

Religious Expression Case Analysis and Rationale

EAD 505: Education Law

Religious Expression Case Analysis and Rationale

A parent, Ms. Beckel, who is on the school's committee at Laurel Middle School, wants to start a religious studies course that has been agreed upon by the principal, Ms. Avery, and other members of the committee. When the teacher, Ms. Kassidy, shared the school's plans with one of the school's stakeholders and friend, Ms. Wright, a problem arose when Ms. Wright shared her strong beliefs in the separation of church and state. Ms. Wright supports and helps the school, although she does not have any children. Ms. Wright "does not agree with using the Bible as a textbook; she feels that the course is to indoctrinate students" (Hanson, 2008).

Ms. Avery will review many court cases and policies to help the team develop an agreement based on objective information rather than subjectivity. The court filings related to this issue are The Establishment and the Free Exercise Clause, which protect religious freedom. "The Establishment Clause protects students against governmental endorsement and imposition of religion whereas the Free Exercise Clause ensures the right to practice faith without harming others" (Reader. BibliU, n.d.). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Stone v. Graham* "that the Bible may be used constitutionally as an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, or comparative religion" (Reader. BibliU, n.d.).

Possible solutions to the issue include an explicit and strict "administrative guide" (Reader. BibliU, n.d.) and a syllabus to any of the stakeholders, parents, committee members, and teachers can have access. Another solution would be to make the class an elective rather than a requirement; that way, students interested in the topic have a chance to sign up for the course, while those not interested can choose a different elective that would provide similar requirements for graduation. Lastly, the committee,

Religious Expression Case Analysis and Rationale

students, and parents can complete an anonymous needs survey to identify concerns, feedback, and strengths and gain insight into who would be interested in the course. The solution would best provide students opportunities while ensuring that the course will teach students about various religions rather than convert them to one specific religion while remaining lawful.

To resolve the issue as a team, we will develop an objectively detailed guide that outlines the course curriculum and resources. Meet with the committee, stakeholders, parents, students, and staff interested in the topic to collaborate on the guide and make necessary changes to satisfy everyone involved while remaining lawful before presenting the plan to the school board. The plan will ensure that the resources will strictly focus on the history, civilization, ethics, and how the religious information from one resource compares to the religious information in a different resource by collaborating with private religious sectors. For the plan to work successfully, during week One, the team will research evidence-based religious textbooks and materials from various religious backgrounds. Bring the material to the meeting next Wednesday to discuss resources used for the course. In week two, the team will meet to discuss new resources found and unwrap quarterly literacy and history standards to see how the religious studies course can fit across disciplines for a school year while ensuring that standards are getting mastered. The team will spend two weeks developing objectives about teaching the Bible and other religious resources that align with the academic standards. We will meet as a team during week five to finalize the Religious Studies Course, develop a course curriculum outline, develop a course syllabus, and

Religious Expression Case Analysis and Rationale

develop a rationale for the course. During weeks six and seven, Ms. Avery will schedule a meeting with the school board to present the proposal.

The solution rationale for Case 13 The Bible and Ms. Wright, helps ensure that a school leader "knows, complies with, and helps the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success" (Professional standards for educational leaders, n.d.). As a leader, it is imperative that one "understands, values, and employs the communities cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement while building and sustaining partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning" (Professional standards for educational leaders, n.d.). All decisions surrounding the issue of creating the religious studies course encompass continuous reflection and transparency with the members involved while ensuring that the leader remains equitable and ethical in conversations and actions.

Religious Expression Case Analysis and Rationale

References:

Hanson, K. L. (2008). Case 13 The Bible and Ms. Wright. In *A Casebook for School Leaders: Linking the ISLLC Standards to Effective Practice* (3rd ed., pp. 54–56). essay, Pearson Education Limited.

Professional standards for educational leaders. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.npbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Professional-Standards-for-Educational-Leaders_2015.pdf

[illegible]

US Department of Education (ED). (2023, March 6). *Guidance on constitutionally protected prayer and religious expression in public elementary and Secondary Schools*. Home. Retrieved March 13, 2023, from https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/religionandschools/prayer_guidance.html#:~:text=Although%20the%20Constitution%20forbids%20public,private%20religious%20speech%20C%20far%20from