By:  Wilson, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Buckingham) H.B. No. 2681

(In the Senate - Received from the House May 17, 2021; May 17, 2021, read first time and referred to Committee on Education; May 24, 2021, reported adversely, with favorable Committee Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0; May 24, 2021, sent to printer.)

COMMITTEE VOTE

                    Yea Nay Absent  PNV

Taylor            X

Lucio                         X

Bettencourt          X

Hall                 X

Hughes               X

Menéndez             X

Paxton               X

Perry                X

Powell               X

Schwertner           X

West                          X

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR H.B. No. 2681 By:  Powell

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to public school elective courses providing academic study of the Bible offered to certain students.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Sections 28.011(a) and (f), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  A school district may offer to students in grade six [~~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).

(f)  A teacher of a course offered under this section must hold a certificate [~~minimum of a High School Composite Certification~~] 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 [~~only~~] be taught only by a teacher who has successfully completed training under Section 21.459.

SECTION 2.  The State Board of Education is required to implement Sections 28.011(a) and (f), Education Code, as amended by this Act, only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, the State Board of Education may, but is not required to, implement Sections 28.011(a) and (f), Education Code, as amended by this Act, using other appropriations available for the purpose.

SECTION 3.  This Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

SECTION 4.  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, 2021.

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