

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

SENATE BILL 140

By: Dahm

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to school curriculum; creating the Oklahoma Science Education Act; providing short title; providing for the creation of a school environment that encourages the exploration of scientific theories; allowing teachers to help students analyze certain scientific strengths and weaknesses; prohibiting the promotion of religious or non-religious beliefs; providing for certain notification; providing for certain immunity; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-103.15 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Science Education Act".

B. The State Board of Education, school district boards of education, school district superintendents, and school principals shall endeavor to create an environment within public school districts that encourages students to explore scientific questions,

1 learn about scientific evidence, develop critical thinking skills,
2 and respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion
3 about controversial issues.

4 C. The State Board of Education, school district boards of
5 education, school district superintendents, and school principals
6 shall endeavor to assist teachers to find effective ways to present
7 the science curriculum as it addresses scientific controversies.
8 Teachers shall be permitted to help students understand, analyze,
9 critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths
10 and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in
11 the course being taught using evidence-based, peer-reviewed
12 material.

13 D. Neither the State Board of Education, nor any school
14 district board of education, school district superintendent, or
15 school principal shall prohibit any teacher in a public school
16 district in this state from helping students understand, analyze,
17 critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths
18 and weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course
19 being taught using evidence-based, peer-reviewed material.

20 E. The provisions of this section shall only protect the
21 teaching of scientific information and shall not be construed to
22 promote any religious or non-religious doctrine, promote
23 discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs
24

1 or non-beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or
2 non-religion.

3 F. By no later than the start of the 2023-2024 school year, the
4 State Department of Education shall notify school district boards of
5 education and school district superintendents of public schools in
6 this state of the provisions of this act. Each school district
7 board of education and school district superintendent shall notify
8 all employees within the school district of the provisions of this
9 act.

10 G. A teacher as defined by Section 1-116 of Title 70 of the
11 Oklahoma Statutes who complies with the provisions of this act shall
12 be granted immunity from civil liability or termination of
13 employment for acts described in subsection C of this section.

14 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2023.

15 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
16 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
17 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
18 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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