



Owasso Parents & Guardians,

Over the last several weeks, announcements have been made by the State Department of Education (SDE) with the intent to require teachers to use the Bible as part of their instructional materials and to revise Oklahoma's social studies standards. I know these announcements have resulted in many questions, therefore, I would like to share with you legal considerations regarding academic standards and instructional materials.

State law, [70 O.S. § 11-103.6a](#), is clear that the selection of curriculum and instructional materials used to teach subject matter standards is a matter of local control. State law allows, but does not mandate, the inclusion of the Bible as part of curriculum and/or as instructional material. It is common for the SDE to recommend certain curriculum and instructional resources to assist educators in delivering instruction related to academic standards, however, SDE cannot mandate curriculum or instructional resources.

[Oklahoma law](#) requires adoption of subject matter standards on a six-year cycle. The existing social studies standards were adopted in 2019 and are up for adoption again in 2025. State law further requires that academic standards be approved by the State Board of Education and the state legislature before implementation. (Note: If the legislature fails to adopt a joint resolution either approving or disapproving the standards in whole or in part within 30 legislative days following the submission of the standards, the standards are considered approved).

SDE already suggests the Bible or passages within the Bible as a teaching resource for some academic standards. For example, within the [approved social studies standards](#), World History Content Standards includes, "*WH.1.2 - Describe the origins, major beliefs, spread and lasting impact of the world's major religions and philosophies, including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, and Sikhism.*"

The curriculum currently used by Owasso Public Schools is fully aligned with the approved Oklahoma Academic Standards and we will continue to adhere to the curriculum and instructional materials previously adopted by the district. As a public school system, it is crucial that we maintain neutrality and objectivity in our curriculum and instructional practices.

Further, I want to reassure you that our current board policy [#1.69, District Wide Parental Involvement \(Parents/Legal Guardians\) \(Parents' Bill of Rights\)](#), provides you with the ability to inspect curriculum and instructional materials at any time. According to the policy, "parents who object to an assignment based on sex, morality or religion may opt their minor child out of the assignment." When this occurs, the teacher simply provides an alternative assignment for the student.



Owasso Public Schools

Education Service Center
1501 N Ash Street, Owasso, OK 74055
Phone: (918) 272-5367 • Fax: (918) 272-8111
owassops.org

It is also important to note that students have been and will continue to have the right to bring their own religious texts to school, or to access religious texts using school-issued technology should they choose.

Thank you for your attention to this information. Please continue to be on the lookout for additional communication from the district and your child's school as we get closer to the start of school on August 15.

Sincerely,

Dr. Margaret Coates
Superintendent
Owasso Public Schools