

## **Chapter 7: Alternate Education Programs**

### *Rule 7.2 GED Standards*

#### Introduction.

Section 37-13-92 of The Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated authorized school districts in Mississippi to provide a program of General Education Development (GED) preparatory instruction as a part of the Alternative Education Program. Section 37-35-3 mandates that students who are enrolled in an approved GED program shall not be classified as dropouts and that the school district will continue to receive State funding for the students while they are enrolled in the GED Program. Students placed in the GED Program shall not be eligible to participate in regular academic courses or other programmatic activities within the school district, including athletics, choir, band, or any other extracurricular activities, except that a GED student may participate in existing job and skill development programs or in programs developed in conjunction with the GED Program and the Vocational Education Director. Local school districts are also authorized to contract with a Community College for the purpose of preparing students for the GED testing process. If a school district contracts with a Community College to provide a GED Program, the students placed in the program will be reported on the monthly attendance report of the public school district of origin and counted in the average daily attendance.

#### Minimum Guidelines for Implementing a GED Program in Mississippi School Districts

1. The GED Program is defined through written policies approved by the local school board. Approved policies and procedures for the GED Program are published and available to the public for review. All policies and procedures for the operation of the GED Program must meet minimum requirements specified in Section 37-13-92. Further, the program must meet the requirements and applicable policies of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges as stated in Section 37-35-1.
2. Selection procedures shall ensure that students who enroll in the GED Option will not graduate with their class because of credit deficiency and are otherwise capable of completing graduation requirements. Recommendation for student participation in the GED Program will be made by a committee of school staff consisting of campus administrators, counselors, classroom teachers, and support staff. Written documentation of the committee recommendation shall be maintained for each student. The criteria for student participation in the GED Option Program as outlined in Section 37-35-3 will consist of the following:
  - a. The student must be at least 16 years of age;
  - b. The student must be at least one (1) full grade level behind his or her ninth grade cohort or must have acquired less than four (4) Carnegie units;
  - c. The student must have taken every opportunity to continue to participate in course work leading to a regular diploma; and
  - d. The student must be certified to be eligible to participate in the GED course by the school district superintendent, based on the developed criteria.

Additionally, according to the American Council on Education (ACE), students that have been referred to the Alternative Education Program for disciplinary reasons shall not be eligible for placement in the GED Option Program until behavioral modification goals for exiting the Alternative Education Program have been attained.

3. The recommendation for placement in the GED Program must be approved by the superintendent of the school district. Students shall not be placed in a GED Program prior to obtaining written parental or guardian consent for placement. Documentation of parental consent for placement in the program will be maintained for each student. {MS Code {37-13-92 and 37-35-3}(1972) (ACE Guidelines)
4. American Council on Education recommends that students demonstrate the ability to perform on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at an eighth grade level.
5. Counseling is required prior to enrollment in GED Option and must be available on a regular basis throughout participation in the program. Student motivation and individual needs are critical factors to consider when determining the quantity of counseling services Students should have access to certified counselors. {MS Code 37-13-92} (1972) (ACE Guidelines)
6. The GED component will remain under the supervision of the Alternative Education Administrator. {MS Code 37-13-92}(1972)
7. GED Option should offer a full range of instruction that aligns with the core content measured by GED Tests. Content will align with high school mathematics, writing, social studies, reading and science. {ACE Guidelines}
8. To ensure effective instructional delivery, sufficient instructional resources and qualified instructional staff must be assigned to instruct and supervise GED classes. According to ACE guidelines students should participate in the GED academic instructional program for a minimum of 15 hours each week. Individualized instruction should be outlined in the student's Individual Education and Career Plan (IECP) and based solely on the individual needs of the student.

Content should include instructor-prepared material, standardized GED- instructional material from publishers, instructional materials from secondary publishers and developers. Workforce development instruction and activities should focus knowledge, skills, and abilities required for securing and maintaining employment. GED Option instructional time and workforce development shall be determined by the district based on the individualized needs of students. GED TESTING IS SET WHEN A STUDENT HAS STUDIED SUFFICIENTLY TO PASS.

9. The student/teacher ratio in the GED Program shall not exceed 15:1 with an exception of 20:1 when an aide is employed full time to assist the teacher. {ACE Guidelines}
10. The curriculum and instructional methodology must address the individual needs of each student as specified in an Individual Education and Career Plan (IECP) developed at the time of placement. The IECP committee (the committee should include an academic

counselor, academic teacher, principal, and vocational personnel) will emphasize academic/instructional needs of the student, job readiness skills, and work experience options. {MS Code 37-35-3}

11. Under normal circumstances, students cannot circumvent the State's Compulsory School Attendance Law or receive a GED certificate/diploma prior to their age equivalent peers. However, students in GED Option may be eligible to receive a GED equivalency diploma prior to their age equivalent peers and/or prior to reaching mandatory compulsory school age, as outlined in Mississippi Code Section 37-13-91, provided the district in which the student resides is in compliance with the minimum guidelines for implementing a GED Program in Mississippi School Districts. Any abuse of this policy (i.e. habitually exiting students early) will result in a review of the district's GED Option program for future authorization. {ACE Guidelines}
12. School districts must comply with GED Option testing guidelines provided by the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.
13. Evaluation of the student's progress shall be conducted at regular intervals according to GED policy and the appropriate records shall be maintained and subject to the Mississippi Department of Education review. {MS Code §37-13-92} (1972)
14. The facility housing the GED Program shall be commensurate with facilities provided to other students by the local school district and shall meet minimum accreditation standards for public school buildings as required in the current edition of the Public School Accountability Standards. The GED Program shall not be housed in a vocational facility unless a request for waiver has been granted by the State Board of Education. {MS Code §37-13-92 and §37-35-3}(1972)
15. Two or more local school districts may form a consortium to provide a GED Program for eligible students. {MS Code §39-13-92}(1972)
  - a. The consortium formed to provide a GED Program shall be bound by a Mississippi Board of Education approved contract;
  - b. The district designated as the lead district will be responsible for the operation and governance of the program; and
  - c. Transportation services shall be the responsibility of each student's school district of origin.
16. The cumulative folder and permanent record of each eligible student placed in an approved GED Program shall remain at and be maintained by the school district of origin. {MS Code §37-13-92}(1972)
17. Evaluation of the student's progress shall be conducted at regular intervals according to GED policy and the appropriate records shall be maintained and subject to the Mississippi Department of Education's review. {MS Code §37-13-92}(1972) (ACE Guidelines)

18. Appropriate assessment and evaluation of each student's educational progress shall be conducted at regular intervals according to established policy approved by the local school board. Assessment and evaluation records will be appropriately maintained to ensure individual student confidentiality. {MS Code §37-13-92}(1972)
19. Data will be collected by the Office of Compulsory School Attendance annually and reported to the State Board of Education. {37-13-92} (ACE Guidelines)
  - a. The total number of students enrolled in the GED Program;
  - b. The age range of students enrolled in the GED Program;
  - c. The reading level of students entering and exiting the GED Program;
  - d. The total number of students successfully completing the GED Program each school year; and
  - e. All school districts will complete an annual report provided by GED Testing Services beginning with the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Reports should be completed and submitted after the end of each school year but no later than July 31.
20. Students participating in an approved GED Option program, who are enrolled in subject area courses through January 31 in a school with a traditional class schedule or who are enrolled in subject area courses through October 31 or through March 31 in a school on a block schedule, shall be required to take the end-of-course subject area tests for those courses in which they are enrolled {MS Code §37-35-3 (1972)}
21. GED Option graduates should receive official school recognition of their achievement. The student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation exercises (Accountability Standard 20.4). A separate graduation ceremony should be held near the same time as the high school graduation ceremony for their peers. The following students are eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies:
  - a. Student receiving a standard high school diploma. (SB Policies 2902 and 2903)
  - b. Student receiving a special diploma or certificate of completion, which states: "This student has successfully completed an Individualized Education Program." {MS Code §37-16-11(1)}
  - c. Student with disabilities receiving a Mississippi Occupational Diploma. {MS Code §37-16-11(2)}(1972) (See Appendix G)
22. Local school districts that fail to comply with the above requirements will risk future approval for providing a GED® Option Program in their district.

Source: *Miss Code Ann. 37-13-92*