4. Will students taking an AP course under the Academic Endorsement be required to score a 3 on the AP exam?
5. Does the early release College or Career Readiness Benchmarks under the Traditional Diploma Option refer to the ACT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks or the MS IHL College and Career Readiness Benchmarks?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed revisions.

Sincerely,



Delesicia Martin
Superintendent of Education
Hinds County School District

From: Carol Byrne
To: Accreditation
Subject: APA concerning the proposed diploma changes
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 2:14:31 PM

Dear MDE

After reading the proposed changes I have a few concerns:

1. This could cause a hardship on smaller schools - adding teacher without additional funding
2. This could adversely effect dropout rate
3. The special needs students - some can not get a traditional diploma. This will be heart breaking to them.

Thanks for letting me express my concerns

Carol C. Byrne



Ocean Springs School District

2901 E. Government Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 771, Ocean Springs, MS 39066-7711
Ocean Springs, Mississippi
Phone: 228/473-4700

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205

Re: Proposed Revisions to Graduation Requirements

Dr. Malone:

Please accept this written correspondence (APA) in regards to the proposed graduation requirements for the 2018-2019 school year. The leadership of the Ocean Springs School District has carefully reviewed the documents that were disseminated and offer the following statements/requests for clarification:

1. The fact that the State's Acceleration Model for Accountability Standards does not recognize the heightened level of rigor of AP and IB classes is further intensified by the requirement for a non-weighted grade of C or higher in College Dual Enrollment courses. This is also evident in the endorsements for the Distinguished and Academic endorsements. The fact that AP and IB students take courses that far exceed the rigor of an entry-level college course AND they must also pass a qualifying exam with a specific score for college credit should certainly validate more weight being given for those courses.
2. On the new diploma options the following has been stated in the Curriculum Coordinator's PowerPoint on June 12, 2017:

For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement, (page 13)

- a. Does this statement mean that the MDE will now recognize these students and their scores in the accountability model? Will they now be included in the senior snapshot? Also, how does this statement address the Early Exit Diploma removal that we see referenced on page 20 of the same document?



- b. As a district that offers Carnegie unit credit in middle school AND operates on the 4x4 for high school, we have many students who could very well leave in December of the senior year. MDE's documents reflect that it will discourage this practice and we are now in the process of addressing this issue from a district policy level and we need clarification.
 - c. Please understand that if districts must offer supplemental courses just to fill up a senior year that this has dramatic budget considerations as well. Again, for districts that permit Carnegie unit credits at the middle school level and operate on the 4x4 for high school the number of credits required for graduation will be exhausted by students in the first semester of the senior year and for some by the end of the junior year.
- 3. Students with an IEP under the proposal are not able to exit with a certificate of completion until they have reached the age of 20. We believe this is an unfair disadvantage to the students and in fact increases the number of dropouts due to them being unable to graduate with their peers. We propose that a student's graduation track may be changed after they have completed four years at the high school and have unsuccessfully attempted the SATP in all required areas in the graduation requirements, two or more times.
 - 4. Please clarify whether school districts can ADD to the requirements as currently our district graduation requirements exceed the number of units of the proposed traditional state diploma.
 - 5. Clarify the requirements for Early Release: in the documents out for APA it states they must meet the IHL benchmark requirement of a 17 on English and a 19 on Math but the MS Accountability Benchmark scores are an 18 on English and a 22 on Math.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond in the APA process and we look forward to clarifications.

Sincerely,



Bonita Coleman, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools



From: Rabert, Julie
To: Accreditation
Cc: Julie Rabert
Subject: APA review
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 3:23:42 PM

Concerns:

GPA is figured differently across the state

Work Release helps ours seniors earn money for family and for college

If we don't have Work Release then we don't have enough teaching units for students and class sizes will be even larger for regular classes

The ACT College and Career Ready is higher than what is required for Accreditation why?

If Seniors are going to be required to have a math senior year, then we need more options for math electives that are for the real world. Most students can't do Algebra III and AP Calculus.

Alternate Diploma Option should NOT have the name diploma in it unless it is a true diploma. Parents gets confused when it says diploma and it is really just a certificate of completion.

Transfer students from out of state or private schools who do have the Career and College Readiness Course

Information should be made clear to the students and the parents what is the expectations of changing diploma track. Students and school staff must understand clearly the impact it will have on the student's post-secondary choices.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my concerns,

--
Julie Rabert
Counselor
Hancock High School
7084 Stennis Airport Drive
Kiln, MS 39556
jrabert@hancockschools.net
228-467-2251

From: Martin, Kimberly
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation revision concerns
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 4:07:06 PM

Subject: Proposed Revisions to Mississippi High School Graduation
Requirements/Diploma Options, Standard 14, Appendix A and G

Dear Dr. Jo Ann Malone:

I am writing the letter in concern of the proposed graduation requirements that will begin in the 2018-2019 school year. Throughout the memorandum provided by MDE, there seems to be concern over the wording and conflict throughout. Traditional Diploma is for all students but it looks as if students must identify before entering the 9th grade. Do students declare an endorsement, or can they select a Traditional Diploma track? The language states throughout the student must complete certain exams. How will this be determined? There is major concern over the GPA requirement due to the variations of how this is determined across our state. Each district sets a grading scale to determine GPA. It is not the same across the state. District establish the number of Carnegie Units for graduation. I feel this will have unintended consequences. I have seen the issue of GPA difference with students applying for scholarships at the Universities. What happens to a student when they meet the requirements, but does not make the GPA requirement?

I feel Career and College Ready is imperative in our state, but how do we address the many student that move into our systems from out of state or private institutions junior or senior year and have not enrolled in a corresponding course? Some students for reason will need an early exit from high school, that may now not be possible if they have not completed the College and Career Ready Course. The wording states the course may be taught during the spring semester of junior year, however, unless the school district is on 4 X 4, a year- long course may not be taught in semester. The proposal limitation to students eligible for early release should be reconsidered. Student should meet College and Career Readiness Benchmarks, but to restrict students from early release where they are going to work sites could not only have a negative impact on the student that will not receive the work experience/training, but could have a negative economic impact on communities and families. School will have to increase teacher units and classes to accommodate these revisions. This will increase the employment costs for each district. What about the students that would have been Mississippi Occupational Diploma track that no longer will have this as an option. They had a work experience requirement in the program, but not if they are not able to meet the 2.5 GPA requirement where will they have the opportunity to

receive experience when they may not be able to reach the 2.5 requirement but are meeting the minimum requirements for graduation.

As a school counselor, we have made steps to increase the time available to spend with students to address academic, personal/social, and career interest of our populations. These recommended changes will cause our school systems to take steps backwards due to the potential training and paperwork that will be created for middle and high school counselors. Choices in middle school will impact the student's diploma track throughout high school. Counselors, Administrators, and teachers will be required to have a deep understanding of all the options starting with middle school. Monitoring the paperwork to complete each student will have an impact on how school counselor may stay in compliance with the State Law of spending 80% of the time in direct contact. Counselors will require more than 20% of a time tracking the courses if they have a large number of students assigned to each counselor.

Information should be made clear to the students and the parents what is the expectations of changing diploma track. Students and school staff must understand clearly the impact it will have on the student's post-secondary choices.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my thoughts,

--

Kim Martin
School Counselor
Hancock High School
work (228) 467-2251
fax (228) 463-1983

From: Cresap, Michelle
To: Accreditation
Subject: APA
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 4:52:53 PM

Good afternoon,

I am very concerned with the proposed Mississippi Diploma Options. If the new requirements are made our drop out rate is going to rise.

The GPA and ACT requirements will hinder many of our lower functioning students from graduating. Not to mention our EL students who struggle to pass classes and state test already.

Not every student is academically inclined so they cannot meet the IHL requirements and they are not going to attend college.

Many of our students are economically challenged and they have to work to help support their family. Most of these students do not have the support or the aptitude to meet many of these requirements. Also, if you drop early work release you will have to find funding for more teachers to teach the extra blocks.

Thank you for taking time to allow us to give our input.

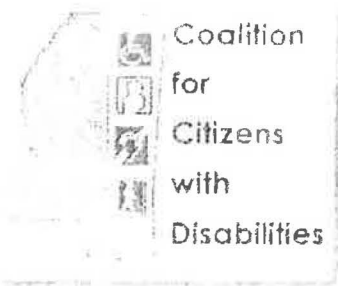
Michelle Cresap

Michelle Cresap, M.Ed, Ed. S, NCC, NCSC
School Counselor

Richland High School
1202 Highway 49 South
Richland, MS 39218
Phone: 601-939-4610
Fax: 601-939-7631

Rankin County School District

Mission: Bring Everyone's Strengths Together! We will all intentionally focus on empowering our students to reach their maximum potential by embracing opportunities and challenges while cultivating a tradition of distinction in education.



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Fax: (601) 709-0250 Website: www.msccd.org

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone
Office of Accreditation
359 N. West Street
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Malone,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the new graduation options being proposed by the Mississippi State Board of Education.

The Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities is a nonprofit statewide cross-disability organization comprised of people with disabilities, family members, professionals and advocates. The Coalition works collaboratively to enhance the quality of life for Mississippians with disabilities and to empower them to reach their potential in all aspects of their lives. Since 2006 our organization has been designated as the Parent Training and Information Center for the State of Mississippi by the US Department of Education. Our center provides training information and support to parents who have children with disabilities and youth with disabilities across the state.

My own son, a twenty-six year old young man with autism, attended public school in the state of Mississippi. I applaud the Department and the Board of Education for having the vision to set forth new rigorous standards that I believe will help many more students realize their potential. For far too long in Mississippi we have talked about what we can't do, and all the reasons why we can't. We have said things like *"but you don't understand what all we deal with in Mississippi"*, *"what more can you expect"*. The statements of defeat and low expectations have proliferated. It is refreshing to finally see a new dialogue, to see discussions about how we CAN do things and plans for how we will! We must see past not only our state's challenges but also the perceived limitations of students in Mississippi. My son's story, the story of a person with autism who had a breakthrough in his ability to communicate at the age of 20 years old, is a prime example of why we should and we MUST give all students the opportunity to learn and be exposed to grade level curriculum with the appropriate supports in place to ensure their success.

In reviewing the membership of the Graduation Requirements Diploma Options Steering Committee, I was disappointed to find that this committee did not include parents who have children with disabilities. Research has consistently shown that parents are the most critical stakeholders in the educational process yet they were not included on a committee formed to put forth new options strongly impacting the future of their children. This seems to be a growing pattern at the Department and is very disturbing.

According to a 2013 report by The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) "*about 85 to 95% of students with disabilities can meet the graduation standards targeted for all other students, as long as they receive specially designed instruction and appropriate access, supports and accommodations.*" Under the new graduation options proposed, all students except those with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) will be expected to pursue a regular high school diploma. The number of students allowed by the U.S. Department of Education to be exempt from standard assessments due to a ruling of SCD is 1%. Therefore, based on the NCEO report, if new graduation requirements are implemented as currently proposed, we are expecting approximately 10% - 14% of students with disabilities in Mississippi not to receive a diploma. Goal #2 identified by the Mississippi State Board of Education is "*Every Student Graduates High School and is Ready for College and Career*" yet we are setting up an entire group of students to fail.

I strongly urge the Department and the State Board of Education either retain the current Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD) or add an additional pathway under the new graduation options to insure success for this subgroup of students. The number of students allowed to pursue this additional option could be limited to approximately 10% - 14% (the number of students expected to fail under the currently proposed options).

As we move forward, in order to achieve the State Board of Education's mission - "*to create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens*" - stronger measures must be in place to make sure students with disabilities are truly receiving specially designed instruction and appropriate access, supports and accommodations. Without these critical elements students with disabilities will not be able to succeed.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to ensuring success for ALL students in Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Pam Dollar
Executive Director

From: Angela Jones
To: Accreditation
Subject: Graduation Options
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 4:57:01 PM

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thanks for the support you provide to our school district.

We would like to request for an additional District Option for the Graduation Options. We have several students who struggle to meet the 24 credit requirements and this would allow for those students to have an additional option to be able to graduate with a standard diploma. The District Option should allow districts to allow students to use the 21 credit option for graduation.

Thanks,
Angela Jones
Canton Public School District

From: Mamie Jones [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 2:21 PM
To: Jo Ann Malone <JMalone@mdek12.org>
Subject: graduation accreditation

Hello, My name is Mamie Jones and my grandson attend [REDACTED] in Greenville, Ms. I am his legal guardian. His mom died when he was two. I have been caring for him since her death. [REDACTED] has cerebral palsy. The doctors at ummc thought he would not live but God has bless him these years. [REDACTED] is a home bound student. As he get older his health is deteriorating. [REDACTED] has learns or has reach his limited of learning as far as what the guide line. he knows a lot of stuff but the goals they have are not possible for him... He is totally dependable on me and his nurses...He don't talk or walk or use his hands...he communicate with his eyes and facial expression..He is being seen by the Palative team at Ummc in Jax. [REDACTED] bday was yesterday he turned 16 and would be a junior if he was normal. I had him transition with his class when he was entering the 9th grade...Now they are telling me he has to stay in school till he is 21 to graduate with his class. [REDACTED] understand and we have been telling he will graduate in 2019..His health is not well and it unfair to him or us to let him miss this milestone...We understand that [REDACTED] will never get a job or live outside the house. He will never go to daycare because he have to be in a control environment...[REDACTED] has a limited amount of brain cell...has a trache...feeding tube...scoliosis...he is on a lot of med...We dont know from day to day if he will be with us...we have almost lost him a few time .It is our dream to see him graduate with cap and gown. I am 59 years old and his nurse is 72 please grant us this opportunity to see [REDACTED] march with the class of 2019 . If you need more information please contact me at [REDACTED].

.

Freddrick Murray, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools



Phone 601-960-8725
Facsimile 601-960-8713
Email fmurray@jackson.k12.ms.us
www.jackson.k12.ms.us

TO: Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Bureau Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education

FROM: Dr. Freddrick Murray
Interim Superintendent of Schools

DATE: August 31, 2017

RE: Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process Response to Proposed Revisions to
Standard 14: Graduation Requirements of the *Mississippi Public Schools*
Accountability Standards

One of Mississippi's most significant areas of growth over the last few years is evidenced in its 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). By increasing its graduation rate and decreasing its dropout rate in large part due to the multiple pathways by which students can receive a diploma, Mississippi, as well as the Jackson Public School District, has seen statistically significant growth trends related to student achievement and growth, graduation, and college and career readiness.

Upon review of the proposed revisions to Standard 14: Graduation Requirements of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, the Jackson Public School District wishes to comment on the following proposed revisions for the **Traditional Diploma Option**:

1. Early Release Requirement

Mississippi has selected the ACT to measure students' college and career readiness and student achievement in high school. Only 11% of Mississippi 11th graders tested in 2016 met benchmark scores in all four tested areas, as opposed to 26% nationwide. While the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has set specific benchmarks for students to meet college- and career-readiness expectations as a part of the state accountability model, individual colleges and universities determine placement requirements for credit-bearing courses in reading, English, and mathematics. To require early release students to meet the college and career readiness benchmarks may prevent students from

- enrolling in an early college program while still in high school to defray college expenses
- gaining real-world experiences
- earning income to assist their families with future college expenses and / or household expenses; and
- receiving ongoing mentoring and coaching from reputable adults in the community.

2. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Endorsement – Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement

While many CTE students achieve a graduation rate higher than state and national averages, requiring CTE students to earn an overall GPA of 2.5 is excessive, considering the additional Carnegie units, courses, and credentials students must earn for this endorsement. Requiring an overall 2.0 is more reasonable in sustaining students' achievement and growth for this CTE endorsement.

3. Academic and Distinguished Academic Endorsements – Non-Weighted Courses

According to the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), accelerated learning courses and programs include postsecondary level courses accepted for credit at institutions of higher education, including dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high schools; or postsecondary level instruction and examinations that are accepted for credit at institutions of higher education, including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. To weigh courses such as AP and IB courses and not weigh dual credit courses offered by accredited colleges and universities is unfair. School districts should retain the autonomy to weigh all courses considered as accelerated learning courses.

Thank you for allowing the Jackson Public School District an opportunity to provide a response regarding the proposed revisions to Standard 14: Graduation Requirements. These revisions will have a significant impact on Mississippi students reaching their long-term college and career goals.

From: earthsaen wallace [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 4:20 PM
To: Jo Ann Malone <JMalone@mdek12.org>
Subject: [REDACTED]

My name is Earthsean Wallace

I am writing this letter in behalf of [REDACTED] to graduate on time instead of waiting until he is twenty-one. I am the nurse that take care of [REDACTED] every day. [REDACTED] struggle every day with cerebral palsy. He is unable to use his limbs, unable to talk, only make facial expression when he want something or something is hurting. He has a feeding tube, tracheotomy. He often go through with periods of stoming where it's look it's last breath with stretching and stuffing of his limbs, heart rate reach to 160 or 170 beats a minute, respiration get to 40 to 60 per minute. He has to have respiratory treatments around the clock. One of the lungs stop working last year. He is on a lot of medication. Some days he is in a lot of pain and we has to medicate him some time around the clock. from one day to the next we don't know if this day will be his last day or not. [REDACTED] have a sense of human he understand what you are saying and respond by smiling or turning his head from for no or yes. We told him he was graduating with his class in 2019, you would see a big smile come on his face. It would mean the world to [REDACTED] and his grandmother to see him graduate on time with his class. this a milestone for both of them. His grandmother have been his caregiver for sixteen years. They have been in and out off the hospital, with not knowing whether they was would come home again or not. I am asking on behalf of [REDACTED] to let him graduate with his class it would mean the world to see graduate with his class. If he make it to graduation he deserve to graduate. I truly hope this can happen for him and his grandmother. Please help him to graduate to graduate on time. I am sending a picture of [REDACTED] on the day of his birthday, he knew it was his birthday and he was so happy, gave me a big smile when I said happy birthday and song the birthday song.

Thank you
Nurse Earthsean Wallace LPN



PASS CHRISTIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committed to Excellence

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Director
Office of Accreditation
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Re: Proposed Revisions to Graduation Requirements

Dr. Malone,

We are writing you today in regard to the proposed graduation requirements that are set to begin during the 2018-2019 school year. We have reviewed the proposed requirements and would like to share the following concerns and questions:

1. The proposal does not create a replacement for the Mississippi Occupational Diploma. The Alternate Diploma Option is specific to students with significant cognitive disabilities, and the closest endorsement option, the Career and Technical Endorsement, requires these students to pass all four state tests. The students currently working toward meeting requirements for the Mississippi Occupational Diploma may have a difficult time meeting this requirement. In addition, the requirements for students to gain acceptance into the Career and Technical programs is often so high that it is not a viable option for this group of students. For example, students must have an overall GPA of 2.5 to qualify for the endorsement. We are concerned that students will choose not to come back after compulsory school age because there will be a gap in options for these students. We recommend a 2.0 as the entry GPA for the CTE endorsement, or possibly an alternate entry requirement for students with disabilities.
2. It appears there are two options for our students with significant cognitive disabilities: Alternate Diploma Option and Certificate of Completion. It is going to be very difficult for smaller schools to run two separate programs within one class. For example, we have one special education classroom at our high school. Additionally, what is the outcome for the student with significant cognitive disabilities that earns an Alternate Diploma? Are they better off than students who earn a Certificate of Completion? We recommend that language connecting this population of students to Vocational Rehabilitation be included in the same manner that other options connect to College and Career. Furthermore, we are concerned that the title of the Alternate Diploma Option is misleading to students and parents, as the document is not a traditional high school diploma.

Furthermore, at a recent curriculum director's meeting, the State Director of Special Education, Gretchen Cagle, indicated that students with significant cognitive disabilities who do not return to their high schools until age 20 will not be eligible to earn a Certificate of Completion and will count against the high school dropout rate. We believe that it is unreasonable to allow the parent's choice of whether or not their child returns to school to have such an impact on the dropout rate. We recommend that the provision to *require* that a student attends to age 20 be reconsidered.

3. During the senior year, all students are required to take an ambiguous College and Career Readiness class. We are concerned with our ability to offer this course to all seniors simultaneously; scheduling issues may be an unintended consequence with detrimental impact to students' ability to graduate. Further, it is important that schools and districts know, in a timely manner, license endorsement requirement needed for this course to ensure that we meet staffing needs. We are also concerned that the proposed course adds one more required class, which could make it difficult for students. For example, students with disabilities could lose the opportunity to take tutorial-type classes for remediation of reading and math.


The senior year may be too late to have a College and Career Readiness class. We recommend that students should be allowed to take this course at any time between their 8th grade and 12th grade year.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to share feedback about this important decision. We are aware that the Mississippi Department of Education has put a lot of thought and hard work into developing these options in order to ensure the best outcomes for all students. We hope that our input will be used to guide this decision.

Sincerely,


Rob French
Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction


Meredith Bang
Chief Academic Officer


Carla J. Evers, Ph. D.
Superintendent

From: Gayle Fortenberry
To: Accreditation
Subject: APA Comments on Graduation standards
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2017 4:49:38 PM

Dear Dr. Malone:

As a parent and former CTE teacher, the following components of the new graduation requirements raise questions for me, and some need clarification or require editing:

Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016, Graduation Requirements Appendix A Revisions

1. Are the phrases/words “may only” “may be” “must be” “required” “may only be” all synonymous? The language throughout Appendix A-3 (and others) is inconsistent, which creates a bit of confusion. **Can you clean up these phrases and if a course is required, use the word “required?”**

2. In *Appendix A-4, Mississippi Early Exit Diploma*, these requirements as outlined in this document do not meet the required College Preparatory Curriculum mandated by Mississippi’s IHL. A student graduating with 17.5 credits on this plan would not even be able to gain admittance to college in Mississippi, because it does not require a Foreign Language or Introduction to World Geography. Looking at A-4, without knowing about IHL’s CPC, a student could gain early exit from high school without being College ready. **How can this be justified?**

Appendix A-5, the chart of Assessment Options on page 28.

1. The chart indicates that a Social Studies score is required on the ACT. There is no Social Studies section on the ACT. How can you require a 17 when there is no possible way to get that score in that section?

2. In college courses in Mississippi, there is no course titled American History. A student in a Mississippi school cannot dual enroll or earn dual credit by taking College American History because it doesn’t exist. **Please clarify specifically what course will count as dual credit.**

3. In college courses in Mississippi, there is no course called College Biology. Also, is a laboratory required with this course? Will any freshman level biology course count? Please clarify.

Appendix A-6 Traditional Diploma

1. How is it that if these new standards are intended to increase rigor when the number of required courses in Science and Social Studies has been reduced?

2. If a student graduates with a Traditional Diploma by these standards, the student will not be College ready. No foreign language is required, and no Geography course is required. A

student could not get into a Mississippi college with a traditional diploma. **How do you justify this?**

3. In my opinion, the early release option should not be an expectation highlighted on the proposed graduation requirements. It should be listed as a separate guideline in the steps to high school graduation.

4. **Where does one find the College or Career Readiness Benchmarks referenced in footnote 12? And should it not be College AND Career Readiness, not College OR Career Readiness? Who has the power to assess a student for this benchmark attainment at the local level? At what grade level is this assessment made?**

Appendix A-7 CTE Endorsement

1. **Why is there a restriction on the type of Arts courses for this endorsement?**

2. If the State is going to require a CTE endorsement student to take the WorkKeys, **what is the cost? Where is the WorkKeys test administered? Will the State pay for the student to take the WorkKeys? How many times can it be taken until the appropriate level is attained? When are they required to take it? What if the student takes the ACT? Will an appropriate ACT score stand in lieu of WorkKeys?**

3. On additional requirements for the CTE endorsement, **should students have the option of completing one CTE dual credit OR dual enrollment course, rather than just a dual credit course? Who is responsible for paying the fees and books for this required course? The student? The district? The state?** Also, the ACT should be required, otherwise a CTE student could not enroll in Dual Credit courses.

4. This endorsement should be identified as Career and Technical Education, not Career and Technical.

Appendix A-8 Academic Endorsement

1. **Why is there a restriction on the type of Arts courses for this endorsement?**

2. If a student graduates with a Traditional Diploma with an Academic Endorsement by these standards, the student will not be College and Career ready. No foreign language is required, and no Geography course is required. A student could not get into a Mississippi college with this endorsement. Your electives list should include required courses for college admission, rather than leaving the electives section so generic.

3. For the additional requirements for this endorsement:

Who will be responsible for paying the fees and books for the AP, IB and/or required Dual credit/dual enrollment course?

Will a dual enrollment course count as a requirement? You only have dual credit specified.

Appendix A-9 Distinguished Endorsement

1. Why is there no restriction on the type of Arts courses for this endorsement?
2. In regards to the electives, what is the difference between IHL Advanced Electives and CPC? Are they not one in the same? You should specify what courses you consider Advanced Electives.
3. Why is the SAT acceptable only with this endorsement?
4. For the additional requirements for this endorsement,

Who will be responsible for paying the fees and books for the AP, IB and/or required Dual credit/dual enrollment course?

Will a dual enrollment course count as a requirement? You only have dual credit specified.

General Comments

My opinion regarding the proposed changes is that these graduation options are very confusing. There are too many options and very little variation between the endorsements. The endorsements are obviously designed to track students, and I do not feel that this is beneficial to all students. What is the relevance and purpose of the endorsement system? Who does it affect? How does it help or hurt a student who graduates from a Mississippi High school and makes a decision about their future? If a student in a traditional diploma track with no endorsements decides one to two years out of high school that they want to go to college, will he/she be able to gain admittance? What if a student on a CTE endorsement track earns a skilled trade, then gets a job in a company that expects all employees to earn a bachelor's degree. Will that student be able to gain admittance to a Mississippi University? Our goal should be to prepare ALL students for College and Career Readiness. Period. End of story. When they "walk" or graduate, they should have been given every effort and been afforded every opportunity that the student in line ahead of them and the student in line behind them was given to be successful. We don't need labels. We need high school graduates who have the basic tools to make a decision for their own personal future.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and questions.

Gayle Fortenberry