

House Bill 3695

Sponsored by Representative RESCHKE

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: Tells school districts to adopt a policy to allow students to attend a released time course. (Flesch Readability Score: 63.6).

Requires school districts to excuse a student for a released time course. Prescribes the requirements for released time courses.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to excusal for religious instruction; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 339.420.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1.** ORS 339.420 is amended to read:

5 339.420. Upon application of the parent or guardian of the child, or, if the child has attained the
6 age of majority, upon application of the child, a child attending *[the]* a public school:

7 (1) May be excused from school for periods not exceeding two hours in any week for *[elementary*
8 *pupils]* **students in kindergarten through grade eight** and five hours in any week for *[secondary*
9 *pupils]* **students in grades 9 through 12** to attend weekday schools giving instruction in religion.

10 (2) **Must be excused from school for periods not exceeding one hour in any week to attend**
11 **a released time course as provided by section 2 of this 2025 Act.**

12 **SECTION 2.** (1) **As used in this section:**

13 (a) **"Released time course" means a course in religious instruction for which a student**
14 **is excused from school to attend.**

15 (b) **"School district" means a school district as defined in ORS 332.002 or a public charter**
16 **school.**

17 (c) **"Sponsoring entity" means an entity that provides instruction for a released time**
18 **course and that complies with the requirements of a policy adopted by a school district as**
19 **provided by subsection (3) of this section.**

20 (2) **Each school district shall adopt a policy that provides for the excusal of a student**
21 **from school to attend a released time course.**

22 (3) **A policy adopted under this section must require that:**

23 (a) **A student be excused to attend a released time course only as provided by ORS**
24 **339.420.**

25 (b) **The school district awards academic credit for the completion of a released time**
26 **course. When determining how much academic credit to award for completion of a released**
27 **time course, the school district shall consider:**

28 (A) **The number of hours of classroom instruction time.**

29 (B) **The course syllabus, requirements and materials.**

30 (C) **The methods of assessment used in the course.**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 **(D) The qualifications of the course instructor, which must align with the school**
2 **district's requirements for teachers.**

3 **(e) The sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes the records available**
4 **to the school district the student attends.**

5 **(d) Transportation to and from the place of instruction for the released time course is**
6 **the responsibility of the sponsoring entity, the student or the parent or guardian of the**
7 **student.**

8 **(e) The sponsoring entity makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student while**
9 **the student is under the control of the sponsoring entity.**

10 **(f) No school district funds are expended in relation to a released time course.**

11 **(g) Released time courses are not held on school property unless permitted as provided**
12 **by ORS 332.172.**

13 **(h) The student assumes responsibility for any missed school work.**

14 **(4) Any time period for which a student is excused to attend a released time course is**
15 **considered as time the student is attending the school from which the student is excused for**
16 **the purpose of ORS 327.061 and for the purpose of instructional time requirements prescribed**
17 **by the State Board of Education.**

18 **(5) Any person or organization aggrieved by a violation of this section may bring an**
19 **action against the school district responsible for the violation and may seek appropriate re-**
20 **lief, including injunctive relief, monetary damages, reasonable attorney fees and court costs.**
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