



RYAN WALTERS

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 12, 2024

Contact: Dan Isett
405-570-9203

**Walters Announces Office of Religious Liberty and Patriotism
*Paves the Way to Align Oklahoma Education Priorities with Trump Administration***

Oklahoma City, Okla – State Superintendent Ryan Walters today announced the establishment of the Office of Religious Liberty and Patriotism at the State Department of Education, which will serve to promote religious liberty and patriotism in Oklahoma and protect parents, teachers, and students’ abilities to practice their religion freely in all aspects. The office will also oversee the investigation of abuses to individual religious freedom or displays of patriotism. Guidance to schools will be issued in the coming days on steps to be taken to ensure the right to pray in schools is safeguarded.

“For decades our nation’s public schools have tragically been ground zero for the erosion of religious liberty across our country,” said Walters. “The radical left never misses a chance to co-opt the teacher unions and their minions to indoctrinate our children against traditional values of faith and family, seeking to attack any display of faith or religion or patriotism. It is no coincidence that the dismantling of faith and family values in public schools directly correlates with declining academic outcomes in our public schools. In Oklahoma, we are reversing this negative trend and, working with the incoming Trump Administration, we are going to aggressively pursue education policies that will improve academic outcomes and give our children a better future.”

The new office will be charged with supporting teachers and students when their constitutional rights are threatened by well-funded, out of state groups as [happened in Skiatook last year](#) when a school was bullied into removing Bible quotes from a classroom. At the time, Superintendent Walters was clear in his assessment: “the removal of Bible verses from display in Skiatook under the threat of a baseless lawsuit is unacceptable. The Constitution guarantees,

2500 NORTH LINCOLN BOULEVARD, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-4599
PHONE: (405) 521-4885 • SDE.OK.GOV • RYAN.WALTERS@SDE.OK.GOV



RYAN WALTERS

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

and the Supreme Court has affirmed in *Kennedy v. Bremerton*, the right of teachers to religious freedom and expression. American citizens do not give up their right to practice their faith at the schoolhouse door or anywhere else.”

The newly established Office of Religious Liberty and Patriotism is in line with one of President [Trump’s top education priorities](#), “Freedom to Pray.” President Trump has proven his commitment to champion the right to pray in schools, working to ensure that to receive federal funds, local educational agencies must confirm that their policies do not prevent or interfere with constitutionally protected rights. Oklahoma is and will do all in its capacity to ensure that that both student and teacher’s rights to prayer are protected and upheld.

In the coming days, Superintendent Walters will be highlighting how SDE is planning to allocate resources that will support and expedite the “Ten Principles For Great Schools Leading To Great Jobs” as outlined in President Trump’s Agenda 47.

###