

# Washington State Guidance for Selection of Instructional Materials

To Meet District and State Standards



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# ***Washington State Guidance for Selection of Instructional Materials to Meet State and District Standards***

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# Guidance for the Selection of Instructional Materials To Meet State and District Standards

## Introduction

The importance of providing effective instructional materials that are well aligned to Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in all Washington State classrooms cannot be overstated. The process of selection and adoption of appropriate instructional materials for all content areas must be well planned and implemented in every district to assure access to such quality materials for every student. It is not uncommon for many people to consider instructional materials or textbooks to be the “curriculum”. **Curriculum** in a standards based system refers to the written documents that define what students are expected to know and be able to do. **Instructional materials** in this document refer to the tools used to support the defined, written curriculum. This guide looks at the selection and use of instructional materials from two perspectives:

- **State Level Perspective:** The first section of the guide includes information to consider as districts prepare to adopt new instructional materials. It describes state requirements and state resources relevant to the selection of instructional materials by local school districts. State RCWs and WACs describing legal requirements for districts as they adopt instructional materials are included, as well as a detailed description of available state resources that will assist districts in effectively screening and evaluating instructional materials for alignment to state standards. Prominent among these are the Washington State Instructional Materials Review Reports, developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
- **District Level Perspective:** The second section of the guide includes information relevant to processes for selection and adoption of instructional materials processes at the local district level. Included in this section are suggested processes for adoption committee makeup and facilitation, as well as samples and tools to support the process.

The process of selection and adoption of effective and well-aligned materials has become both complex and compelling as we move Washington’s schools through a standards based instruction system. Historically, basal textbooks were the focal point in instructional materials adoption processes. The textbook was seen as the single and most significant instructional tool used by classroom teachers, in all courses and at all grade levels. In today’s classrooms, we must make available a more comprehensive set of instructional materials in order to provide teachers with the necessary tools to effectively teach the academic standards outlined for each content area. This often includes resources such as technology programs, supplementary reading materials, or hands-on materials. Therefore, it is imperative

that districts use a process to choose their materials that is carefully outlined and clearly designed to align our instructional tools with the academic standards identified by their community and the State of Washington.

Large districts may have the luxury of additional professional staff members who are trained as specialists in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Those districts typically have defined policies and procedures for their curriculum work, including the selection of instructional materials. Smaller districts often do not have district-level staff to complete extensive curriculum projects; smaller districts often must assign such instructional responsibilities to already busy principals or identified talented classroom teachers who have limited time, training, and experience.

This guide has been developed primarily for use by smaller sized school districts throughout the state. The intent is that administrators and teachers can use this guide as a structure for aligning district curriculum to state standards and in the selection of appropriate instructional materials to support the teaching and learning of those standards.

### **Goals for Instructional Materials Selection Guidance**

The primary goals for this guide are to:

- Provide districts a guide for the selection of instructional materials that meet state and district standards.
- Define a generic process that is adaptable for use by both large and small school districts.
- Include both state and district policies that impact the selection of instructional materials in one convenient resource.
- Outline procedures and identify tools that can assist with a successful selection and adoption process.
- Include sample documents applicable to the selection and adoption process.

This guidance document is intentionally a brief overview, not a comprehensive process. The contents of this guide are not all-inclusive or exhaustive in the type of study and support needed to fully implement a system for curriculum review and materials adoption processes. Under each topic mentioned, there are other activities and ideas that could be added. Also, districts differ throughout the state, and an exact process for one district may not be effective in another unless some modifications are made to it. This guide is a template, a structure to assist in the improvement of instruction and to help students experience more academic success. Users of the guide should feel comfortable in manipulating the structure to more cost-effectively meet the goals of the district.

A preliminary draft of the guide was made available at the OSPI 2006 Summer Institutes, where participants had an opportunity to review the materials and provide suggestions for further work.

## State Level Perspective

Central to the work in school reform in Washington State has been the work surrounding the Common Characteristics of High Performing Schools. This large body of research cites nine characteristics that make a successful school. They are as follows:

- Clear and Shared Focus
- High Standards and Expectations
- Effective School Leadership
- High Levels of Collaboration and Communication
- ***Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards***
- Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning
- Focused Professional Development
- Supportive Learning Environment
- High Levels of Community and Parent Involvement

As the context of the nine characteristics is examined, others such as Robert Marzano's work on What Works in Schools (Marzano, 2003) makes clear that providing students with a "guaranteed and viable curriculum..." that is well-aligned to academic standards is a critical piece of achieving high student achievement. However, this research also points out that high standards for every student cannot be achieved by curriculum alone. While educators continually strive to identify highly effective instructional programs, often searching for the "silver bullet" solution, the selection and implementation of quality instructional materials must include also include a strong emphasis on quality instruction and ongoing professional development as critical components of any effective program implementation.

## State Legal Requirements

In the state of Washington, RCW 28A.320.230 (instructional materials) outlines each school district's legal requirements as they select and approve instructional materials for their students. These requirements include:

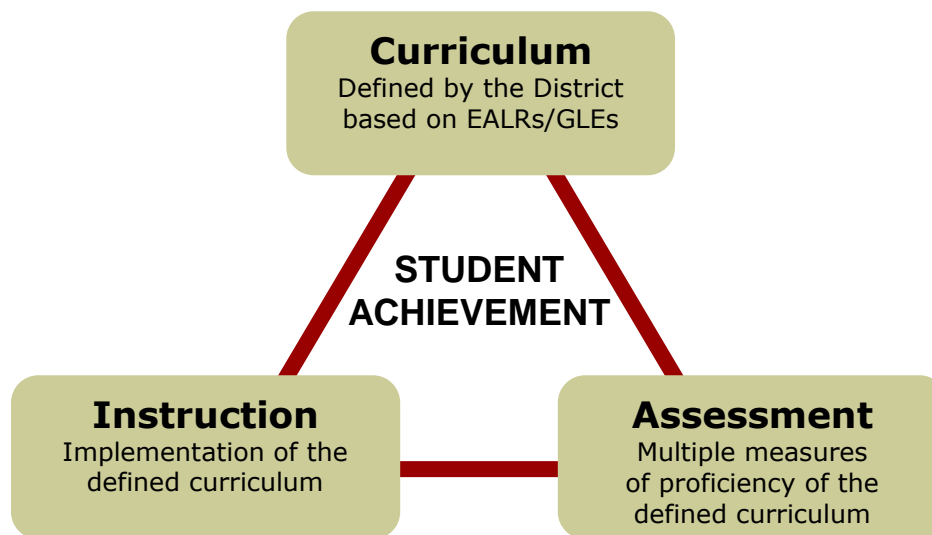
- The adoption of a Board Policy outlining the district's selection process for instructional materials.
- The formation of an Instructional Materials Committee at the district level, whose membership includes professional staff and parents.
- District approval to include consideration and review of bias and fairness in each selection process.
- Approval or disapproval of district instructional materials be made by the Board of Directors.

In addition Washington State RCW 28A.640.020 (elimination of discrimination) outlines district responsibilities to provide policy assuring the elimination of discrimination in district instructional materials. WAC 392.190.055 further outlines rules regarding the elimination of sex bias in textbooks and instructional materials. Federal law further requires through the IDEA 2004, that districts provide access for appropriate print materials to student with print disabilities (National Instructional

Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) Go to: <http://nimas.cast.org> or/and <http://www.nimac.us/>. As districts proceed with the selection and adoption of instructional materials, it is critical that the process includes district policy and procedures that provide the requirements indicated in Washington State law. Samples of Board Policy and procedures can be found in Appendix A.

### State Resources for Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials

A critical concept in selecting instructional materials that will assist students in achieving high academic standards is the concept of **alignment**. As outlined in the Common Characteristics of High Performing Schools – **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment must be aligned with standards**. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has developed a number of resources to assist districts in identifying instructional materials that are well aligned with state standards – the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). Alignment for student achievement is described in our standards based system best by the following alignment model.



To assist districts in the ongoing process of alignment, important resources include the Washington State learning standards documents for each academic content area ([www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct](http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct)). In addition, important information on assessment alignment is available including support information related to the *Washington Assessment of Student Learning* (WASL) at [www.k12.wa.us/Assessment/WASL](http://www.k12.wa.us/Assessment/WASL). Critical WASL test specifications can be found here as well as information on test specific student performance on various strands of the WASL. This information will assist districts in focusing on strengths and weaknesses of current programs.

## Washington State Instructional Materials Reviews

Critical resources in the early stages of the selection and adoption process are the Washington State instructional materials review reports and documents. The instructional materials review reports are currently available to online at <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/publishernotices.aspx>.

### ***Misconception Alert!***

It is important for district personnel to understand how these reviews were developed and specifically what they are designed to achieve. The Instructional Materials Reviews are ***alignment studies*** available of submitted commercial materials to the Washington State GLEs. During each review of reading programs, publishers were invited to participate by creating a self-study document citing specific examples of how their materials align with specific grade level expectations. Following this submission, a panel of subject area educators examined the publisher's self-study to verify the GLE alignment of the content, cognitive demand and context as cited by the publisher.

**It is equally important to understand that the results of these reviews do not constitute a state list of approved instructional programs. Specifically, the reviews are not endorsements of programs over other programs, nor are they rankings of preferred instructional programs. In conducting these reviews the state has not created a list from which districts must select.** In examining the results, it will be apparent that most, but not all, available materials are included in the review as publishers chose voluntarily to participate in the process.

While the Instructional Materials Reviews are not intended to shortcut the decision making process for districts, much valuable time may be saved by district personnel in the labor-intensive screening of multiple programs as a result of studying the information available in these reviews. This will allow the local district committee to focus often limited time and resources on examining materials that are found to be more strongly aligned to state and local standards.

It is strongly suggested that districts include careful review and study of all available OSPI resources relevant to the content area, as well as their own student achievement data as they begin the process of selection and adoption of new instructional materials. Participants in the process will benefit from becoming very familiar with this information as they begin the selection process and will be assured of increased effectiveness in identifying materials that may assist students in reaching identified academic standards.

## Washington State Master Price Agreement

As an outcome of continued cooperation with publisher representatives regarding the needs for instructional materials in Washington schools, the state has negotiated Washington State Master Price Agreements for K–3 Reading in 2006 and in 2007 for Grade 4–10 Reading qualified materials. The parameters of this agreement include publishers holding the current prices of core materials for six (6) years to all districts in the state of Washington. Savings offered to Washington State districts will match those available to large “state adoption” states such as California, Florida and

Texas. While Washington State is considered "non-state adoption state" this agreement has tremendous potential for savings to all Washington State districts, and districts should make every effort to be informed about the details.

The Master Price Agreements can be found online at [www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/reading/ReadingProgMasterPriceAgrmnt.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/reading/ReadingProgMasterPriceAgrmnt.aspx) . Washington State districts will benefit whether they purchase directly from these publishers or through the Northwest Textbook Depository.

## District Level Perspectives

As a local school district prepares to select and adopt new instructional materials for a selected content area, it is important that the district first identify the specific state and/or local standards (curriculum) that the new materials will address. State standards, identified through the Essential Academic Learning Requirements and the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) will need to be examined, along with any local district standards. Often they will be one and the same.

Once the local curriculum is defined, the next step is the selection of instructional materials that effectively align with the standards for student achievement. It can be assumed that most published instructional materials will not align completely with the identified state and local standards (curriculum). Instructional programs are written to meet the needs of all states in the nation, not just to meet Washington standards. Therefore, many times, the instructional materials will include content, activities and lessons that are more inclusive than the district standards. This requires the district to align its standards with the chosen instructional materials by identifying the content to be taught and the content to be omitted from the selected materials. In some cases, there might be curricular content not included in the chosen materials, thus requiring supplemental instructional materials to be identified.

In Washington State, districts have the responsibility for selecting appropriate classroom instructional materials for their students. Smaller districts often do not have human or fiscal resources needed to devote large amounts of time in the selection process. As a result, districts will find the *Washington State Instructional Materials Review* reports not only helpful to their process, but also useful in reducing the time requirements and cost of the adoption process and purchase of the materials.

Districts are trusted to make intentional decisions regarding the critical role the introduction of new instructional program will play on the overall development of the content area program. The effective introduction of a new program, with comprehensive professional development can provide a substantial influence on staff use of the materials, the pacing of content introduction, assessment practices, support for best instructional practices (pedagogy), and for the overall organization of the selected program or course.

As districts begin their review process it is important to clarify for all constituents the specific objectives and purposes for the process to select and adopt new materials. Certainly the primary purpose for all districts will be the improvement of student performance in the selected content area. However, other reasons for new adoptions can include:

- Lack of student academic achievement in a specified strand or grade band.
- Current materials not aligned to state and local district standards.
- Current materials out of print or obsolete.
- Need for new materials that will assist staff in change in instructional practice.
- Community, staff, national or state pressure to purchase updated materials.

## **District Policies**

As a local district begins a selection and adoption process, leaders of the process should review relevant district policies and procedures to assure the process will follow district policy, as well as adhere to the requirements of state law. (See on *State Legal Requirements page X* and Appendix A.) Each district should have in place the specific policies and procedures for the development and maintenance of its instructional program. These policies will reflect what is required in state law as well as the individual characteristics of the community. As noted earlier, districts are required by law to have an Instructional Materials Committee to review and recommend all selected instructional materials, which is then presented for approval to the local district's Board of Directors. In addition, local school boards approve the policies and procedures for the development and maintenance of curriculum, selection of instructional materials, assessment of student academic achievement, and district program evaluation.

## **K–12 Curriculum Review and Instructional Materials Adoption**

A comprehensive review of kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum and instructional materials is the most effective and thorough approach to curriculum improvement. An advantage to a K–12 approach is to bring coherence to district efforts for overall school improvement. Such a process encourages more effective communication leading to more accurate vertical and horizontal alignment of standards, instruction and assessment across the system. The K–12 curriculum and instructional materials reviews should be inclusive to meet the needs of all students. The process must consider needs for students receiving special education, gifted and talented students, English Language Learners and other students with special needs. District K–12 cadres of teacher leaders can assist with implementation, help improve instruction in targeted areas and assist with the evaluation of the program. A new result of this K–12 process builds increased capacity for teacher development and student achievement.

## **District Level Curriculum Mapping**

In the initial stages of the selection process, districts will benefit from the use of a comprehensive curriculum mapping process to determine which content is assigned to each grade level, as well as the necessary time and/or pacing requirements. Most commercial instructional materials programs include vast amounts of content that go well beyond what is practical or desirable to instruct at any one level. When a district has mapped its curriculum for each content area in kindergarten through grade 12, the curriculum committee can then work with the specifically identified standards, skills and content to include in each grade level as they begin their screening of materials. It is also helpful to identify the available instructional time allotted for the content area in each grade level as the committee develops a more detailed picture of what is needed for their district. (i.e., Elementary reading 90 minutes, elementary math 75 minutes, etc.) At the secondary level, the curriculum committee should assign the appropriate grade level expectations and content for each course (i.e., United States History, 2 semesters, 55 minute periods; Word Processing, 1 semester, 50 minute period).

The committee can pare the curriculum to a manageable amount of content for instruction – one where teachers and students can both succeed. Such decisions hold the district accountable for a comprehensive, consistent and effective instructional program where teachers do not “pick and choose what they want to teach” and students receive a consistent program from year to year. Omissions and repetitions of content will no longer be a concern. Both student academic assessment and program evaluation can be effectively and accurately accomplished. The district can assure the community of a quality educational program.

### **District-wide Adoption for Coherence**

Washington State local districts have the responsibility to select the most effective instructional materials for their communities that will assure all local students the opportunity to learn the State Essential Academic Learning Requirements. For all districts the selection and purchase of instructional materials are high cost activities that play a primary role in shaping the future success of their students. To increase coherence of learning opportunities for students, as well as maximize investment costs of materials and training, the practice of a single district-wide adoption is increasingly pursued by Washington State local districts. With such a practice, the district selection committee will be charged with recommending a consistent adopted instructional materials program for all schools within the district, rather than presenting a number of acceptable programs among which schools can choose.

Local districts who have pursued district-wide approaches to adoptions have found numerous other advantages, which include:

- Support for vertical and horizontal alignment of standards to instructional materials;
- Teacher collaboration on student performance within and across buildings;
- Increased efficiency in detecting and correcting gaps or omissions of content and skills;
- Increased capacity within a district to improve instruction in targeted areas;
- Consistency in instructional programs for highly mobile students as they move from school to school within a district;
- Efficiency in maintenance, monitoring and adjustment of materials to meet standards;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of student assessment and program evaluation
- Increased consistency in professional development, including training of new staff each year; and
- Effective identification, development, and training of interventions and enrichment activities for all students.

### **Superintendent/District Office Obligations**

Superintendents and district office administrators have direct responsibilities for the curriculum development and instructional materials selection process. In larger districts, the policies are often established by district office administrators and principals after discussion with content-area specialists and teachers. In smaller districts with limited number of administrators, an individual district office

administrator or school principal may have the sole responsibility for curriculum along with many other duties. Because of a very heavy work-load, this administrator or principal may be assisted by a classroom teacher interested in the specific content area, i.e., a high school math teacher may facilitate the K–12 math committee or a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher may facilitate the elementary science instructional materials adoption.

Additional duties of the district office administrators may include:

- Identify a staff person to facilitate the selection and adoption process.
- Develop budget for adoption costs, i.e., release time for committee members, purchase of materials, staff development and other initial adoption costs.
- Develop a communication plan.
- Identify on-going implementation and maintenance costs.
- Determine timeline for completion of selection and implementation.
- Define line-of-authority and decision-making process.
- Determine whether to pilot materials.
- Determine impact of curriculum/adoption on other current programs.
- Determine instructional time allocations per day.
- Develop plan to align curriculum with selected materials.
- Identify impact of revised program on technology needs.
- Determine impact of revised program on staffing.
- Identify sunset considerations – those materials which will be discontinued as a result of the curriculum revisions and new materials.

### **Role of Facilitator**

Careful selection of the facilitator is required. The facilitator must have an in-depth understanding of content-area curriculum, the state Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Grade Level Expectations, as well as the personal and professional skills to ensure a fair and effective selection process, whether it is a K–6 reading adoption, a middle school health and fitness program or a high school Chemistry course. In addition to many of the administrative duties listed earlier, the facilitator's role includes:

- Determine committee member selection process/criteria.
- Identify Selection/Adoption/Curriculum Committee members.
- Define roles of all participants.
- Plan and facilitate all meetings.
- Implement a communication plan informing district teachers, administrators, parents and school board.

The facilitator must understand the importance of in-depth planning and must anticipate what will take place throughout the adoption process. Often times, the success of an adoption is contingent upon the knowledge and skills of the facilitator, and his/her ability to anticipate what lies ahead.

### **Committee Member Characteristics**

One of the most significant duties of the facilitator is the careful selection of committee members. The best committee members have the ability to remain open to all discussion and perspectives, and at the same time, be able to make decisions based upon the objective evidence gathered during the process. Other characteristics of successful committee members are:

- Excellent group and interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to see varied points of view
- Able to devote time required for completion of project
- Confidential
- Respected both personally and professionally by colleagues and community
- Academically interested in the content area

### **Committee Representation**

Committee membership is important. Depending upon the district demographics, the committee may include some or all of the following members:

- Classroom teachers
- Representatives from all schools involved in the district
- District Office Administrators and/or principal
- Representatives from key support roles i.e., special education, Title I, ELL, Librarian and other staff
- Parents and Community Members
- Education Association Representative
- Students (high school level)
- Experienced and beginning teachers
- Gender and ethnic diversity

### **Committee Responsibilities and Structures**

Committee responsibilities and structures will vary from district to district. However, there are some responsibilities that are consistent from discipline to discipline and from district to district. Such responsibilities of the committee members include:

- Study the research and best practices for the content area.
- Review student data including demographic and achievement data.
- Study the *Washington State Instructional Materials Review* from OSPI, both criteria for review and outcome of state review.
- Gather information from teachers and other staff members using interviews, surveys or other methods.
- Examine the EALRs and GLEs and district curriculum materials.
- Establish clear definitions of significant terms.
- Review time allocations for content area.
- Determine method for decision-making; a consensus model is recommended.

**Structure of Committee(s)** – When possible, a district will want to complete a K–12 curriculum revision and adoption of instructional materials assigned to the primary committee. In most cases, a K–12 process will be the most efficient and effective use of budget and personnel. In larger district, it may be possible to ask a K–12 steering committee to be chosen along with expanded level committees to do the specific work of evaluation the material and analyzing and revising the curriculum. In smaller district, the responsibilities as suggested below may need to be carried out by one central committee, depending on resources and expertise.

**Steering Committee** – A K–12 steering committee includes the representatives from each of the level committees. The steering committee provides the broad perspectives, establishes the K–12 content-area goals, and other topics concerning the discipline. The steering committee functions as an umbrella over the more-detail oriented level committees – it looks at the big picture and represents community stakeholders.

**Level Committees** – The level committees usually complete the selection of the materials for review, correlate standards to the materials, and assist the implementation of the program at the grade or course level. At the secondary level, there are often multiple courses within a discipline that must be included in the process, i.e., discipline of science includes earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, etc. However, the basic selection process remains the same for all levels. In larger districts a more complex structure and a larger number of participants may be needed to ensure adequate involvement and representation in the process and to obtain an appropriate decision. The level committees complete the details.

### **Screening and Evaluating Comprehensive Instructional Materials**

The screening and evaluation of the comprehensive instructional materials follow after completing the items noted above; screening takes place after the committee members have had opportunity to become knowledgeable about their content instructional requirements and their district demographic requirements.

The selection committee will complete two processes: 1) the initial screening of all sample materials, narrowing the options for more in-depth scrutiny to two or three samples, and 2) the second step is to more fully evaluate the two or three most appropriate sample materials identified during the screening process. A “tentative” finalist choice will be identified at this time. (See sample screening and evaluation tools – Appendix D.)

#### **Screening Sample Materials**

Suggestions for effective screening include:

- Screen student textbook, teacher editions and assessment materials only. The numerous ancillary materials extend or support instruction, but are not the prime instructional tool for the program.
- Examine the materials reviewed by the state alignment studies;

- Develop an objective, broad screening tool based upon GLEs and other important district standards. For efficiency, identify a few of the district's most significant GLEs to screen each sample publication (See Resources, pg. 23).
- Eliminate programs that do not align to district and state standards immediately; no matter how impressive they might be they do not meet the academic needs of the students.

Thorough objective screening will eliminate most of the sample materials; usually not more than three publications will remain for final evaluation after screening is complete. Some additional questions to ask are:

- Is there evidence of program effectiveness among all teachers, not just the most knowledgeable?
- Has the program been tested in schools?
- Does the program reflect current research?
- Are the materials consistent with the GLEs?
- Does the program provide explicit instruction in key GLEs?

### **Evaluating the Top Choices Identified During the Screening Process**

After narrowing the number of choices to two or three, a more thorough, in-depth evaluation process is completed on the remaining publications. Expand the evaluation tool to include a larger number of significant GLEs, instructional strategies and assessment items. Some topics to remember when evaluating the two or three finalists:

- Limit number of finalist programs to three or fewer.
- Establish objective in-depth evaluation tool (usually a further extension of the screening tools).
- Complete a horizontal skills/concept trace in finalist.
- Complete a vertical skills/concept trace in finalist.
- Follow skill/concept at each level evaluating sequence of instruction over a few days.
- Evaluate the instructional strategies suggested for teachers. Take four to six over-arching items to assess the design, coherence and systematic nature of instruction.

To identify the finalist, the title recommended to be adopted, utilize a consensus process (See A Word about Consensus, pg. 17) using the data collected by the committee during the in-depth evaluation. The evaluation tool should produce concrete, objective data comparing the different publications. This data should then explicitly lead to the final recommendation. The selection is not a subjective vote, but the result of careful analysis of the publication based upon the pre-determined criteria contained in the screening and evaluation tools.

### **After the “Finalist” has been Chosen**

Once the committee has come to consensus as to their first choice or their “finalist”, there are several other tasks to complete before the decision is to become public knowledge and a recommendation to the Instructional Materials Committee (IMC) and the school board. The facilitator and the committee will want to:

- Contact other districts using the “finalist” to determine their success.
- Align the “finalist” to GLEs and district standards – identify gaps in instruction.
- Determine instructional time allotments at each grade level.
- Complete sex bias and fairness forms and Instructional Materials Committee forms.
- Conduct informal staff and community review before board meeting and approval.
- Work with principals to determine materials order (including quantities, cost, etc.).
- Develop a list of ancillary materials in order of priority.

### **Formal Adoption Procedures**

Once the adoption committee has finalized its decision, then the formal process for adoption must be completed. (See sample forms for IMC and Board submission – Appendix E) At this time, the facilitator will:

- Gain IMC approval of finalist.
- Present to School Board of Directors for approval.
- School Board approves the adoption.

After the school board has approved the recommendation, the district has several duties prior to the use of the materials in the building. Usually new adoptions are introduced to teachers and students at the first of the school year. Prior to this time, the facilitator will complete the following activities:

- Develop an in-service/staff development plan for the initial year of adoption including all teachers, para-educators, administrators, and substitutes.
- Order materials for each school including materials for special education, Title I, ELL, and other identified students within district.
- Build a staff development plan for years II and III.
- Determine program evaluation plan for years I, II, and III.
- Evaluate student academic achievement using new program at end of years I, II, and III.

### **Additional Committee Responsibilities**

The adoption review committee will remain intact throughout years one through three, and beyond as needed. During these years, the committee as a group and as individual members will help with the implementation of the program. They will:

- Assist with initial implementation of program at the school level.
- Assist with staff development district-wide and at school.
- Assist teachers who are having difficulty with new materials.
- Assist with program monitoring and evaluation.
- Monitor implementation throughout years I, II, and III.
- Assist new teachers and substitute teachers to succeed with the materials.

### **Implementation of the Program**

After the completion of a curriculum revision and the selection of new instructional materials, the district will want to build into its budget sufficient funds to maintain the program with fidelity. Sometimes a district will discontinue purchasing components,

reduce in-service opportunities or begin to supplement without serious consideration given to the reasons for the action. Sometimes an individual teacher or group of teachers will make revisions without thought given to the greater impact the change might mean to the district at large. Therefore, district curriculum administrators and individual principals must be knowledgeable of the academic programs to ensure fidelity of the program and be responsible to support teachers to become knowledgeable in the content area in which the material will be used to ensure greater academic achievement for each student. For a successful program to remain successful, it must be carefully monitored and supervised year after year. Only then can any flaws be detected and corrected.

## Hints for a Successful Adoption

The following pages are suggestions and tools for use in the review of the state standards, identification of district standards, and selection and adoption of instructional materials to ensure student academic success.

### Challenges to Consider

There are a variety of things that can effect a district adoption. Before embarking upon an adoption, some potential challenges to consider are:

- Problems with the selection of committee members (chosen for inappropriate reasons);
- Inadequate timeframe for completion of project;
- Inadequate understanding of budget parameters by participants in the process;
- Inadequate understanding of committee's assignment or task;
- Inadequate understanding of criteria for evaluation and selection of materials;
- Strong bias on part of committee members;
- Ineffective leadership by the facilitator or committee chairperson;
- Lack of clear direction and authority of the committee;
- Inadequate tools for evaluation;
- Lack of understanding of publishing industry.

### To Pilot or Not to Pilot?

Some districts have a history of piloting a variety of programs before finalizing a decision; other districts have a 'no pilot' policy. Pilots can be very effective or very divisive. Some suggestions are:

- Check local district policies and history for guidelines.
- If you decide to pilot:
  - Limit pilot to finalist program(s) only.
  - Establish criteria for evaluation of the pilot in advance of completing the pilot.
  - Consider committee members only to pilot, (they have more familiarity and understanding of the materials).
  - Limit to one or two instructional units, rotating between teachers and grade levels.
  - Examine student outcome; survey teachers, parents, and administrators.
- Advantages of piloting:
  - Increases "buy-in" on part of staff.
  - Learn more about the logistics of the program.
  - Observe student response to the materials.
  - Build integrity into the adoption process.
- Possible disadvantages of piloting:
  - Lead to incorrect conclusions if used by teachers with insufficient understanding of the program.
  - Lead to or increase divisiveness if more than one program is piloted.

- Shift the focus to superficial issues such as pictures, print layout, ease of use of teacher's edition, etc.
- Once pilot is over and decision made, some staff are displeased with the outcome.

### **A Word about Consensus**

This guide suggests the use of a consensus process when reviewing/developing curriculum and in the selection of instructional materials. Since the district standards/curriculum are a reflection of the total community, it is appropriate that a consensus model be used. To ensure that end, the adoption committees must strive to collect objective data for use in making the ultimate decision.

*“Consensus is a mind set as well as a process. Authentic consensus requires that team members are more concerned about community and less concerned about power. Authentic consensus requires that team members are more focused on successful team productivity and less focused on individual credit. Consensus demands mature behavior on the part of all team members. The leader must give sponsorship to the consensus process by holding self and others accountable for open, honest participation.”*

Hoffman and Ness, Vista Associates, 1998

There are a variety of consensus models available for use. Knowing the characteristics of the committee, the facilitator can choose a consensus model that is effective with such a committee. Coming to consensus is the goal for the IMC as it finalizes its choice of instructional materials for recommendation to the administrators and the Board of Directors. Using a consensus model usually defuses tension and frustration that sometimes occurs in such committees. It allows the committee to make the best decision for its district, school and each student. It reminds the committee that their first priority is the selection of instructional materials that will ensure student success.

A decision-making or consensus model based on objective criteria and procedures should be developed as one of the first duties of the committee so that all members understand how the final decision is to be made. Some suggestions are:

- Use objective criteria for evaluation and for determining the final decision.
- Consider using a formal ranking tool to sort and prioritize information.
- Follow the original process, and trust the process to bring consensus.

### **Involvement of Community Members, Parents, and Students**

Often districts will want to include parents, other community members, and sometimes students to serve on a curriculum committee. This may be a challenge simply because of the time required on the part of the volunteer and the committee's schedule; other times there may be no parent or community member available who has the academic background to be an asset to the committee. However, there are often parents and other community members who can manipulate their schedule to be an active participant. Sometimes high school students can be included on the committee if they have the time and academic interest. Some additional practical ways to include these important partners and to receive feedback from them may be:

- Host open houses at the district office/school using committee members as the hosts and speakers. The committee members are usually the most knowledgeable of the new materials and can provide to parents the reasons for the selection and how the choice is to be used in the classroom.
- Invite parents to an evening meeting at their child’s school where the materials will be on display and explained. Give parents an opportunity to write their questions or responses.
- Publish that the instructional materials will be on display in the district office before the school board meetings for parents to review.

### **Working with Publisher Representatives**

In most cases, the publisher representative who calls on the district will become a very helpful person in the adoption process; treat them as respected colleagues and as partners in the process. Some guidelines that will help the process to be more efficient:

- Ask publisher representative to work with the facilitator only and to have no contact with individual committee members or schools.
- Samples from publisher go only to the facilitator.
- Expect to see all components of a program (sample sets often are incomplete).
- Keep publisher representative apprised of timeline and expectations throughout the process and decisions.
- Do not accept free “gifts”; remain objective and ethical.
- Request immediate phone access to consultant on days of screening and evaluation of programs.

### **Conducting Meeting Tips**

A well-run meeting will help the committee to accomplish its goals timely, efficiently and effectively. Some meeting tips are:

- Be well-planned and have a printed agenda.
- Begin and end on time.
- Restate overall purpose to focus meeting.
- Use strategies to get all members to participate.
- Evaluate the meeting.
- Create sub-committees when needed.
- Write minutes of meeting before members depart.
- Full-day meetings are often most efficient for committees because teachers are not interrupted and can focus totally on the assignment.

### **Communication Tips**

The success of an adoption often hinges upon the communication between the committee and the teachers and administrators who are serving in the schools. Those people are entitled to know how the process is moving ahead as the decisions will impact both their students and themselves. Some tips to build effective communications are:

- Meeting Minutes:
  - Ask a member to keep notes throughout the meeting.

- Complete “draft” of meeting minutes before departure from meeting.
- Discuss minutes with principals and other administrators.
- Have committee members report to faculty.
- Distribute minutes to all faculty and staff.
- Allow time for staff feedback at beginning of each meeting.
- Have administrative representative report to the administrators at each meeting.
- Keep superintendent and board up to date. (No one likes surprises.) Effective communications will usually defuse any concern on the part of the faculty and staff about the outcomes of the adoption process.

### **People to Keep Informed**

The responsibilities of other people in the district who are not administrators or teachers are impacted by the actions of the adoption committee in various ways. Show them their time and involvement is valuable by keeping them informed.

They are:

- Human resources officer and substitute caller
- Clerical support team (meeting announcements, book orders)
- Business office (processing purchase orders)
- Warehouse staff (moving books, storing supplies)
- Custodians (relocating books/materials in schools)

### **Managing Materials**

Some adoption processes will bring a massive amount of boxes and materials to the district. Plan ahead for an appropriate place to house the boxes as they arrive, and determine a large room for the committee to work as all those boxes will have to be opened and made available to the committee. If the committee is large, request additional copies of teacher editions, student textbooks and assessment materials to meet the needs of the committee.

After the adoption is completed, request assistance for the building staff when the shipments arrive at the schools prior to opening day. The processing of the order and moving books, etc. to other locations in the school require time and effort on the part of the school staff. A few hours of additional time allocated to the school for receiving the shipment will decrease errors in processing and help accurate placement of materials in the appropriate classrooms.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development will be necessary in a variety of ways before and following the adoption process. Prior to the adoption, the district might want to invite a content area specialist to meet with the committee to update the members as to the latest research and instructional strategies in that discipline. This can bring the committee to a base line of common understanding that will serve to enhance their effectiveness during the committee work.

Following adoption, publisher consultants can be used effectively with teachers and committee members. Often committee members can shadow the consultant and become a local/internal expert in the use of the materials.

Throughout implementation, all principals, teachers, para-educators, specialists, support staff and substitute teachers should be included in the staff development. Many para-educators are directly involved in the instruction so it is imperative they have sufficient training to enhance their effectiveness with students.

Staff development should continue beyond the first year of implementation. Newly-hired teachers and all teachers can benefit from on-going in-service in effective use of the materials. During the first year, both teachers and students are learning their way through the materials. The more familiar they become with the format, strategies and vocabulary, the more effective and efficient is their instruction, and the more success students will experience academically.

### **Supplemental / Intervention Instructional Materials**

Core comprehensive instructional programs usually will require some type of auxiliary material to fill in the gaps of content or meet the skill-level of identified students. These extension materials should be identified using the same caution and criteria as used with the other district adopted materials. **A future component of this guide will include a section of the selection of appropriate supplemental and/or intervention materials.**

## Definition of Terms (as used in this document)

- Adoption – An adoption is the selection and approval of specific instructional materials (textbook, computer program, science kit, etc.) for a content area or other specific purpose. In the broader sense, an adoption could be an individual item chosen for a specific instructional use, i.e., Gone with the Wind, a novel for use in a high school American Literature class, or Algebra I adopted for use as the 9<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra textbook.
- Comprehensive Instructional Materials – Comprehensive instructional materials are programs deemed complete enough to provide appropriate tools for all students within a grade level or secondary course; often called basal programs.
- Consensus Process – An objective, structured model clearly built to assist a group into making a decision based upon the evidence collected.
- Core Program – A core program is a comprehensive program containing an extensive scope and sequence of skills and concepts, utilizing a variety of instructional strategies, and identified as the primary instructional tool for a grade level.
- Curriculum – In our standards based education system, this refers to the written documents that define what students are expected to know and be able to do (including district written documents based on EALRs and GLEs).
- Curriculum Committee – Any committee given the responsibility for writing and revising curriculum (standards) and for the selection and implementation of new instructional materials to support the curriculum for a school or district.
- Discipline Specific Committee – Discipline or content area or course committee is usually a secondary committee focusing on an individual course or discipline, i.e., U.S. History Committee or H.S. Social Studies Committee
- Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) – Our state academic content standards. These broad statements span a K–10 period for learning and are based on our state’s Basic Education Act four learning goals.
- Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) – GLEs are grade by grade expectations for the EALRs. Each GLE contain the essential content or process to be learned, a statement of cognitive demands and appropriate context in which it learned.
- IMC – Instructional Materials Committee
- Instructional Materials– The instructional tools used to support the defined, written curriculum.
- Level Committee – A level committee usually consists of teachers/administrators representative of each school level, i.e., elementary includes representative from grades K–6, middle school grades 6–8, high school grades 9–12.

- State Adoption States – A state where districts can only use instructional materials selected and approved by a statewide. Washington State is a local control state, considered a non-state adoption state.
- Steering Committee – Usually a comprehensive content area/discipline committee assigned to write, select, implement, monitor, and evaluate curriculum and instructional materials. The steering committee is usually an on-going district-wide committee consisting of teachers, administrators and sometimes community members. In some districts, there is steering committee for each content area, i.e., K–12 English Literacy Committee, etc.
- Time Allotment – The district time allotment is a delineation of the number of minutes devoted to each subject throughout the school day/week, i.e., reading, 90 minutes per day; 450 minutes per week; art, 60 minutes per week, etc.)
- Washington State Instructional Materials Review – Several Washington State Instructional Materials Reviews have been completed by the OSPI in the content areas of Mathematics and Reading. In the future, additional content area materials will be reviewed. The purpose is to evaluate the alignment of the state Grade Level Equivalent (GLEs) to published programs and report the alignment of the GLEs to the schools statewide.

## Resources

The following pages include resources that may assist districts in completing their curriculum revisions and selection of instructional materials. Many of these resources are used by districts throughout the state and are used here with their permission

- **Instructional Materials Review Reports**  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/publishernotices.aspx>
- **Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials**  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/pubdocs/WashingtonModelsfortheEvaluationofBias.pdf>
- **School Improvement Planning Process Guide**  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/Improvement/publications/SchImprovementPlanGuide.aspx>
- **School System Improvement Resource Guide (SSIRG Guide)**  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/Improvement/district/ResourceGuide.aspx>
- **Master Price Agreements**  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/ReadingProgMasterPriceAgrmnt.aspx>

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- **Judy Ness and Connie Hoffman**  
*Putting Sense into Consensus*  
Vista Associates, Seattle, WA  
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- **Langford International, Inc.**  
*Tool Time for Education:  
Choosing and Implementing Quality Improvement Tools*  
Molt, MT  
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