



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BRIEFING

THE ADOPTION PROCESS FOR TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

PRESENTED TO THE

OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Board of Education’s authority for approving textbooks and other instructional materials is prescribed in the Virginia Constitution and in the *Code of Virginia*.

- Virginia Constitution, Article VIII, § 5 (d)
“It [the Board of Education] shall have authority to approve textbooks and instructional aids and materials for use in courses in the public schools of the Commonwealth.”
- *Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-238
“A. The Board of Education shall approve textbooks suitable for use in the public schools and shall have authority to approve instructional aids and materials for use in the public schools. Any school board may use textbooks not approved by the Board provided the school board selects such books in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board.”

The Board of Education’s regulations specifies the types of materials that may be adopted.

- *Regulations Governing Textbook Adoption*, 8 VAC 20-220-30
“Only those materials which are designed to provide basic support for the instructional program of a particular content area at an appropriate level will be adopted.”

STATE ADOPTION PROCESS OF TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

By regulation, the Virginia Board of Education has the authority to approve textbook and instructional materials in the following areas:

<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	
Language & Grammar	Literature	World History
Social Studies	Speech	U.S History
Mathematics	Drama	U.S. Government
Health	Journalism	Economics
Dictionaries	Foreign Languages	Mathematics
Science	Physical Science	Health
Reading	Earth-space Science	Dictionaries
Spelling	Biology	Sociology
Handwriting	Chemistry	Geography
	English, Grammar, & Composition	

The following process summarizes the state Board’s actions regarding the adoption of textbooks for a particular area:

- The Board approves the textbook and instructional materials adoption process. The Virginia Department of Education administers the adoption process on behalf of the Board.
- The Department releases evaluation criteria to publishers, again on behalf of the Board.

- The Department recruits and selects evaluation committees, on behalf of the Board. The committees have representation from all regions of the state.
- Publishers indicate their intent to submit textbooks and instructional materials for the adoption process.
- On behalf of the Board, the Department notifies the publishers of evaluation committee members for the purpose of sending all textbooks and instructional materials under consideration for adoption to these reviewers. The publishers must include documentation that indicates the correlation between their textbooks and/or instructional materials and the corresponding *Standards of Learning*.
- The evaluation committee members review the materials independently.
- The evaluation committees meet for consensus reviews with Department staff.
- The Department submits the evaluations to the publishers for review. Publishers may request reconsiderations of the evaluations if they believe the committees overlooked information related to the correlations. The Department responds to publishers' reconsideration requests.
- Prices for the reviewed textbooks and instructional materials are received by the Department.

- The state Board then considers the list of recommended textbooks and instructional materials for first review.
- On behalf of the Board, the Department makes the textbooks and instructional materials available for public comment.
- The Board reviews all public comment and considers the adoption list for final review.
- Following Board action, the Department posts a list of adopted textbooks and instructional materials with bid prices on the Department's Web site under *Textbooks and Instructional Materials* (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/mat_review_main.html).
- On behalf of the Board, the Department completes six-year contracts with publishers.

The entire adoption process for textbooks in one particular area takes approximately one and a half years, beginning with the Virginia Board of Education approving the textbook and instructional materials adoption schedule and concluding with signed six-year contracts with publishers. The most recent state adoption cycle occurred in 2004-2005, for 6-12 English and literature, K-12 mathematics, and foreign languages.

LOCAL ADOPTION PROCESS OF TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Constitution of Virginia vests the authority for day-to-day operations of school divisions with their respective local school boards. Consequently, these local school boards select materials to meet local needs from the adoption list.

In addition, the *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-238) provides that any local school board may use textbooks not approved by the state Board, provided the school board selects the books in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board of Education (8VAC20-230-30).

These regulations require the following major steps in the local adoption process:

- An evaluation committee is appointed by the local school board to review and evaluate the textbooks.
- The evaluation committee shall be representative of the supervisory staff of the central office, elementary or secondary school administrators or both, and classroom teachers of the subject field, and shall be nondiscriminatory with respect to sex and race.
- The committee must first examine and evaluate the appropriate textbooks on the state-adopted list.

- The evaluation committee shall submit in writing its recommendations and supporting data via the division superintendent to the school board for action in sufficient time for the adoptions by the local school boards to be effective July 1 of odd-numbered years.
- The criteria to be used by the evaluation committee in the review and assessment of textbooks must have the official approval of the local school board and be on file in the office of the local school board.
- The division superintendent certifies to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, on a form prescribed by the Virginia Department of Education, a list of all books adopted and states that all books have been adopted in compliance with the appropriate regulations and that the prices paid for books are available upon request.
- The price charged for any textbook adopted should not be in excess of that charged elsewhere in the United States.

APPENDIX

GENERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING K-12 TEXTBOOKS

1. How many students are there currently in Virginia?

As of March 31, 2007, average daily membership in Virginia public school divisions was approximately 1.2 million students.

2. What is the average amount spent on textbooks per student? (elementary, middle, high)

State funding for textbooks is provided as an entitlement payment in the Standards of Quality and local school divisions must provide a local share based upon a composite index of local ability-to-pay. The formula to calculate the entitlement payment (on a per student basis) is based upon expenditure data provided by school divisions. For fiscal year 2007-2008, state funds were provided to cover costs based on a per pupil amount of \$100.28. (This per pupil amount is adjusted in every biennial budget.)

The state per pupil amount reflects only the costs of textbooks (both hardcopy and on-line content) and does not include costs related to instructional materials.

The following table provides additional information on the state per pupil amount for textbooks:

	Appropriated 2004-2005	Appropriated 2005-2006	Appropriated 2006-2007
Per Pupil Amount	\$63.12	\$63.12	\$100.28

The following table provides additional information regarding the expenditures reported by school divisions. These expenditures are used as the basis for calculating the state per pupil amount:

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Statewide Textbook Expenditures	\$97.9 million	\$99.0 million	\$109.8 million
Statewide Technology- Software/On-line Content	\$17.4 million	\$15.4 million	\$17.1 million
Total	\$115.3 million	\$114.4 million	\$126.9 million
Percent Increase		-1.6%	10%

3. Is there a known percentage increase in the costs of textbooks within the Commonwealth of Virginia?

Publishers may request a price increase two years after a contract goes into effect. The increase in the price of approved textbooks generally follows the Consumer Price Index. Also see question 2.

4. How often are books updated and reviewed by the Board?

Textbooks at both the elementary and secondary level are adopted for a six-year period, according to a schedule determined by the state Board.

5. Do adoptions occur more frequently at different levels of education?

See question 4.

6. When a book is updated and accepted, does the Board frequently invoke its ability to allow continued use of pre-existing texts for the statutorily authorized period of at least three years?

Local school boards may adopt textbooks using a local process, so long as the boards comply with state regulations.

7. What is the average increase in costs when new textbooks are adopted?

See question 2. Costs incurred by school division can vary, depending upon the individual needs of the division and when new textbooks are adopted.

8. In recognizing the requirement of Virginia history (generally taught at fourth or fifth grades), does the Board recommend a national textbook or a textbook with the sole topic of Virginia history?

The state Board recommends a Virginia-specific textbook. There are two textbooks on the adopted list: Harcourt School Publisher's *Horizons: Virginia* and Scott Foresman's (Pearson Education, Inc.) *Virginia*.

9. What are the requirements for homeschoolers?

Parents who wish to homechool a child may do so if they:

- 1) Have a high school diploma or higher;
- 2) Are a teacher of qualifications prescribed by the state Board;
- 3) Have enrolled the child in a correspondence course approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; *or*
- 4) Provides a program of study or curriculum which, in the judgment of the division superintendent, includes Standards of Learning objectives or provides evidence of being able or provide an adequate education.

Virginia law related to homeschooling does not directly address textbooks.