

# March 1 Deadline on Prayer and Bible Study Policies: Understanding Senate Bill 11 and How the Church Can Help

## February 13, 2026

During the 89th Texas Legislative session in 2025, [Senate Bill 11](#) passed. SB 11 is a law that allows and encourages public schools to set aside a period of prayer and reading of the Bible, or other religious texts, before normal school hours and separate from instructional time for both students and school employees. The bill is designed to respect individual beliefs without imposing any particular faith on students or staff.

## Deadline for Public School Adoption of SB 11:

1. SB 11 became effective on September 1, 2025.
2. This law requires that school board trustees for each Texas ISD formally decide and vote by March 1, 2026 to either adopt a policy establishing a voluntary prayer and/or religious text observance/study time or a school can choose to *not* implement this policy at all.

## Background of SB 11:

1. SB 11 was derived from the 2022 Coach Kennedy Supreme Court case in *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* ([Prayer Wins! Victory for Coach Kennedy at Supreme Court](#)).
2. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that teachers, coaches, and school employees all have the constitutional right to pray on a public school campus.
3. SB 965, a Texas law which also passed in 2025, addresses the right of a public school employee to engage in religious speech or prayer while on duty and codified the Kennedy decision in Texas.

## What the Attorney General's Office Will Do Under SB 11:

1. On request from the governing body of a school district or open enrollment charter school, the AG's office will provide advice on the best methods for implementation and compliance and a model consent form that may be used.
2. Defend the school district or open enrollment charter school in a cause of action arising from the adoption of a policy.

Attorney General Ken Paxton encourages all Texas schools to implement dedicated time for prayer and the reading of scripture in accordance with Senate Bill 11. He encourages children to begin with the Lord's Prayer as outlined in Matthew 6:9-13, and says our nation was founded on the rock of biblical

truth and America's success and strength were built upon this ([Attorney General of TX Ken Paxton Sept. 2, 2025 Press Release](#)).

## What Cannot be Done by Public Schools:

1. Prayers cannot be broadcast over public address systems.
2. Prayer periods cannot replace required instructional time.
3. Prayer and religious study cannot be mandated—it is strictly voluntary. Students cannot be pressured or coerced into taking part.
4. Students cannot participate without parents/guardians signing and submitting an opt-in form.
5. School policy must ensure that an established period for prayer and the reading of the Bible or other religious texts is not in the physical presence or within the hearing of a person for whom a signed consent form has not been submitted.

## How Our Churches Can Help:

1. Encourage your school principal and school board members to adopt this policy and give students and teachers the opportunity to pray and have Bible study.

Explain why our young people need biblical literacy (Article: [Importance of the Bible](#)). The teaching of the Bible in American education history has shaped literature, government and language (Article: [Influence in History and Culture](#); Article: [Why and How Schools Began in the United States](#)).

Young people are also seeking answers to life's problems, and prayer can reduce stress and anxiety and help with focus skills. It teaches gratitude and humility. Bible study is essential to our spiritual and moral development and provides a sense of purpose, meaning, relationship and community.

2. This is a great opportunity for churches to provide public school employees and students with prayer guides and Bible study resources.