

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H1/30/13 S4/16/13*

2 89th General Assembly

# A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE BILL 1017

4

5 By: Representatives D. Altes, *Ballinger, Harris, Payton*

6 *By: Senator G. Stubblefield*

7

8

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT CURRICULUM  
10 STANDARDS AS DIRECTED BY THIS ACT FOR AN ACADEMIC  
11 STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE THAT MAY BE OFFERED AS AN  
12 ELECTIVE COURSE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT; TO SET  
13 REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHING AN ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE  
14 BIBLE COURSE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL AS DIRECTED BY THIS  
15 ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

16

17

18

## Subtitle

19 TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT  
20 CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR AN ACADEMIC  
21 STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE AS DIRECTED BY  
22 THIS ACT.

23

24

25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

26

27 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 16, Subchapter 1 is amended  
28 to add an additional section to read as follows:

29 6-16-142. Academic study of the Bible course.

30 (a)(1) The State Board of Education shall allow for an elective  
31 academic study of the Bible course or courses that consist of a nonsectarian,  
32 nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence on literature,  
33 art, music, culture, and politics to be offered to students in public school  
34 districts, if the academic study of the Bible course meets the standards  
35 listed in this section.

36

(2) The curriculum standards submitted by a public school



1 district for approval of an academic study of the Bible course shall meet  
2 the:

3 (A) Academic rigor and curriculum standards of other  
4 elective courses approved by the state board; and

5 (B) Requirements of the Arkansas Constitution and the  
6 United States Constitution.

7 (b)(1) A public school district that elects to offer an academic study  
8 of the Bible course shall implement the course in accordance with the  
9 Arkansas Constitution and the United States Constitution, including the  
10 manner in which the course is taught in the classroom and the assignment of  
11 school district personnel teaching the course.

12 (2) Personnel assigned to teach the course shall be licensed to  
13 teach in the State of Arkansas.

14 (3) Personnel shall not be assigned to teach the course based on  
15 any:

16 (A) Religious test;

17 (B) Profession of faith or lack of faith;

18 (C) Prior or present religious affiliation or lack of  
19 affiliation; or

20 (D) Criteria involving particular beliefs or lack of  
21 beliefs about the Bible.

22 (c) An academic study of the Bible course offered by a public school  
23 district shall:

24 (1) Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no  
25 attempt made to indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of  
26 the biblical materials or texts from other religious or cultural traditions;

27 (2) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian  
28 interpretation of the Bible or of texts from other religious or cultural  
29 traditions; and

30 (3) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of  
31 religious beliefs.

32 (d) A public school district that elects to offer an academic study of  
33 the Bible course shall use only the standards in this section to:

34 (1) Evaluate textbooks for an academic study of the Bible  
35 course; and

36 (2) Teach an academic study of the Bible course.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36

*SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY.*

*(a) The State Board of Education shall apply the existing adopted rules governing elective course offerings and permitting a school district to adopt and teach elective courses to a school district that chooses to adopt and teach an academic study of the Bible course as an elective course.*

*(b) This act does not require the state board to adopt new rules, standards, or curriculum frameworks.*

*/s/D. Altes*