

Amend **HB 1287** by striking all below the enacting clause and substituting the following:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 28.011 to read as follows:

Sec. 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 shall 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 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 textbook 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) A teacher of a course offered under this section must hold a minimum of a High School Composite Certification in language arts, social studies, or history with, where practical, a minor in religion or biblical studies. A teacher selected to teach a course under this section shall successfully complete appropriate staff development training. A course under this section may only be taught by a teacher who has successfully completed training in connection with the Bible course chosen by the school district. Training in connection with the Bible course chosen shall be submitted to the Texas Attorney General for approval to ensure that applicable constitutional standards are met.

(f) 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.

(g) If, for a particular semester, fewer than 20 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.

(h) 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.

(i) 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.

SECTION 2. Section 28.002(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Each school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 shall offer, as a required curriculum:

(1) a foundation curriculum that includes:

(A) English language arts;

(B) mathematics;

(C) science; and

(D) social studies, consisting of Texas, United States, and world history, government, and geography; and

(2) an enrichment curriculum that includes:

(A) to the extent possible, languages other than English;

(B) health, with emphasis on the importance of proper nutrition and exercise;

(C) physical education;

(D) fine arts;

(E) economics, with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits;

(F) career and technology education; ~~and~~

(G) technology applications; and

(H) religious literature, including the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and New Testament, and its impact on history and literature.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2007.