

By: Senator(s) Jordan

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2683

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-13-181 THROUGH 37-13-185,  
2 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO MANDATE A COMPREHENSIVE K-12 PROGRAM  
3 FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION EFFECTIVE WITH THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR  
4 AND TO PRESCRIBE CHARACTER TRAITS TO BE THE FOCUS OF STUDENT  
5 DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF  
6 EDUCATION TO REVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICTS' PROPOSED CHARACTER EDUCATION  
7 PROGRAMS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-13-181, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
10 amended as follows:

11 37-13-181. The local school boards of the public school  
12 districts \* \* \* are authorized and directed to develop and  
13 implement, at the beginning of the \* \* \* 2024-2025 school year, a  
14 comprehensive program for character education in Grades K-12.  
15 This program of character education shall focus on students'  
16 development of the following character traits: courage,  
17 patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for and  
18 obedience to the law, respect for others, kindness, cooperation,  
19 self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance,  
20 diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness,



21 school pride, respect for the environment, patience, creativity,  
22 sportsmanship, loyalty and perseverance. Said program of  
23 character education shall include the Pledge of Allegiance to the  
24 flag as required in Section 37-13-7, Mississippi Code of 1972.

25 The definition of the character traits chosen by the school  
26 district for implementation shall reflect and be in keeping with  
27 both the spirit and the letter of the following founding  
28 documents: the Mississippi Constitution of 1890; the Constitution  
29 of the United States of America; the Declaration of Independence;  
30 and state and federal law. A public school may not define or  
31 teach character or character traits in any manner that might  
32 promote or encourage students to participate in conduct that would  
33 violate any state or federal law.

34 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-13-183, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
35 amended as follows:

36 37-13-183. \* \* \* Effective with the 2024-2025 school year,  
37 assessment of the students' understanding of the character traits  
38 chosen to be taught in public school shall be limited to and must  
39 reflect the material taught in the classroom. Students shall not  
40 be evaluated in any way as to whether or not the students evidence  
41 a specific character trait in their own lives.

42 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-13-185, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
43 amended as follows:

44 37-13-185. \* \* \* Effective with the 2024-2025 school year  
45 the State Board of Education shall review the proposed character



46 education programs of the individual school districts to ascertain  
47 if the programs comply with the criteria set forth in Section  
48 37-13-181, and develop an annual report thereon to the  
49 Legislature. Review of the programs shall not exceed a time  
50 period of sixty (60) days. If a review extends beyond this time  
51 period, the proposal will be deemed in compliance with the law.

52 If the proposed character education program is rejected, the  
53 State Board of Education shall set forth in writing the specific  
54 areas of objection. These objections must be based on and limited  
55 to the following criteria: the definition of the character traits  
56 chosen by the school district for implementation shall reflect and  
57 be in keeping with both the spirit and letter of our founding  
58 documents; no instruction shall promote or encourage participation  
59 in any conduct that would violate existing state or federal law;  
60 and no student shall be assessed or evaluated as to whether or not  
61 the student evidences a specific character trait in his or her own  
62 life.

63 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
64 and after July 1, 2024.

