

ENROLLED HOUSE  
BILL NO. 2321

By: Russ, Johnson, Thompson,  
Billy, Reynolds, Walker,  
Faught and Tibbs of the  
House

and

Ivester of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; allowing school districts to offer elective courses in Hebrew Scripture and New Testament; stating purposes; providing for primary texts; providing exception; specifying guidelines; requiring certain teacher certification; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

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

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

A. A school district may offer to students in grade nine or above:

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

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

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

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

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

2. Familiarize students with, as applicable:

- a. the contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament,
- b. the history of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament,
- c. the literary style and structure of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament, and
- d. the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament on law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture.

C. The Bible shall be the primary text of the course and may be supplemented with additional resources. The primary text for the course will be a parallel translation Bible or multi-translation Bible that uses more than one translation for side-by-side comparison chosen by the school district. However, a student may not be required to use a specific translation as the sole text of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament and may use as the basic textbook a different translation of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament from that chosen by the district board of education or the student's teacher.

D. A course offered pursuant to this section shall follow applicable law and all federal and state guidelines in maintaining religious neutrality and accommodating the diverse religious views, traditions, and perspectives of students in the school district. A course offered pursuant to this section shall not endorse, favor, or promote, or disfavor or show hostility toward, any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective. Nothing in this section is intended to violate any provision of the United States Constitution or federal law, the Oklahoma Constitution or any state law, or any rules or guidelines provided by the United States Department of Education or the State Department of Education.

E. A teacher of a course offered pursuant to this section must be certified to teach social studies or literature.

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

Passed the House of Representatives the 5th day of May, 2010.

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Presiding Officer of the House of  
Representatives

Passed the Senate the 20th day of April, 2010.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate