STATE OF NEW YORK

9246

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

November 7, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. DiPIETRO -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to Bible literacy courses in public schools

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 819 to read as follows:

§ 819. Course of instruction on Bible literacy. 1. The commissioner shall promulgate regulations to establish elective social studies courses of study on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible, the New Testament of the Bible or the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible.

2. The purpose of a course of study under this section is to:

(a) 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

(b) familiarize students with, as applicable:

(i) the contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament;

(ii) the history of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament;

(iii) the literary style and structure of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament; and

(iv) the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament on law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture.

3. A student shall 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 school district.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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4. The commissioner shall include the course standards in the program of studies for public schools, including the teacher qualifications and required professional development.

5. 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 the school. 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. The commissioner, in complying with this section, shall not violate any provision of the United States Constitution or federal law, the New York Constitution or any state law, or any administrative regulations of the United States Department of Education or the department.

6. Any school district may authorize the display of historic artifacts, monuments, symbols, and texts, including but not limited to religious materials, in conjunction with a course of study that includes an elective course in history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, literature, or other subject area that uses such artifacts, monuments, symbols, and texts as instructional material if the display is appropriate to the overall educational purpose of the course.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.