In God We Trust: A Multiple Case Study of the Implementation of Religious and Biblical Literacy Courses in Public Charter Schools

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Abstract
This study was conducted with administrators of four charter schools located in the west, the south, and southeast portions of the United States that had courses in religious and biblical literacy in each school's curricula. A multiple case study methodology was employed to describe the experiences of public charter schools implementing religious and biblical literacy courses to discover commonalities to successful implementation. The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews conducted during the summer and fall of 2016. Areas of interest were specific to course descriptions, the fit within the specific charter school vision and mission, teacher training, and resources. The most common factor supporting the implementation of the courses, revealed by all administrators, was the need for teacher training and preparedness before taking on a specific religious or biblical literacy course. The researcher chose schools where the course fit into the mission and vision of the school, as an indicator of purpose, and where teachers used primary source documents in lesson plans. A framework of implementation strategy is provided as well as the implications needing to be addressed by staffing. The research may inform other charter schools looking to implement such coursework and the researcher outlines additional areas of study needed to investigate other specific indicators.

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Religion in our public schools creates divisiveness, and awareness of religious differences often builds walls between students. In 1890, Catholic parents in my state of Wisconsin brought suit against the practice of devotional reading of the (Protestant) bible in the public schools. In concurring with a ruling that declared such bible reading unconstitutional, a Wisconsin State Supreme Court justice wisely noted "In the best of all possible public school environments, it would be ideal, of course, to include, at least at the high school level, a class on comparative religion. Most social studies and geography classes already study the religious affiliations of an area, and some of their identifying tenets. U.S. students should not..."
grow up in ignorance of the world religions. Explicitly the term „religious education“ enters the Russian language only in the second half of the 19th century, whereas implicitly such education, being understood as the transfer of knowledge and practical skills of the relationship with the „unknown“ from generation to generation, has existed throughout the history of mankind. There are three radically different typological forms of social reality that stand behind the term „religious education“ in its implicit meaning: the ancient Slavic „oral tradition“, „Greek law“ („the science of the fear of God“) and „the era of the USSR“ („religion It may, of course, require more than a leap of religious faith to argue that the actual composition of religious discourse is itself important. To someone trained in the social psychology of opinion research, discourse is likely to be relevant only as a means of tapping into the deeper attitudinal predispositions that supposedly govern behavior. Discourse is in this view ephemeral, unpredictable, superficial; only the underlying mindsets are meaningful. Other studies have examined moralistic themes, success motifs, and images of the collectivity in public speeches. When a text states that “Christ is God and man,” it must also be read literally despite its reason-violating message.