

Virginia's Textbook Review Process
Virginia Department of Education

Approved by the Virginia Board of Education
March 24, 2011

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Section I: Introduction

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 have the authority to 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. The Board shall publish a list of all approved textbooks on its website and shall list the publisher and the current lowest wholesale price of such textbooks.
- B. 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.
- C. For the purposes of this chapter, the term "textbooks" means print or electronic media for student use that serve as the primary curriculum basis for a grade-level subject or course.

The Board of Education's current textbook regulations specify the types of materials that may be approved.

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.

On September 23, 2010, the Board took final action to adopt revised regulations regarding textbooks that will supersede those currently in effect. The revised regulations are currently undergoing the provisions of the Administrative Process Act (APA) and will become effective at the conclusion of that process. When the proposed new regulations become effective, they will state:

Regulations Governing Local School Boards and School Divisions, 8 VAC 20-720 et seq.

8 VAC 20-720-179. Textbooks

A. Textbook approval

1. The Board of Education shall have the authority to approve textbooks for use in the public schools of Virginia.
2. In approving basal textbooks for reading in kindergarten and first grade, the Board shall report to local school boards those textbooks with a minimum decodability standard based on words that students can correctly read by properly attaching speech sounds to each letter to formulate the word at 70 percent or above for such textbooks, in accordance with § 22.1-239 of the *Code of Virginia*.
3. Any local school board may use textbooks not approved by the Board provided the school board selects such books in accordance with this chapter.
4. Contracts and purchase orders with publishers of textbooks approved by the Board for use in grades 6-12 shall allow for the purchase of printed textbooks, printed textbooks with electronic files, or electronic textbooks separate and apart from printed versions of the same textbook. Each school board shall have the authority to purchase an assortment of textbooks in any of the three forms listed above.

Textbooks play an important role in helping teachers provide instruction based on the Standards of Learning (SOL) and in helping students achieve the standards. This document provides a comprehensive overview of Virginia's textbook review process including 1) how the review process is initiated; 2) the evaluation procedures used before textbooks are submitted to the Board of Education for first review; 3) the forms publishers must complete; 4) the selection of review committee members; 5) a description of state board action; and 6) an ongoing process for public comment on textbooks approved by the Board of Education.

Section II: Initiating the Textbook Review Process

The Board of Education approves the textbook review process and determines the schedule for approval of specific content area textbooks. The Board will approve textbooks for, but not limited to, the four core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.

The Virginia Department of Education administers the review process on behalf of the Board of Education. A flow chart showing the order of events in Virginia's textbook review process is provided in Appendix A. The Board of Education gives administrative authority to the Department to make necessary technical edits and changes to the process and evaluation criteria based on state or federal statutes or regulations and on the specific needs of each of the subject areas (e.g., kindergarten through grade three English/reading books may necessitate review criteria somewhat different than secondary English textbooks).

Section III: Evaluation Criteria and Publishers' Submission Forms

Following the Board's approval of the textbook review process for each subject area, the Department invites publishers to submit textbooks for review. It is the primary responsibility of publishers to ensure the accuracy of textbooks they submit for review. The Department will work to ensure that publishers have accomplished this by establishing the following evaluations for each textbook submitted: 1) an accuracy review based on the Textbook Publisher's Certification and Agreement; 2) a review for correlation to the Virginia Standards of Learning, content, bias, and suitable instructional planning and support based on the evaluation criteria used by review committees; and 3) a public examination of materials during a public review and comment period.

1. **Publisher's Submission Forms:** Publishers indicate their intent to submit textbooks for the approval process by returning the completed Textbook Publisher's Certification and Agreement.

The **certification** requires each publisher to certify that textbooks have been thoroughly examined and reviewed by qualified content experts for factual accuracy and to list all authors and their credentials. Publishers must also list the professional credentials for at least three content review experts who have thoroughly examined each textbook for content accuracy. They must certify that each textbook has been thoroughly examined and reviewed by qualified editors for typographical errors and errors in grammar, written expression, spelling, formatting, and other substantive elements that may affect student learning.

Publishers must also certify that any duplicate version (i.e., print or digital) of the primary material that is available to Virginia school divisions contains at least the same content included in the primary material selected by the publisher for review and that any additional content above that contained in the primary material reviewed is accurate and free of errors. If the content of the print and digital versions of the same primary material varies, those variations are outlined in an attachment to the certification.

Publishers must provide a detailed description of the internal process used to ensure accuracy and lack of bias including:

- The quality assurance and workflow steps used to ensure accuracy of content;
- The quality assurance and workflow steps used to eliminate editing and typographical errors, including errors in grammar, written expression, spelling, formatting, and other substantive elements that may affect student learning;
- The fact-back-up guidelines (i.e., what is an acceptable source for a fact and what is not) used by the authors, editors, and outside content experts;
- The review by outside content experts, other than the authors, to verify accuracy and ensure freedom from bias; and
- The process used to reach consensus on information with divergent interpretations.

Publishers must also sign an **agreement** to correct all factual and editing errors found in a textbook, at their expense. Publishers must agree to the following:

- After submission of a textbook to the Department of Education for consideration in the textbook approval process, the publisher will promptly inform the Department in writing of any changes made in the textbook prior to its approval by the Board of Education.
- If any factual or editing errors are identified in a publisher's textbook following its approval by the Board of Education, the publisher will submit a corrective action plan to the Department of Education within 30 days of being notified by the Department of the errors. All corrective action plans must be approved by the Board of Education, but the Board hereby delegates the approval of corrective action plans not involving significant errors to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each corrective action plan must be tailored to the materiality of the errors identified and must be implemented in the manner most conducive to and least disruptive of student learning. Corrective action plans may include, but are not limited to: a) corrections upon reprinting of the textbook; b) corrective edits to an online textbook; c) electronic errata sheets posted on the publisher's and the Department of Education's Web sites; d) print errata sheets provided to schools for insertion into textbooks; e) replacement books; and f) return of the textbook and refund of any payment made for the textbook. Upon approval of the corrective action plan, the publisher will implement the plan at the publisher's expense.
- If, upon being notified by the Department of factual or editing errors in an approved textbook, the publisher disputes that the textbook contains such errors, the publisher must submit a written explanation of its position to the Department within 30 days of receiving notice from the Department of the error. Upon request, the publisher may meet with the Department. The Board of Education reserves to itself the right to make a final determination of whether the textbook contains a factual or editing error. If the Board determines that the textbook contains such an error, the publisher will submit a corrective action plan to the Department within 15 days after receiving notice of the Board's determination.
- If numerous and/or significant errors are identified in a textbook on the Board of Education's approved list, the Board of Education may, in its sole discretion, withdraw the textbook from the approved list. A "significant error" is a factual or editing error that the Board of Education or Department of Education determines within the context of the intended use of the textbook will substantially interfere with student learning. A change in knowledge that occurs subsequent to publication shall not constitute a significant error. The Board of Education must notify the publisher in writing before it removes its textbook from the approved list. The publisher will have 30 days to respond in writing and the right to meet with the Department of Education before removal.
- If the publisher makes updates/revisions to textbooks after they have been approved by the Board of Education, the publisher will ensure that the updated/revised material has been vetted through the same quality assurance process for accuracy and editing outlined in the signed certification. The publisher will notify the Department and any

school division that has purchased this material of the updates/revisions that have been made.

Department of Education staff will review all textbook publishers' certifications and agreements to determine if forms have been completed correctly, sufficient information has been provided, and the forms are signed by an appropriate representative of the publishing company. Any concerns regarding the certifications or agreements will be addressed by Department staff with the appropriate publisher. A certification or agreement that is not completed correctly, is lacking in sufficient information, or is not signed by the appropriate representative, may result in the textbook(s) being removed from consideration for review.

2. **Evaluation Criteria:** The textbook evaluation criteria used by review committees are comprised of two sections: 1) correlation with the Standards of Learning (SOL); and 2) instructional planning and support.

In Section I, publishers are provided with correlation forms that list all of the SOL for the subject area being reviewed and are asked to provide specific evidence of how and where the SOL are addressed in the textbook. Review committees use the correlation forms to determine the degree to which content found in the textbook is correlated in thoroughness and accuracy to the SOL. They are also given the opportunity to comment on content accuracy, bias, or other concerns resulting from their reviews.

In Section II, a rubric with evaluation criteria is provided for review committees to offer insight on how well the textbook is designed for instructional planning and support. The criteria address the organization of materials, format design, writing style and vocabulary, graphics and illustrations, and instructional strategies. The Department of Education may establish indicators that are specific to subject areas for each criterion. Additionally, the Department of Education will include as part of the state review, criteria that are required in state statute.

3. **Public Examination of Materials:** After the Board of Education accepts for first review the list of recommended textbooks, it directs the Department to seek public comment on all textbooks on the recommended list for approval. Review copies of all textbooks are available for public examination at various sites around the Commonwealth. Individuals are invited to examine the proposed textbooks at the examination sites and to submit written comments via mail to the Department or via e-mail to an established electronic mailbox. Department staff review public comments and provide a summary of them to Board members as a part of the final review of the recommended textbooks for approval.

Section IV: Review Committees

As a part of the review process, the Department seeks nominations for qualified educators and content experts to serve on the textbook review committees. Nominations are solicited from division superintendents for teachers, principals, administrators, content specialists, and others who have expertise with the content areas and the standards. Department staff members will also

collaborate with community colleges, institutions of higher education, and other sources of subject-matter experts with graduate degrees in the field, to assist with content review. Every attempt will be made to include the following members on each review committee: 1) teachers; 2) a division-level content specialist; and 3) a subject-matter expert who may work across committees. In selecting committee members, Department staff members will attempt to have representation from all regions of the state. Committee members must certify any potential conflict of interests they may have with serving as a member of the review committee before they will be confirmed as a member of the committee.

The Department notifies the publishers of evaluation committee members for the purpose of sending all textbooks under consideration for approval to these reviewers. Committee members use the evaluation criteria, including the publisher's SOL correlation forms, to review the textbooks independently for SOL correlations and design for instructional planning and support.

Members of the review committee submit their individual analyses of each textbook to Department staff. The full committee is then convened to reach consensus on their reviews of the submitted textbooks. Following the meeting, consensus evaluations are shared with publishers, and publishers are given an opportunity to respond to committees' reviews and recommendations. Requests by publishers for reconsideration of SOL correlations are examined carefully prior to the list of recommended textbooks being submitted to the Board of Education for first review.

Section V: State Board Action

The Superintendent of Public Instruction reviews the list of textbooks proposed by the reviewers and makes a recommendation to the Board of Education that it accept for first review the proposed list of textbooks for state approval. Information from the textbook publishers' certifications and agreements is also included as part of the presentation to the Board. Upon acceptance for first review by the Board, a 30-day public examination period is announced. The public is invited to review copies of the books that have been placed at review sites around the state and to provide public comment to the Board either by mail or to an established electronic mailbox.

The Board reviews all public comment, considers the list, and approves the textbooks. Following Board action, the Department posts a list of approved textbooks with prices on the Department's Web site under Textbooks. Information from the textbook publishers' certifications and agreements will also be posted on the Web site.

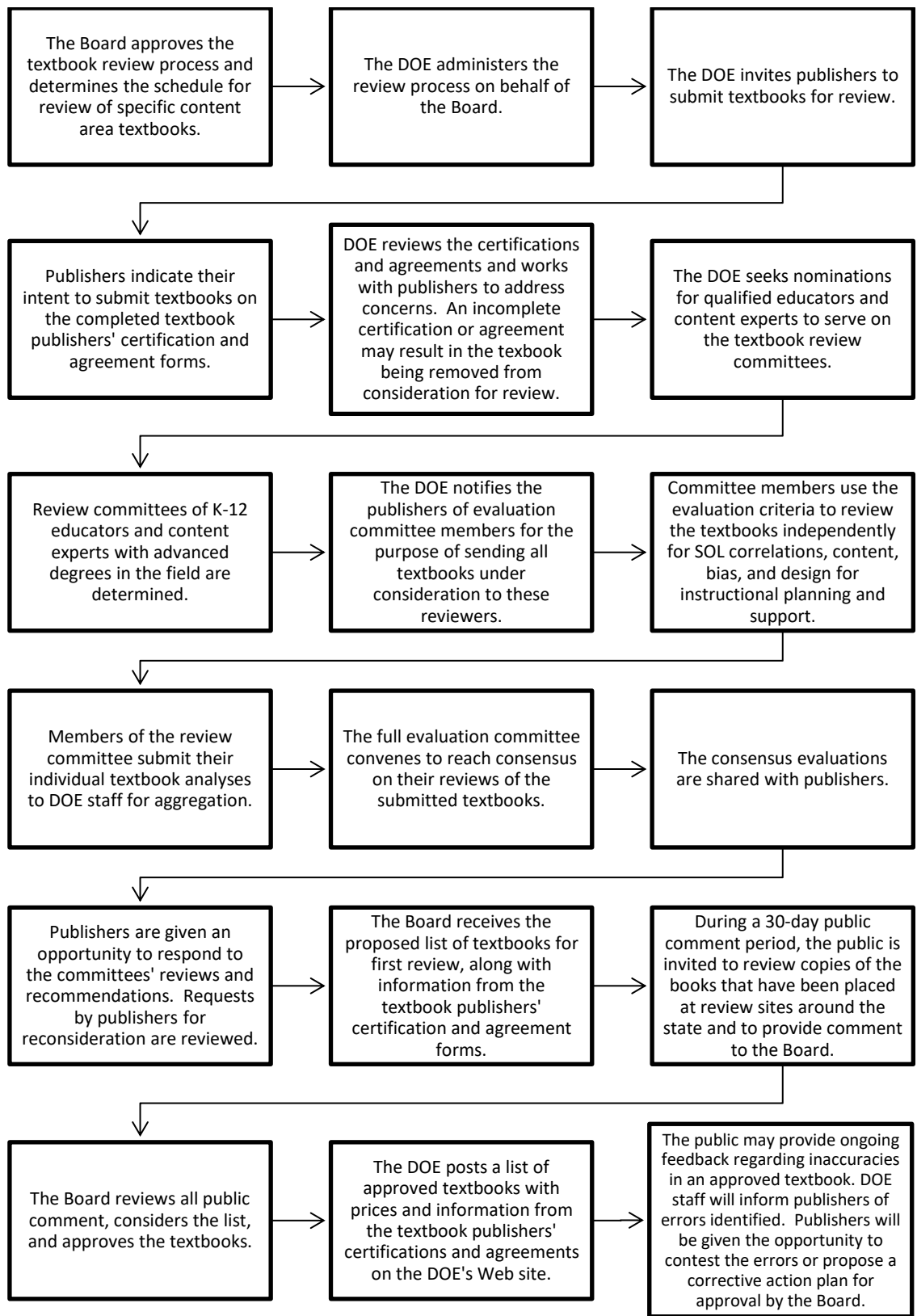
Section VI: Ongoing Public Comment

After the textbook approval takes place, the public can provide ongoing feedback to the Department regarding any inaccuracies found in an approved textbook. An electronic mailbox will be established for this purpose. Department of Education staff will inform publishers of any errors identified. Publishers will be given the opportunity to contest the errors and/or propose a corrective action plan for approval by the Board. If numerous and/or significant errors are

identified in a textbook on the Board of Education's approved list, the Board of Education may, in its sole discretion, withdraw the textbook from the approved list.

Appendices

Virginia's Proposed Revised Textbook Approval Process



**Publishers' Submission Forms for Virginia's
Textbook Approval Process**

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Introduction

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- *Code of Virginia, § 22.1-238*

- A. The Board of Education shall have the authority to 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. The Board shall publish a list of all approved textbooks on its website and shall list the publisher and the current lowest wholesale price of such textbooks.
- B. 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.
- C. For the purposes of this chapter, the term "textbooks" means print or electronic media for student use that serve as the primary curriculum basis for a grade-level subject or course.

This document, including all attachments, provides textbook publishers with the required information and forms for submitting textbooks for review by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and approval by the Virginia Board of Education. By submitting textbooks for evaluation, publishers agree to follow the procedures set forth in this document. Failure to comply with all procedures may result in disqualification of the textbook as a part of the review and approval process.

Primary Material Submitted for Review

As noted in Section 22.1-238.C of the *Code of Virginia* above, the term textbook refers to print or electronic media for student use that serves as the primary curriculum basis for a grade-level subject or course.

For the remainder of this document, such instructional media will be referred to as "primary material." Primary material contains the core curriculum that is the basis for the grade-level subject or course. VDOE review committees will review the material selected by the publisher as the "primary material." This is typically the student edition of the textbook or the primary material that students will use to gain access to the content, although there may be exceptions according to the content area and grade level of the textbooks (e.g., teacher's editions may

need to be included in the review at elementary grades for English/reading). Ancillary and supplemental materials will not be considered for review.

Submitting primary material in digital format is encouraged. However, publishers may submit primary material in either digital or print format, or in a format combining both media. VDOE review committees will review only the material selected as the primary material by the publisher. If a print program is submitted as the primary material to be reviewed, a digital version of this material must also be available to students. Any duplicate or similar version of the primary material submitted will not be reviewed by the VDOE review committees as a part of the textbook approval process. If a publisher submits digital primary material and this material is also available in print, the review committee will review only the digital version of the primary material. In submitting their materials for review, publishers must provide an explanation of if and how the content in the primary material medium (digital or print) is different from or comparable to that offered in the other medium. Digital primary material may contain items such as embedded video clips or content that is delivered through an interactive format.

Submission Forms

Publishers must complete the Textbook Publisher's Certification and Agreement listing all primary materials submitted for review consideration at the time it signals intent to submit textbooks for review as part of Virginia's textbook approval process.

3. Any duplicate version (i.e., print or digital) of the primary material that is available to Virginia school divisions contains at least the same content included in the primary material selected by the publisher for review. Any additional content, above that contained in the primary material reviewed is accurate and free of errors. If the content of the print and digital versions of the same primary material varies, those variations are outlined in an attachment to the certification.
4. The Quality Assurance and Editing Process described below was followed for all primary materials submitted by the publisher for review.

Quality Assurance and Editing Process: Please describe, *in three pages or less*, the internal process used to ensure accuracy and lack of bias including:

- the quality assurance and workflow steps used to ensure accuracy of content;
- the quality assurance and workflow steps used to eliminate editing and typographical errors, including errors in grammar, written expression, spelling, formatting, and other substantive elements that may affect student learning;
- the fact-back-up guidelines (i.e., what is an acceptable source for a fact and what is not) used by the authors, editors, and outside content experts;
- the review by outside content experts, other than the authors, to verify accuracy and ensure freedom from bias; and
- the process used to reach consensus on information with divergent interpretations.

Enter the description here. (Additional information will not be considered or reviewed.)

Textbook Publisher's Agreement

The PUBLISHER agrees to the following:

1. After submission of a textbook to the Department of Education for consideration in the textbook approval process, the PUBLISHER will promptly inform the Department in writing of any changes made in the textbook prior to its approval by the Board of Education.
2. If any factual or editing errors are identified in a PUBLISHER's textbook following its approval by the Board of Education, the PUBLISHER will submit a corrective action plan to the Department of Education within 30 days of being notified by the Department of the errors. All corrective action plans must be approved by the Board of Education, but the Board hereby delegates the approval of corrective action plans not involving significant errors to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each corrective action plan must be tailored to the materiality of the errors identified and must be implemented in the manner most conducive to and least disruptive of student learning. Corrective action plans may include, but are not limited to: a) corrections upon reprinting of the textbook; b) corrective edits to an online textbook; c) electronic errata sheets posted on the PUBLISHER's and the Department of Education's Web sites; d) print errata sheets provided to schools for insertion into textbooks; e) replacement books; and f) return of the textbook and refund of any payment made for the textbook. Upon approval of the corrective action plan, the PUBLISHER will implement the plan at the PUBLISHER's expense.
3. If, upon being notified by the Department of factual or editing errors in an approved textbook, the PUBLISHER disputes that the textbook contains such errors, the PUBLISHER must submit a written explanation of its position to the Department within 30 days of receiving notice from the Department of the error. Upon request, the PUBLISHER may meet with the Department. The Board of Education reserves to itself the right to make a final determination of whether the textbook contains a factual or editing error. If the Board determines that the textbook contains such an error, the PUBLISHER will submit a corrective action plan to the Department within 15 days after receiving notice of the Board's determination.
4. If numerous and/or significant errors are identified in a textbook on the Board of Education's approved list, the Board of Education may, in its sole discretion, withdraw the textbook from the approved list. The Board of Education must notify the PUBLISHER in writing before it removes its textbook from the approved list. The PUBLISHER will have 30 days to respond in writing and the right to meet with the Department of Education before removal. A "significant error" is a factual or editing error that the Board of Education or Department of Education determines within the context of the intended use of the textbook will substantially interfere with student learning. A change in knowledge that occurs subsequent to publication shall not constitute a significant error.
5. If the PUBLISHER makes updates/revisions to textbooks after they have been approved by the Board of Education, the PUBLISHER will ensure that the updated/revised material

has been vetted through the same quality assurance process for accuracy and editing outlined in the signed certification. The PUBLISHER will notify the Department and any school division that has purchased this material of the updates/revisions that have been made.

- Please check here if this submission includes an attachment that outlines if and how duplicate versions (print or digital) of primary materials vary. (Item #3 in the certification)

(Signature of President of the Company or Designee)

(Date)

(Name and Title of Person Signing)

Author(s)/Editor(s) and Content Review Expert Information

This attachment must be completed for each primary material submitted for review. Please insert additional copies for each primary material.

Primary Material (printed book or digital submission)

Please list name and edition of the textbook, or series submitted as a primary material.

Publisher: _____
Product Name: _____
Author(s): _____
Edition: _____ **ISBN:** _____

Author/Editor Information

Please complete the table below. Include each author and/or editor associated with the development of the primary material. Please insert copies of the table for additional authors/editors.

Author/Editor:	Role of the author/editor in writing the textbook (include references to specific sections, chapters, pages, etc.)
Education and professional background:	
Related published works:	
Professional qualifications and specific areas of expertise:	
Did the author/editor review the final copy of his/her work before publication? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Author/Editor:	Role of the author/editor in writing the textbook (include references to specific sections, chapters, pages, etc.)
Education and professional background:	
Related published works:	
Professional qualifications and specific areas of expertise:	
Did the author/editor review the final copy of his/her work before publication? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Author/Editor:	Role of the author/editor in writing the textbook (include references to specific sections, chapters, pages, etc.)
Education and professional background:	
Related published works:	
Professional qualifications and specific areas of expertise:	
Did the author/editor review the final copy of his/her work before publication? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Content Review Expert Information

Please include each content review expert associated with the quality assurance process for accuracy and editing for the primary material listed. At least three content review experts must be included with at least 1) two experts with a graduate degree in the content area being reviewed; and 2) at least one teacher with recent experience teaching the content in the appropriate grade level or course. Please insert copies of the table for additional content review experts.

Reviewer:	Role the reviewer had in the review process (entire book or include references to specific sections, chapters, pages, etc.)
Education and professional background:	
Related published works:	
Professional qualifications and specific areas of expertise:	

Reviewer:	Role the reviewer had in the review process (entire book or include references to specific sections, chapters, pages, etc.)
Education and professional background:	
Related published works:	
Professional qualifications and specific areas of expertise:	

Reviewer:	Role the reviewer had in the review process (entire book or include references to specific sections, chapters, pages, etc.)
Education and professional background:	
Related published works:	
Professional qualifications and specific areas of expertise:	

Evaluation Criteria Used by Textbook Review Committee

Section I: Correlation with the Standards of Learning

Determine the degree to which content found in these textbooks is correlated with the Standards of Learning and the Curriculum Framework for this subject.		
Adequate A	Limited L (Note: Provide examples to support this rating.)	No Evidence N (Note: Provide examples to support this rating.)
<p>Lessons are aligned with the standards.</p> <p>Content appears accurate, clear, and in sequential order.</p> <p>Most of the essential understandings, knowledge, and skills are supported.</p> <p>Many opportunities are provided for students to practice essential skills.</p>	<p>Limited connections between the standards and the lessons are noted.</p> <p>Content appears to contain some inaccuracies or is not always clear.</p> <p>Essential understandings, knowledge, or skills are not sufficiently addressed.</p> <p>There is limited opportunity for students to practice essential skills.</p>	<p>No correlation between the standards and the lessons.</p> <p>A logical sequence of content cannot be identified and/or there appear to be significant content inaccuracies.</p> <p>Essential understandings, knowledge, or skills are not addressed.</p> <p>Opportunities to practice essential skills are not included.</p>
<p>Comments or concerns related to content accuracy, bias, or editing:</p>		

Evaluation Criteria Used by Textbook Review Committee

Section II: Rubric for Instructional Design and Support

(Reported and may be used in correlation and approval considerations.)

Adequate A	Limited L (Note: Provide examples to support this rating.)	No Evidence N (Note: Provide examples to support this rating.)
Criterion 1 - Textbook is presented in an organized, logical manner and is appropriate for the age, grade, and maturity of the students.		
Textbook is logically organized and grade/age appropriate for students.	Textbook lacks consistency in organization and appropriateness for the grade/age of students.	Textbook is not reasonably organized and is inappropriate for the grade/age of the students.
Criterion 2 - Textbook is organized appropriately within and among units of study.		
Scope and sequence is easy to read and understand.	Scope and sequence is confusing and not easy to understand.	Scope and sequence is difficult to read and understand.
Criterion 3 - Format design includes titles, subheadings, and appropriate cross-referencing for ease of use.		
Organizational properties of the textbook assist in understanding and processing content.	Organizational properties of the textbook offer limited assistance in understanding and processing content.	Organizational properties of the textbook do not assist in understanding and processing content.
Criterion 4 - Writing style, syntax, and vocabulary are appropriate.		
Readability is appropriate for the grade level. Writing style and syntax are varied and appropriate to enhance student understanding. Vocabulary consists of both familiar and challenging words.	Readability may be appropriate but is inconsistent throughout the text. Writing style and syntax may be inappropriate or lack variety, offering limited support for student understanding. Vocabulary may be too challenging or too familiar.	Readability is not appropriate for the grade level. Writing style and syntax are often inappropriate and lack variety to enhance student understanding. Vocabulary is too challenging or unfamiliar.
Criterion 5 - Graphics and illustrations are appropriate.		
Visuals are accurate, support the text, and enhance student understanding.	Visuals are somewhat unclear and offer limited support for the text and student understanding.	Visuals are inaccurate, do not support the text, and do not enhance student understanding.
Criterion 6 - Sufficient instructional strategies are provided to promote depth of understanding.		
Materials provide students with opportunities to integrate skills and concepts.	Materials provide students with limited opportunities to integrate skills and concepts.	Materials provide students with no opportunities to integrate skills and concepts.

Note: Any subject area criteria that are required in state statute will be included as part of the state review. The Department of Education may establish criteria indicators that are subject-area specific.