
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: SB 2578
DATE: 4/4/2001
CC: FILE

SB 2578

SB 2578 amends Section 37-16-11 to require the State Board of Education to develop and issue criteria for an occupational diploma for students with disabilities as defined by federal IDEA. Beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, such students may request and be given the opportunity to meet the developed criteria in order to receive an occupational diploma.

Bill Bunch has received 4 or 5 phone calls from Vo-Tech instructors expressing concern that SB 2578 will result in a lot of special education students being placed in Vo-Tech. MDE supports this bill. Steve Williams said that the bill only affects the type of diploma that special education students will be entitled to receive. This bill will enable them to receive an occupational diploma rather than a certificate of completion. Williams said that the State Board will develop the policies for this diploma and that in doing so the Board will not dilute any other programs (Vo Tech), but will seek to strengthen Special Ed programs. He said that participating students will have to meet IDEA criteria. Placement of students in classes and programs will be governed by students' Individual Educational Plans (IEP), which are developed by an IEP Committee. Williams said that SB 2578 will not flood the Vo Tech programs with Special Ed students.

There was strong support for this bill in both Education committees. Members see this as an avenue for strengthening Special Ed students' employability skills. After going to conference, the Senate concurred with the House amendment because it clarified that this option should be available to qualifying students beginning with the 2002-2003 school year.

SB 2578 is effective July 1, 2001.