



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
516 West Lookerman St., Dover, DE 19904
302-739-4553 (voice) 302-739-6126 (fax) <http://www.gacec.delaware.gov>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 19, 2018

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Dafne A. Carnright, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: **House Bill No. 287 (High School Diploma of Modified Standards)**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed House Bill No. 287 which will amend Title 14 to rename the "Certificate of Performance". The Certificate of Performance will be renamed the "State of Delaware High School Diploma of Modified Performance Standards." Council **endorses** this legislation. This change will allow schools to issue a document recognizing the completion of a course of study consistent with the goals and performance outcomes identified on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) of the student. The new title validates the work completed by the student and reduces stigma attached to special education.

As a practical and financial matter, this change will improve the ability of students with disabilities to attain post-secondary education, training or employment. According to the Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for persons without a high school diploma was 8.6% in April of 2015 compared to 5.4% for persons with a diploma. A research study published in the Journal of Disability Policy in June of 2008, (Employer Perspectives on High School Diploma Options for Adolescents With Disabilities, Ryan Hartwig and Patricia L. Sitlington, University of Northern Iowa. Volume 19 Number 1, June 2008), states the following: "Employers are much less likely to hire those who earned a certificate of completion, attendance, or achievement. Employers also indicated, "...they would assign individuals with these certificates more menial jobs."

This legislation will allow the ability of the individual to be considered by allowing them the opportunity to state that they have attained a diploma. The name will not mislead any prospective employer regarding the performance track or standards attained by the student since it states that it is a diploma of 'modified standards'. This should increase dialogue on the needs of the position and the abilities of the applicant. Council feels that there is no downside to renaming the Certificate.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our endorsement of the proposed legislation. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss at the GACEC office should you have any questions.

CC: The Honorable Susan L. Bunting, Secretary of Education
Mike Matthews, Delaware State Education Association