

**158.197 Elective course on religious scripture -- Purpose -- Restrictions -- School council or governing body authorized to display historic religious and nonreligious artifacts, monuments, symbols, and texts in conjunction with course of study.**

- (1) A school-based decision making council under administrative regulations of the Kentucky Board of Education may offer students in grade nine (9) or above:
  - (a) An elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible;
  - (b) An elective social studies course on the New Testament of the Bible; or
  - (c) An elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible.
- (2) The purpose of a course 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:
    1. The contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament;
    2. The history of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament;
    3. The literary style and structure of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament; and
    4. 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 council.
- (4) 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. A school-based decision making council, in complying with this section, shall not violate any provision of the United States Constitution or federal law, the Kentucky Constitution or any state law, or any administrative regulations of the United States Department of Education or the Kentucky Department of Education.
- (5) Any school council organized pursuant to KRS 160.345 or, if none exists, the principal, 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:
  - (a) Appropriate to the overall educational purpose of the course; and

(b) Consistent with the requirements of KRS 42.705.

**Effective:** June 29, 2017

**History:** Amended 2017 Ky. Acts ch. 187, sec. 2, effective June 29, 2017. --  
Created 2006 Ky. Acts ch. 34, sec. 4, effective March 24, 2006.