

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 58th Legislature (2022)

3 SENATE BILL 1161

By: Burns

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2021,
8 Section 11-103.11, which relates to an elective
9 course on the Hebrew Scriptures; directing certain
10 instruction to include certain component; directing
11 certain version of Bible to be used as primary text
12 in certain course; directing preference in choosing
13 certain comparison; providing for applicability of
14 certain law to certain resources; allowing certain
15 member of the clergy to teach certain course;
16 requiring each school district library to include
17 certain version of the Bible; providing an effective
18 date; and declaring an emergency.

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

20 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 11-103.11,
21 is amended to read as follows:

22 Section 11-103.11. A. A school district may offer to students
23 in grade nine or above:

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

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

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

2 1. Teach students knowledge of biblical content, characters,
3 poetry, and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding
4 contemporary society and culture, including literature, art, music,
5 mores, oratory, and public policy; and

6 2. Familiarize students with, as applicable:

7 a. the contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or New
8 Testament,

9 b. the history of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament,

10 c. the literary style and structure of the Hebrew
11 Scriptures or New Testament, and

12 d. the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures or New
13 Testament on law, history, government, literature,
14 art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture,
15 especially as it pertains to the United States of
16 America and this state.

17 C. The Authorized Version of the Bible, which is more commonly
18 known as the King James Version of the Bible, shall be the primary
19 text of the course and may be supplemented with additional
20 resources. ~~The primary text~~ Other texts for the course ~~will~~ may be
21 a parallel translation Bible or multi-translation Bible that uses
22 more than one translation for side-by-side comparison chosen by the
23 school district. In choosing a comparison translation, preference
24 shall be given to those translations which exist in the public

1 domain. Any additional resources used shall be subject to all
2 applicable copyright laws. However, a student may not be required
3 to use a specific translation as the sole text of the Hebrew
4 Scriptures or New Testament and may use as the basic textbook a
5 different translation of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament from
6 that chosen by the district board of education or the student's
7 teacher.

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

19 E. A teacher of a course offered pursuant to this section ~~must~~
20 shall be certified to teach social studies or literature. An
21 ordained or licensed member of the clergy may be selected by the
22 school district to teach a course offered pursuant to this section,
23 provided that the member of the clergy complies with the provisions
24 of subsection D of this section and is a non-compensated volunteer.

1 F. Each school district library in this state shall include the
2 Authorized Version of the Bible, more commonly known as the King
3 James Version of the Bible, to be used in a course offered pursuant
4 to this section.

5 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2022.

6 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
7 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
8 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
9 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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