

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

SENATE BILL 1416

By: Alvord

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.229-6, which relates to character education; naming language the Teaching Honesty, Respect, Integrity, Virtue, and Excellence (THRIVE) Act; providing short title; directing the State Department of Education to develop certain program of positive character traits and personal skills education as part of certain subject matter standards; providing for contents of program; directing the Department to make certain information available online prior to certain school year; directing the Department not to include certain programs, curricula, or materials in certain approved list; removing language regarding distribution of certain grants; directing the board of education of each public school district and the governing body of each public charter school to adopt certain program and issue certain public notice; providing process to opt child out of program; requiring the Department to electronically submit and publish on its website certain report within certain time period; providing for contents of report; allowing acceptance of certain funds; requiring the board of education of each public school district and the governing body of each public charter school to adopt certain policy regarding availability of school premises; requiring prior written notification regarding availability of certain program; directing the State Board of Education to approve and publish online certain list of programs; providing certain construction; providing for promulgation of rules; updating statutory language; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.229-6,
is amended to read as follows:

Section 1210.229-6. A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Teaching Honesty, Respect, Integrity, Virtue, and Excellence (THRIVE) Act".

B. ~~The board of education of every school district in this state may~~ State Department of Education shall develop and implement a comprehensive program for of positive character education in any single grade or combination of traits and personal skills education as part of the subject matter standards adopted by the State Board of Education for grades, prekindergarten through twelfth twelve pursuant to Sections 11-103.6 and 11-103.7 of this title. The positive character traits and personal skills education program shall focus on development of character traits in students. The program of character education may program shall include, but shall not be limited to, the voluntary reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and consist exclusively of instruction in the value of finishing high school, working full-time, getting married before having children, and instruction in the following character traits and fundamental values deeply rooted in the history and tradition of the United States:

1 1. Trustworthiness including honesty, reliability, punctuality,
2 and loyalty;

3 2. Responsibility including hard work, accountability,
4 diligence, good judgment, perseverance, and self-control;

5 3. Care for family including parents, siblings, and a future
6 spouse and children;

7 4. Kindness and generosity toward others;

8 5. Respect and care for human life;

9 6. Respect for parental authority;

10 7. Respect for parents' obligations to their children;

11 8. Respect for the property of other people;

12 9. Respect for legitimate authority and law;

13 10. Respect for patriotism, service to the community, and
14 concern for the common good;

15 11. Respect for religious faith, morality, wisdom, and
16 knowledge;

17 12. Respect for lifelong marriage, sexual fidelity within
18 marriage, and sexual abstinence outside of marriage;

19 13. Gratitude;

20 14. Charity; and

21 15. Courage.

22 ~~B.—The~~ C. Prior to the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year,
23 the State Department of Education shall develop and make available
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1 to all public school districts and public charter schools through an
2 Internet website, the following:

3 1. Technical assistance upon request of a public school
4 district or public charter school;

5 2. A list of approved ~~research-based~~ positive character traits
6 and personal skills education programs, curricula, and materials
7 that meet the requirements of this section which may be used by
8 public school districts and public charter schools;

9 3. A positive character traits and personal skills education
10 honor roll that will recognize public school districts and public
11 charter schools that have successfully implemented a ~~comprehensive~~
12 ~~school-district-wide~~ program of positive character traits and
13 personal skills education and will highlight the positive impacts
14 the program has had on each public school ~~or~~, public school
15 district, or public charter school; and

16 4. A positive character traits and personal skills education
17 reading list of books that ~~may include, but is not limited to, books~~
18 ~~that~~ illustrate models of ~~good character~~ one or more of the
19 character traits and personal skills set forth in subsection B of
20 this section and books that relate to the development of ~~good~~ such
21 positive character traits and personal skills that may be used by
22 public schools in a character education program.

23 The State Department of Education shall not include any programs,
24 curricula, or materials in the list approved pursuant to this

1 subsection that contradict or undermine respect for the character
2 traits and personal skills required to be taught pursuant to this
3 section. The Department's approval of programs, curricula, or
4 materials pursuant to this subsection shall be ministerial only and
5 not discretionary. Public school districts and public charter
6 schools may only satisfy the requirements of this section by
7 adopting programs, curricula, or materials from the list approved
8 pursuant to this subsection.

9 ~~C. Subject to the availability of funding, the State Board of~~
10 ~~Education may award grants to ten school districts for the~~
11 ~~establishment of pilot projects which align character education with~~
12 ~~the state curriculum in reading, mathematics, science or social~~
13 ~~studies and demonstrate how character education teaches life skills~~
14 ~~that lead to career readiness. The amount of each grant shall be~~
15 ~~One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00). The projects shall be innovative~~
16 ~~programs that will serve as models for other school districts.~~
17 ~~Funding may cover the cost of purchasing curriculum, materials, or~~
18 ~~training teachers. The Board shall determine pilot project criteria~~
19 ~~and establish a process for the consideration of proposals. The~~
20 ~~proposals for pilot projects shall be considered on a statewide~~
21 ~~competitive basis. The Board shall promulgate rules for the~~
22 ~~operation of the projects~~

23 D. The board of education of each public school district and
24 the governing body of each public charter school shall adopt the

positive character traits and personal skills education program prescribed by this section and adopt a process to issue a public notice of implementation of the positive character traits and personal skills education program required by this section, to make curricula and materials available for public inspection, and to provide parents and legal guardians a means to opt their child out of participation in the positive character traits and personal skills education program. The parent or legal guardian of a student who does not want his or her child to participate in the program may provide written notification to the public school district or public charter school that the child is opting out of the program. No student whose parent or legal guardian elects to opt the student out of the program shall be required to participate in the program.

E. No later than sixty (60) days following the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, and no later than sixty (60) days following the beginning of each school year thereafter, the State Department of Education shall publish on its website and electronically submit a report to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairs of the committees with responsibility over common education in both houses of the Legislature. The report shall include:

1. The total number and names of public school districts and public charter schools that have implemented the positive character

1 traits and personal skills education program required by this
2 section;

3 2. The total number and names of public school districts and
4 public charter schools that have not implemented the positive
5 character traits and personal skills education program required by
6 this section and the reasons given for not complying with the
7 provisions of this section; and

8 3. Actions taken by the Department to bring public school
9 districts and public charter schools reported pursuant to paragraph
10 2 of this subsection into compliance with the provisions of this
11 section.

12 F. The State Department of Education, public school districts,
13 and public charter schools may accept federal or private funds to
14 implement the provisions of this section.

15 G. 1. Prior to the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year,
16 each public school district board of education and governing body of
17 a public charter school shall adopt a policy to make school premises
18 available for students to participate in voluntary after-school
19 instruction programs provided by third parties that instruct
20 students in the philosophical, historical, traditional, or religious
21 justifications for the positive character traits and personal skills
22 education program required by this section.

23 2. Written consent from a parent or legal guardian shall be
24 required to allow a student to participate in such instruction

1 programs. Each public school district board of education and
2 governing body of a public charter school shall provide prior
3 written notification to the parent or legal guardian of a student
4 regarding the availability of the instruction program available
5 pursuant to this subsection, which shall include information to
6 parents and legal guardians on how to provide written consent for
7 student participation. Consent for a student's participation may be
8 revoked at any time by the student or his or her parent or legal
9 guardian upon written notice to the public school district or public
10 charter school.

11 3. The State Board of Education shall approve and publish on
12 the State Department of Education's website a list of after-school
13 instruction programs that comply with the provisions of this
14 subsection. Approval shall not be denied to a program based on its
15 viewpoint or on the grounds that it contains expression protected by
16 the Oklahoma Constitution or the United States Constitution.

17 H. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this
18 section and any other provision in the Oklahoma Statutes or an
19 administrative rule, guidance, or policy, the provisions of this
20 section shall control.

21 I. The State Board of Education may promulgate rules to
22 implement the provisions of this section.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2026.
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1 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
2 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
3 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
4 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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