



## School Checklist

To create a better future for our children, it is essential that schools and school districts have faith-friendly policies and practices. We envision public schools as places where students feel the freedom to express their faith and where they gain an academic appreciation for the Bible and Christianity across the whole curriculum as they relate to history, culture, and values. This can be done legally and appropriately within existing constitutional boundaries and in keeping with current laws and state standards.

### What Can I Do?

The School Checklist (on the reverse side of this page) answers the question: “What should I do?” The checklist becomes a simple way to review your schools and, if necessary, advocate for improvements. It focuses on two areas:

- 1) **Religious freedom** — *schools must be safe places for religious expression*
- 2) **Academic freedom** — *teachers must feel free to teach about the influence of the Bible and Christianity as they relate to history, culture, and values*

### Evaluate two things in your schools:

- **POLICIES** - School policies need to promote and protect freedom of religious expression and academic freedom to address topics related to religion
- **PRACTICES** - Classroom practices need to foster freedom of religious expression and instruction about the cultural and historical influence of the Bible and Christianity.

**Step One:** Evaluate the current condition of your school and/or school district in the areas listed on the checklist. (See the reverse side of this page.)

**Step Two:** Access Gateways to Better Education’s website and printed materials to learn how to help bring improvement in each area.

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For an interactive copy with [links](#) to online documents related to items on the checklist, visit, [www.GoGateways.org](http://www.GoGateways.org).

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Academic Freedom		
School District Policies		
Y	N	Yes or No
		The school district has a favorable policy on <a href="#">teaching about religious topics</a>
		The school district has a policy regarding holidays similar to the Sioux Falls School District ( <a href="#">see Florey v. Sioux Falls</a> )
		The school district allows for, or requires, a moment of silence at the beginning of each day ( <a href="#">applicable in 34 states</a> )
School Practices		
Y	N	Yes or No
		Teachers are adequately informed of the school district's favorable policy on teaching about religious topics
		Bible literacy and Judeo-Christian history, culture, and values are appropriately included across the curriculum
		Social Studies – students learn about the Bible and Christianity's <a href="#">influence</a> on <a href="#">American and Western civilization</a>
		Language Arts – Bible literacy is incorporated to enhance <a href="#">literary understanding</a>
		Science – students are taught the limits of science and have access to the <a href="#">full range of scientific views</a> on evolution
		Mathematics – students learn how people of faith use math to benefit others (e.g., charity, inventions)
		Foreign Language – students learn the Christian cultures of foreign countries
		Music – <a href="#">sacred music</a> is incorporated into the music program
		Art – students learn the <a href="#">significant role</a> of Christianity in the support and development of the arts
		Library Books – students have <a href="#">access to the Bible</a> and books with Christian characters and themes
		As part of the <a href="#">music program</a> , students sing Christmas carols and other songs with religious themes
		Educators teach about the religious aspects of <a href="#">Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter</a>
		Teachers conduct a moment of silence at the beginning of each day ( <a href="#">applicable in 34 states</a> )
Religious Freedom		
School District Policies		
Y	N	Yes or No
		<a href="#">Religious Freedom Day</a> is officially recognized annually by a <a href="#">resolution</a> issued from the school board
		The school district has a <a href="#">policy</a> clarifying students' and educators' religious liberties
		The school district has a policy allowing religious release time programs
		The school district has a policy allowing student-led religious clubs
		The school district has a policy allowing after-school religious clubs
School Practices		
Y	N	Yes or No
		<a href="#">Religious Freedom Day</a> is recognized by each school
		Schools annually distribute <a href="#">information</a> about students' religious liberties to all students, parents, educators, and administrators ( <a href="#">sample video</a> )
		<a href="#">Character education</a> lessons include explaining the freedom to express one's faith in word and deed at school
		The schools offer a religious release time program ( <a href="#">sample</a> )
		The schools have student-led religious clubs ( <a href="#">sample</a> )
		The schools have after-school religious clubs ( <a href="#">sample</a> )