

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Thursday, February 11, 2010

House Bill No. 2321

HOUSE BILL NO. 2321 - By: RUSS AND JOHNSON of the House.

An Act relating to schools; directing the State Board of Education to adopt curriculum standards for certain academic study of the Bible courses; specifying standards meet certain requirements; providing for implementation of the course by public school districts; requiring personnel to meet certification requirements; prohibiting assignment of personnel based on certain beliefs or affiliation; establishing conditions for teaching the course; directing the State Textbook Committee to incorporate certain conditions when evaluating textbooks; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

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

1           SECTION 1.   NEW LAW   A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma  
2 Statutes as Section 11-103.11 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in  
3 numbering, reads as follows:  
4           A. The State Board of Education shall adopt curricular standards for an elective  
5 course or courses that may be offered to students in the public schools of this state  
6 consisting of a nonsectarian, nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence  
7 on literature, art, music, culture and politics. The curriculum standards shall meet the  
8 academic rigor and standards of other elective courses approved by the Board and shall  
9 meet the requirements of the Constitutions of the United States and the State of  
10 Oklahoma.

1 B. A public school district that elects to offer an academic study of the Bible course  
2 shall implement the course in accordance with the Constitutions of the United States and  
3 the State of Oklahoma, including the manner in which the course is taught in the  
4 classroom and the assignment of school district personnel teaching the course. Personnel  
5 assigned to teach the course shall meet all certification requirements. In addition, no  
6 person shall be assigned to teach the course based in whole or in part on any religious  
7 test, profession of faith or lack of faith, prior or present religious affiliation or lack of  
8 affiliation, or criteria involving particular beliefs or lack of beliefs about the Bible.

9 C. An academic study of the Bible course offered by a public school district shall:

10 1. Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no attempt made to  
11 indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of the biblical materials or texts  
12 from other religious or cultural traditions;

13 2. Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible  
14 or of texts from other religious or cultural traditions; and

15 3. Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs.

16 D. When adopting textbooks for academic study of the Bible courses, the State  
17 Textbook Committee shall incorporate the conditions set forth in this section into the  
18 criteria used to evaluate textbooks for the courses.

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

20 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON COMMON EDUCATION, dated 02-10-10  
21 - DO PASS, As Coauthored.