

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 52nd Legislature (2010)

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
4 FOR

5 SENATE BILL 1338

6 By: Ivester

7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

8 [ schools - elective courses - Hebrew Scriptures and  
9 New Testament - codification - effective date ]

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11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

12 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
13 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-103.11 of Title 70, unless  
14 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

15 A. Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, independent school  
16 districts may offer to students in grade nine or above:

17 1. An elective course on the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament)  
18 and its impact and an elective course on the New Testament and its  
19 impact; or

20 2. An elective course that combines the courses described in  
21 paragraph 1 of this subsection.

22 B. The purposes of courses authorized by this section are to:

23 1. Teach students knowledge of biblical content, characters,  
24 poetry, and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding

1 contemporary society and culture, including literature, art, music,  
2 mores, oratory, and public policy; and

3 2. Familiarize students with, as applicable:

- 4 a. the contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or New  
5 Testament,
- 6 b. the history of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament,
- 7 c. the literary style and structure of the Hebrew  
8 Scriptures or New Testament, and
- 9 d. the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures or New  
10 Testament on law, history, government, literature,  
11 art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture.

12 C. A student shall not be required to use a specific  
13 translation as the sole text of the Hebrew Scriptures or New  
14 Testament and may use as the basic textbook a different translation  
15 of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament from that chosen by the  
16 district board of education or the student's teacher.

17 D. A course offered pursuant to this section shall follow  
18 applicable law and all federal and state guidelines in maintaining  
19 religious neutrality and accommodating the diverse religious views,  
20 traditions, and perspectives of students in the school district. A  
21 course offered pursuant to this section shall not endorse, favor, or  
22 promote, or disfavor or show hostility toward, any particular  
23 religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective. Nothing in  
24 this section is intended to violate any provision of the United

1 States Constitution or federal law, the Oklahoma Constitution or any  
2 state law, or any rules or guidelines provided by the United States  
3 Department of Education or the State Department of Education.

4 E. By November 1, 2010, the State Board of Education shall  
5 adopt rules identifying the curricular standards for the courses  
6 authorized pursuant to this section. Prior to such adoption, the  
7 Board shall submit the proposed curricular standards to the Attorney  
8 General. The Attorney General shall review the proposed curricular  
9 standards to ensure that the standards comply with the First  
10 Amendment to the United States Constitution and Section 5 of Article  
11 II of the Oklahoma Constitution. The Board may not adopt rules  
12 identifying the curricular standards for courses authorized pursuant  
13 to this section without the Attorney General's approval as required  
14 by this subsection.

15 F. By December 1, 2010, the State Board of Education, in  
16 consultation with appropriate faculty members at institutions of  
17 higher education, shall approve training materials and other teacher  
18 training resources for school districts to use in assisting teachers  
19 of courses authorized by this section in developing:

20 1. Expertise in the appropriate Hebrew Scriptures and New  
21 Testament course curriculum;

22 2. Understanding of applicable Supreme Court rulings and  
23 current constitutional law regarding how courses for the teaching of  
24 the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament are to be taught in

1 public schools objectively as a part of a secular program of  
2 education;

3 3. Understanding of how to present the Hebrew Scriptures and  
4 New Testament courses in an objective, academic manner that neither  
5 promotes nor disparages religion, nor is taught from a particular  
6 sectarian point of view;

7 4. Proficiency in instructional approaches that present course  
8 material in a manner that respects all faiths and religious  
9 traditions, while favoring none; and

10 5. Expertise in how to avoid devotional content or  
11 proselytizing in the classroom.

12 G. By January 1, 2011, the State Superintendent of Public  
13 Instruction shall compile and distribute to each independent school  
14 district a list of training materials and teacher training resources  
15 approved pursuant to subsection F of this section.

16 H. Independent school districts that offer a course authorized  
17 pursuant to this section shall ensure that each teacher selected to  
18 teach a course authorized pursuant to this section are provided  
19 training materials as approved by the State Board of Education  
20 pursuant to subsection F of this section. A course provided  
21 pursuant to this section shall only be taught by a teacher who has  
22 received approved training materials as provided by subsection F of  
23 this section.

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1 I. This section shall not be construed to prohibit a district  
2 board of education from offering a course, other than the courses  
3 authorized by this section, in the academic study of the Hebrew  
4 Scriptures, the New Testament, or both for elective credit toward  
5 high school graduation.

6 J. The State Board of Education shall require no additional  
7 funds for its approval authority as required by this section.

8 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2010.

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