

## **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **STAFF NOTE**

#### **Action/Discussion Item:**

704 KAR 3:306, Kentucky Academic Standards for Historical and Cultural Influences of the Bible Elective Social Studies Course (Second Reading)

#### **Commissioner's Recommendation:**

The Commissioner recommends the board approve this administrative regulation in order to fulfil the requirements of KRS 156.162.

#### **Rationale:**

KRS 156.162 required the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to develop course standards for an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible; the New Testament; or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible. The regulation will come forward for a second reading at the June Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) meeting.

#### **Action Question:**

Should the KBE approve 704 KAR 3:306?

#### **Applicable Statute or Regulation:**

KRS 156.070, 156.160, KRS 156.162, KRS 158.197

#### **History/Background:**

***Existing Policy:*** In 2017, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 128, which created a new section of Chapter 156 to require the KBE to promulgate an administrative regulation setting the course standards for an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible; the New Testament; or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible and amended KRS 158.197 to permit a School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council to offer an elective social studies course. KRS 156.162 required the KDE to develop course standards for an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible; the New Testament; or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible. At the April KBE meeting, the Curriculum and Instruction committee recommended revision of the regulation to include stronger alignment to the authorizing statute.

**Summary:** The purpose of these elective courses for grades nine through twelve is to focus on the historical impact and literary style from texts of the Old Testament and/or New Testament eras, including the Hebrew Scriptures, to 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.

An elective course offered under this section will be expected to 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. An elective course under this section shall not endorse, favor, promote, disfavor, or show hostility toward any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective.

A SBDM under administrative regulations of the KBE may offer this elective course to students in grade nine or above.

**Budget Impact:** State funds were used to develop these standards. The cost of development and focus groups totaled \$1,212.04, plus staff time. Additional staff time will be required as the standards move through the legislative and implementation process.

**Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:**

- Higher Education Focus Group
- High School Social Studies Teacher Focus Group
- Council of State Social Studies Specialists
- Kentucky Historical Society

The standards were informed by feedback from the public and social studies community. When these standards were open for public feedback, 3,987 individuals commented.

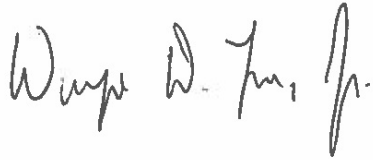
At the April KBE meeting, the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee of the KBE asked staff to review KRS 156.162 and consider alignment of the regulation to that statute. A focus group reviewed the KBE feedback and changes were made to tighten that alignment.

The Office of Education Accountability reviewed the regulation and provided feedback.

The Local Superintendent's Advisory Committee (LSAC) will review this regulation for a second time at its May 29, 2018 meeting. Comments from the LSAC should be received by the June meeting.

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**Interim Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

June 2018