

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents and Principals

From: Robin LeClaire, Director of School Improvement
J. Matthew Walsh, Curriculum Specialist

Date: June 28, 2019

Re: Senate Enrolled Act 373 - Academic Credits for Religious Instruction

Background:

The 2019 Indiana General Assembly passed legislation allowing high schools to award high school academic credit for religious instruction. Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 373 amends Indiana Code 20-33-2-19 to include the awarding of a maximum of two religious instruction elective credits. After July 1, 2019, a school board would need to adopt a specific policy to this effect if they intend to award high school academic credit for religious instruction.

Guidance:

A public secondary school may award credit to a student who attends religious instruction if the governing body of a school corporation adopts a policy allowing the awarding of credit. A policy adopted must provide the following:

- 1) Classes in religious instruction are evaluated on the basis of purely secular criteria in substantially the same manner as similar classes (taken by a student in a non-public secondary school who transfers to a public secondary school) to determine whether the student receives the transfer credit for the classes. Secular criteria may include the following in addition to other secular criteria established by the governing body:
 - The number of hours of classroom instructional time;
 - A review of the course syllabus that reflects the course requirements and materials;
 - Methods of assessment used in the course; and
 - Whether the course is taught by a licensed teacher.
- 2) The decision of whether to award academic credit is neutral as to, and does not involve, any test for religious content or denominational affiliation.

(continued)

- 3) A provision that a student attending religious instruction will seek to use a time period during a student instructional day (as defined in IC 20-30-2-2) that is not devoted to student instructional time to attend religious instruction. If a student is not able to attend religious instruction at a time other than during student instructional time, the student may not be released to attend religious instruction for an amount of time per week exceeding the amount established in subsection (b) of [IC 20-33-2-19](#) (not to exceed 120 minutes in total in any week).

A student may be awarded a total of not more than two elective credits under this new law.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin LeClaire at 317-232-0524 or e-mail at rleclaire@doe.in.gov or Matt Walsh at 317-232-6619 or e-mail at jwalsh1@doe.in.gov.

This legislation was authored by Senator Dennis Kruse and the full bill text can be found [here](#). Information regarding how to contact your legislators can be found [here](#).