

Bible Study Release Classes

What you need to know

- Without the approval of the Knox County Schools Board of Education, 2nd through 5th grader students at Sterchi Elementary are being bused to The Church at Sterchi Hills for one hour of Bible education once a month.
- **It affects instructional time for all students Grade 2 and higher.**
 - Grade 2 students are missing language arts instructional time.
 - Older students are missing Encore classes.
- Teachers are not in favor of it due to lost instructional time.
- The normal approval process for this type of program was side-stepped by making it “only” a pilot program
- The Board of Education will act on this after assessing the success of the Sterchi program (In November or December at the latest).
- It is funded by a single organization - The Elgin Foundation.
- Children are given candy during the lesson time, which helps recruit new children to the program.
- It promotes only one view of Christian belief, not the multiplicity of of Christian faith traditions.
- Some of the content can be traumatic to children (see actual sample lesson material below).*

If this bothers you like it does us, please contact every member of the Board of Education, Superintendent, Bob Thomas, and others listed below. And please visit Ms. White in person to let her know how you feel about having your child miss instructional time to accommodate those who wish to participate in Bible Release classes. But most of all, do not give your child approval to participate in this controversial program.

Contact information:

BOE emails available at: <https://www.knoxschools.org/Page/2094>

Bob Thomas email: superintendent@knoxschools.org

Tammi Campbell, Ombudsman: tammi.campbell@knoxschools.org

Renee Kelly, Chief of Staff: reneekelly@knoxschools.org

Julie Thompson, Executive Director, Elementary Education: julie.thompson@knoxschools.org

Quoted from a lesson in materials provided by Elgin Foundation:

“The Bible tells us that God wants everyone to go to Heaven, but not everyone will. There is something that keeps us out of Heaven. Do you know what it is? Sin. sin is anything we say, think or do that is against God. (Repeat) The Bible tells us that we are ALL sinners. Romans 3:23 For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Remember the game we played? No one is perfect! We all fall short (or miss the mark) of the glory of God. Raise your hand if you have ever disobeyed your parents. Raise your hand if you have ever hit your brother or sister? Raise your hand if you have ever told a lie? If your hand is not in the air you are lying now. Did you get in trouble? God has to punish sin and the Bible tells us in Romans 6:23 The payment (punishment) of sin is death (total separation from God forever. That is what we deserve.).”

Sample letter for sending by email:

Dear _____,

As a resident of Knox County (with children in the school system) I am opposed to providing Bible Release Time in the Knox County Schools. This program would rob children of essential instructional time. It also blurs the line of state/church separation. Religious instruction does not belong in our schools or during critical school time. Every family has adequate time to provide study of their religion of choice during hours outside the school day.

Please do not move forward with making the pilot program at Sterchi Elementary a county-wide program. Bible Release Time affects all students. Our children deserve the opportunity to have their full instructional time every day.

Sincerely,