BLUEBONNET BLUES:
TALKING POINTS FOR TEXANS TO ADVOCATE AGAINST THE BLUEBONNET CURRICULUM

ACLU Texas

WHAT IS BLUEBONNET & WHY IS BLUEBONNET CONCERNING:

On November 22, 2024, the Texas State Board of Education narrowly approved Bluebonnet Learning — an optional state-developed open curriculum for grades K-5 with a $60/student funding incentive for adopting districts — despite widespread public outcry from parents, students, and faith leaders. Each school district can choose to adopt Bluebonnet Math and/or Bluebonnet English Language Arts and Reading individually or together. The latter (which we'll call "Bluebonnet") infuses Bible stories into lessons for K-5 public school students, prioritizing Christianity over other religions. Bluebonnet raises constitutional concerns around religious freedom and infringes on our foundational separation of church and state.

Bluebonnet also erases key parts of our country's history. Slavery and the Civil Rights Movement are glossed over with no mention of racism or the lasting effect that slavery has on society today.[i] Bluebonnet does a disservice to Texas students by erasing significant parts of American history and silencing key voices in social justice movements, as well as infringing on students' religious freedoms.

Whether you are a parent, teacher, faith leader, advocate, concerned community member, or a student yourself, you should be concerned about this threat to the separation of church and state and sanitization of our country's struggle for equality. Thankfully, since Bluebonnet is not mandatory, Texans can use this toolkit to stop their district from adopting Bluebonnet by using the talking points below.

IF YOUR DISTRICT HAS NOT YET ADOPTED BLUEBONNET, HERE'S HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT TO YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS:

Community members from all backgrounds are concerned about Bluebonnet and how it infringes on students' freedom to learn and freedom of religion. Any Texan can engage community members and school leaders in an honest discussion about rejecting state-sponsored religious education and the white-washing of our history by using these talking points:

- Parents and guardians have the right to raise their children with or without a religious faith.
    - The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution contains the Establishment Clause, which prohibits the government from sponsoring, favoring, or establishing one religion over any other. It also contains the Free Exercise Clause, which recognizes students' right to believe in and practice their own faith, or none at all.

    - Article 1 of the Texas Bill of Rights, Section 6 states that all Texans "have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences… and no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious society or mode of worship."
    - Many Texans are concerned that Bluebonnet violates these constitutional guarantees by promoting Christianity over other religions and indoctrinating students.
- Texas public schools are a place for readin', writin', and 'rithmatic — not religion.
    - Public school teachers have limited time in the day for instruction and should not have the added responsibility of being a religious instructor or potentially facilitating religious discussions or arguments between students.
    - Texas public schools are not Sunday schools. Texas students deserve a high-quality education that prepares them for their futures while honoring their diverse backgrounds, religious or not.
    - Public schools should be a safe and welcoming place for all Texas students, and Bluebonnet puts kids at risk of feeling unwelcome at school. Texans practice many different religions, with over a quarter identifying as non-religious.[ii] Bluebonnet favors one narrow view of Christianity, which can lead to students of other faiths feeling left out. Students of minority faiths already face bullying at a disproportionate rate compared to Christian students.[iii]
- Adopting Bluebonnet is a financially risky proposition for school districts.
    - Adopting Bluebonnet could expose the district to potentially costly litigation.
    - Districts, especially smaller ones, might end up financially burdened when the $60/student state incentive for adopting Bluebonnet fails to cover the full price of implementing and printing Bluebonnet materials.[iv]
- Bluebonnet presents materials that are not age appropriate and offers incomplete accounts of history.
    - Bluebonnet introduces topics like resurrection, messiah, and redemption to very young students who are likely just beginning to understand their own families' belief systems.
    - Students need to know our country's full history to be well-rounded contributors to society. But Bluebonnet teaches that "many of the Founding Fathers realized that slavery was wrong and founded the country so that Americans could be free," but doesn't teach that many of the founders also enslaved people.[v] There are lessons on how the Nuremberg laws dehumanized Jews in Nazi Germany, but not how Jim Crow laws from the United States inspired those laws.[vi]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Americans United Toolkit on Bluebonnet Lessons Broken Down By Grade
- Hindu American's Breakdown of Bluebonnet and Harms Caused to Students
- Texas Freedom Network's Toolkit on Bluebonnet Lessons
- Texas Jewish Federation's Review of Bluebonnet Curriculum