To: Education

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2019
By: Senator(s) Blackwell

SENATE BILL NO. 2033

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OR GED APPLICANTS TO PASS AT LEAST 60% OF THE CIVICS PORTION OF THE NATURALIZATION TEST USED BY THE IMMIGRATION SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-16-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

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

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

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

(c) (i) Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, the academic standards for social studies shall include a requirement that, in order to graduate from high school or obtain a General
Equivalency Diploma (GED), a student must correctly answer at least sixty (60) of the one hundred (100) questions listed on a test that is identical to the civics portion of the Naturalization Test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(ii) The local school board may determine the method and manner in which to administer a test that is identical to the civics portion of the Naturalization Test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(iii) A student who does not obtain a passing score on the test that is identical to the civics portion of the Naturalization Test may retake the test until the student obtains a passing score.

(iv) A student who has passed a similar test within the previous three (3) years shall not be required to take the test under this section.

(v) Provisions of this section shall be subject to the requirements and accommodations of a student's Individualized Education Program.

(* * *d) By school, information on high school graduation rates. High schools with graduation rates lower than eighty percent (80%) must submit a detailed plan to the Mississippi Department of Education to restructure the high school experience to improve graduation rates.
(2) A student who meets all requirements prescribed in subsection (1) of this section shall be awarded a standard diploma in a form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

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

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2019.