

## RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Code **JHCB** Issued **10/18**

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The board will release students in grades nine through 12 from school, at the written request of their parent/legal guardian, for the purpose of religious instruction for a portion of the day. The school will consider this a lawful absence.

The board will not allow the student to miss required instructional time for the purpose of religious instruction. Any absences for this purpose must be during non-instructional periods of the school day.

When approving the release of students for religious instruction, the board assumes no responsibility for the program or liability for the students involved.

The sponsoring group or the student's parent/legal guardian is completely responsible for transportation to and from the place of instruction. The district assumes no responsibility or liability for such transportation.

Religious instruction must take place away from school property and at a regularly designated location.

District officials will ensure that no public funds will be expended to support a released-time program and that district staff and faculty will not promote or discourage participation by district students in a released-time program. District faculty and staff may not promote program attendance through encouragement, coercion, or other means. Specifically, employees of the district may not be instructors for a released-time program.

### **Elective Credit**

The district may award high school students no more than two elective Carnegie unit credits for classes in religious instruction taken during the school day in accordance with this policy. The district will evaluate the classes on the basis of purely secular criteria prior to awarding credit.

### **Transfer Credit**

The district may accept released-time transfer of credits without individually assessing the quality or subject matter of the class when the transfer is from an accredited private school.

Adopted 9/16/96; Revised 11/12/02, 6/14/05, 10/9/18

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### Legal References:

- A. S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:
  - 1. Section 59-1-460 - South Carolina Released Time for Religious Education Act.
  - 2. Section 59-39-112 - South Carolina Released Time Credit Act.
- B. Federal Cases:
  - 1. *Moss v. Spartanburg County School District Seven*, 683 F.3d 599 (4th Cir. 2012).