

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE
TITLE 2. PUBLIC EDUCATION
SUBTITLE F. CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES
CHAPTER 28. COURSES OF STUDY; ADVANCEMENT
SUBCHAPTER A. ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS; CURRICULUM

TEC, §28.011. ELECTIVE COURSES ON THE BIBLE'S HEBREW SCRIPTURES (OLD TESTAMENT) AND NEW TESTAMENT AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION.

- (a) A school district may offer to students in grade six 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 by Subdivision (1).
- (b) The purpose of a course under this section is 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) 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 instructional material a different translation of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament from that chosen by the board of trustees of the student's school district or the student's teacher.
- (d) A course offered under 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 their school district. A course under 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 statute is intended to violate any provision of the United States Constitution or federal law, the Texas Constitution or any state law, or any rules or guidelines provided by the United States Department of Education or the Texas Education Agency.
- (e) Before adopting rules identifying the essential knowledge and skills of a course offered under this section, the State Board of Education shall submit the proposed essential knowledge and skills to the attorney general. The attorney general shall review the proposed essential knowledge and

skills to ensure that the course complies with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, and the board may not adopt rules identifying the essential knowledge and skills of a course offered under this section without the attorney general's approval under this subsection.

- (f) A teacher of a course offered under this section must hold a certificate in language arts, social studies, or history that qualifies the teacher to teach at the grade level at which the course is offered with, where practical, a minor in religion or biblical studies. A teacher selected to teach a course under this section shall successfully complete staff development training outlined in Section [21.459](#). A course under this section may be taught only by a teacher who has successfully completed training under Section [21.459](#).
- (g) For the purpose of a student earning credit for high school graduation, a school district shall grant one-half academic elective credit for satisfactory completion of a course on the Hebrew Scriptures, one-half academic elective credit for satisfactory completion of a course on the New Testament, and one-half academic elective credit for satisfactory completion of a combined course on both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. This subsection applies only to a course that is taught in strict compliance with this section.
- (h) If, for a particular semester, fewer than 15 students at a school district campus register to enroll in a course required by this section, the district is not required to offer the course at that campus for that semester.
- (i) This section does not prohibit the board of trustees of a school district from offering an elective course based on the books of a religion other than Christianity. In determining whether to offer such a course, the board may consider various factors, including student and parent demand for such a course and the impact such books have had on history and culture.
- (j) This section does not prohibit a school district from offering a course, other than the course authorized by this section, in the academic study of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, or both for local credit or for state elective credit towards high school graduation.