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## EXPLANATION: TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

MSBA has modified this policy to reflect the change in the law brought about by Senate Bill 17, § 170.340, RSMo. This new legislation does little to change the law regarding the teaching of religion. Districts have always been allowed to teach about religion and use religious texts as long as the teaching does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The new law, which allows books of a religious nature to be used in elective courses in literature and history, is actually more limiting than the current case law interpreting the First Amendment.

MSBA advises all districts to clearly define the purpose of the use of religious texts in classes and seek legal advice before using them. Model curricula involving the teaching of religious texts are readily available, but some models do not satisfy the test the courts have established to determine Establishment Clause violations.

<i>MSBA recommends that copies of this document be routed to the following areas because the content is of particular importance to them. The titles on this list may not match those used by the district. Please forward copies to the district equivalent of the title indicated.</i>					
	Board Secretary		Business Office		Coaches/Sponsors
	Facility Maintenance		Food Service		Gifted
	Human Resources	X	Principals		Library/Media Center
	Health Services		Counselor		Special Education
	Transportation		Public Info/Communications		Technology

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## TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

Pursuant to state and federal law, the **FIELD(DistrictCommonName)** may teach about religion but may not promote any particular religion or religious belief. **Books of a religious nature may be used in the classroom as part of instruction as long as such books are not used in a manner that violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.**

No course or portion of any course taught in the district will have the primary purpose or effect of illegally advancing or inhibiting religion.

Nothing in this policy is to be construed as inhibiting otherwise constitutionally protected religious expression by any individual.

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***Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.***

Adopted: **FIELD(AdoptDate)**

Revised:

Legal Refs: Mo. Const., Art. I, §§ 5-7  
**§ 170.340, RSMo.**  
U.S. Const., Art. I

**FIELD(DistrictLocationLine)**