

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-2-9A

§18-2-9a. Elective courses of instruction on the Bible.

(a) County boards of education may offer to students in grade nine or above:

(1) An elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible;

(2) An elective social studies course on the New Testament of the Bible; or

(3) An elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible.

(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 the development of American 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 county board or school.

(d) The county board of education shall submit to the West Virginia Department of Education the course standards for any elective to be offered pursuant to subsection (a), of this section including the teacher qualifications and required professional development.

(e) 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 may not endorse, favor, promote, disfavor, or show hostility toward, any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective. Any county board offering a course under this section, shall not violate any provision of the United States Constitution or federal law, the West Virginia Constitution or any state law, any administrative regulations of the United

States Department of Education, or any rule of the state board. The state board shall provide guidance to the county boards on complying with the requirements of this subsection.