



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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High School Math Curricula Recommendation – Holt Mathematics

Last year, State Superintendent Randy Dorn, following state law, chose Holt Mathematics as the recommended high school math curriculum. This process, which overlapped the tenure of Superintendent Terry Bergeson and Superintendent Dorn, continues to cause confusion. This memo is intended to clarify the process, and the rationale behind Superintendent Dorn's recommendation.

Background

During the 2007-09 biennium, state law (RCW 28A.305.215) required the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to review mathematics curricula and recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) no more than three basic mathematics curricula at the elementary, middle and high school grade spans, within six months of the adoption of the revised standards.

The high school mathematics standards were adopted on July 30, 2008. Superintendent Bergeson conducted an instructional materials review that evaluated published core/comprehensive high school mathematics instructional materials using the 2008 revised Washington State Mathematics Standards and other factors, such as equity and assessments.

On January 15, 2009, two days after taking office, Superintendent Dorn forwarded the recommendations of the 2008 review to the SBE for comment. Those initial recommendations were Holt Mathematics, Discovering Mathematics and Core-Plus Mathematics.

The SBE then contracted with consulting firm Strategic Teaching to evaluate the initial recommendations. Strategic Teaching concurred that all three programs were well aligned with the state's new standards. Accordingly, they focused their review of the three recommended program bundles (as well as one additional program bundle) on mathematical soundness based on two mathematicians' reviews of five specific High School Performance Expectations and their development within each program. The four program bundles reviewed were Holt Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II (Holt McDougal); Discovering Algebra, Geometry and Advanced Algebra (Key Curriculum Press); Glencoe McGraw-Hill Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II (Glencoe McGraw-Hill) and Core Plus Mathematics, Contemporary Mathematics in Context Course I, II, III (Glencoe McGraw-Hill).

Holt Mathematics was the only publisher bundle that received a satisfactory rating from SBE consultants on mathematical soundness.

SBE recommended that OSPI and SBE hire additional independent mathematicians to conduct a final mathematical soundness review of the top seven programs most closely aligned to the standards. Unfortunately, funding to support that request was not available.

Based on all the available information, Superintendent Dorn, per state law, made his final recommendation of Holt Mathematics at the high school level. The recommendation of Holt is not a state mandate. By law, local school boards have authority over the choice of curriculum materials, not the state.

Information available on the OSPI and SBE Web sites provides resources and guidance for those intending to purchase materials. For those districts that have chosen to delay purchasing decisions, OSPI plans to conduct another K-12 mathematics instructional materials alignment review within the next two years as resources and funding allow. In future reviews, we anticipate even higher overall alignment rankings as publishers will have sufficient time to modify their products to fit the new Washington standards.