



OPI Bill Draft– 2025 Legislature

Allow students the freedom to utilize volunteer chaplains in school through a school board adopted policy for mental health support and other purposes. Require parental notification and permission.

20-7-13. School Chaplains.

- (1) Each school district or charter school may adopt a policy to authorize paid or volunteer school chaplains to provide supports, services, and programs to students as assigned by the district school board or charter school governing board. The school district or charter school policy must, at a minimum:
 - (a) Describe the supports, services, or programs that volunteer school chaplains may be assigned;
 - (b) Require that principals of schools with a paid volunteer school chaplain inform all parents of the availability of such supports, services, and programs; and
 - (c) Require written parental consent before a student participates in or receives supports, services, and programs provided by a volunteer school chaplain from the list provided by the school district, which must include the chaplain's religious affiliation, if any.
- (2) Each volunteer or paid school chaplain must meet the background screening requirements for certain noninstructional school district employees, contractors and volunteer school chaplains.
- (3) Any school district that adopts a volunteer school chaplain policy shall publish the list of volunteer school chaplains, including any religious affiliation, on the school district's website.
- (4) To be eligible for appointment in any position in any district school system, a person must be of good moral character; must have attained the age of 18 years, if he or she is to be employed in a noninstructional capacity; Notwithstanding any other law, a school district may engage a chaplain instead of a school counselor to perform the duties required of a school counselor under this title. A chaplain employed under this section is not required to be certified by the State Board of Education.
- (5) Except as provided in _____ non-instructional school district employees, or contractual personnel, paid or volunteer school chaplains who are permitted direct contact with students or who have access to or control of school funds must meet the screening requirements of _____. Contractual personnel shall include any vendor, individual or entity under contract with a school or the school board.