

R 2510 ADOPTION OF TEXTBOOKS

It is the legal responsibility of the Board of Education to approve all textbooks used as part of the educational program of this district.

For purposes of this regulation, "textbook" means books, workbooks, or manuals, whether bound or in loose leaf form intended as a principal source of study material for a given class or group of pupils, a copy of which is available for the individual use of each pupil in such class or group.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for the selection and recommendation of textbooks for Board consideration, and shall develop a plan for the selection of textbooks which includes professional staff members participation at all appropriate levels in the selection process and annual review of textbooks with copyright dates more than five years old for their continuing suitability.

In considering the approval of any proposed textbook, the Board will weigh the following elements:

1. Suitability for the maturity level and educational accomplishment of the pupils who will be using the book;
2. Freedom from bias;
3. Relationship of the book to the curriculum;
4. Impact on community standards of taste;
5. Manner of textbook selection;

A list of all approved textbooks shall be maintained by the Superintendent and made available for the use of the professional staff and for the information of parents and members of the Board.

Before new textbooks are purchased in the Washington Township District, they will be evaluated (i.e., rubric, checklist or other tool) by a committee of teachers, administrators, and the Board Curriculum Committee in the following areas:

- Alignment with the Core Content Standards
- Alignment with curricula goals
- Quality of Illustration

- Balance of Illustration/Text
- Errors in text
- Difficulty of text for grade level
- Quality of written matter
- Attention to map, graph, chart skills
- Attention to high level thinking skills
- Attention to basic skills
- Clearness of concepts
- Compliance with Affirmative Action and 504 Policy
- Workbook adaptability
- Audio-visual support system
- Computer software support system
- Additional resources plan
- Clarity of teacher's guide
- Usability of teacher's guide with text
- Evaluation plan
- Supportive tests
- Instructional Alternatives and Suggestions

Instructional Materials Evaluation

Exclusion/Invisibility

1. Perhaps the most fundamental form of bias in instructional materials is the complete or relative exclusion of a particular group or groups from representation or consideration in text and/or illustration.

2. Research suggests, for example, that textbooks published prior to the 1960's largely omitted any consideration of Black Americans within contemporary society, and indeed rendered Black Americans relatively invisible from accounts or references to America after the Reconstruction. Spanish speaking Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans continue to be absent from most textbooks, both in terms of their historical roles and contributions to our society and with reference to their current status or position. All of these are examples of the existence of bias through exclusion or invisibility.

Stereotyping

1. When they are included in textbooks, racial-ethnic minority group members and both males and females are often portrayed with regard to only one particular attribute characteristic or role.
2. In textbooks published before the 1960's, the stereotyping of ethnic groups and minority groups was frequently documented.
3. Stereotyping may occur in reference to any number of variables such as physical appearance, intellectual attributes, personality characteristics, career roles, domestic roles, and social placement.

Imbalance/Selectivity

1. Textbooks can perpetuate bias by only presenting one interpretation of an issue, situation, or group of people. This imbalanced account restricts the knowledge of pupils regarding the varied perspectives which may apply to a particular situation. Through selective presentation of materials, instructional materials may distort reality and ignore complex and differing viewpoints. As a result, millions of pupils have been taught little or nothing about the contributions, struggles, and participation of women and minorities in our society.

Unreality

Many researchers have remarked upon the tendency of instructional materials to ignore facts which are unpleasant or which do not conform with the stated value system of the white majority culture. Instructional materials often ignore the existence of prejudice, racism, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, sexism, and intergroup conflict. Controversial topics are often glossed over. This unrealistic coverage denies children the information they need to recognize, understand, and perhaps some day conquer, the problems that plague society.

Fragmentation/Isolation

1. Bias through fragmentation and isolation takes two primary forms. First, content regarding minority groups and women may be physically or visually fragmented and isolated and delivered only in separate chapters or even in boxes to the side of the page. Second, racial-ethnic minority group members and women may be depicted as interacting only with persons like themselves, never contacting or impacting the dominant culture.
2. Fragmentation and isolation imply that the history, experiences, and situations of minority and female persons are somehow entirely unrelated to those of the dominant culture or cultures. They ignore the dynamic relationship of these groups to the development of our current society, and imply the continuous progress of the dominant culture without any reliance upon the contributions and influence of racial-ethnic minorities and women.

Linguistic Bias

Language is a powerful conveyer of bias in instructional materials. Use of the generic "he" is an obvious source of bias, but there are also many more subtle forms of linguistic bias.

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Considerations

1. Are there diverse role models (male-female, diverse cultures/races)?
2. Are units or courses given titles which may imply greater meaning to one sex or cultural group?
3. Do units include units or activities which encourage self-awareness?
4. Do units include activities on values awareness?
5. Do units or activities deal with the basic concepts of interpersonal and intergroup relations? (i.e., multiple intelligence activities)
6. Do units or activities include the origins and effects of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination?
7. Do texts directly confront the contemporary social problems of sexism, racism, cultural bias, and bias toward the disabled?

8. Are the contributions and perspectives of both women and men, diverse cultural/racial groups, and the disabled included in all units of the textbook?
9. Is history taught from a multicentric rather than a Eurocentric perspective?
10. Have attempts been made to eliminate ethnocentrism from the units on cultures?
11. Are all units (family, cities, cultures, economics, etc.) taught from a multi-cultural, non-sexist perspective?
12. Are illustrations in textbooks, supplementary materials, audiovisual aids, and on the bulletin boards representative of the cultural/racial diversity in the United States as well as the roles open to men and women in today's society? Are disabled persons represented?
13. Are both women and men, diverse cultural/racial groups and the disabled shown in both active and passive roles?
14. Are the contributions and perspectives of both men and women, diverse cultural/racial groups, and the disabled included in textbooks?
15. Do social studies and history texts deal openly and honestly with historic intergroup conflict in the United States as well as the struggle for social equality?
16. Is the content information about men and women, the various cultural/racial groups and the disabled accurate?
17. Do the materials tend to reinforce stereotypes about cultural/racial groups, men and women or the disabled?
18. Are members of diverse cultural/racial groups, both women and men and the disabled shown engaged in a broad range of social and professional activities?
19. Are opposing points of view concerning historical events or issues included?
20. Does the material include the contributions and involvement of women and men as well as cultural/racial groups at all points where it is appropriate and meaningful to do so?

21. Have multi-cultural, non-sexist criteria been integrated into textbooks adoption process at the district level?
22. Are instructional materials free of ethnocentric or sexist language patterns which may make implications about persons or groups solely based upon their culture, race, sex or disability?
23. Are values awareness techniques and strategies used as a vehicle for discussion of contemporary social issues?
24. Are class activities such as role playing, mime, creative drama, and small group problem solving used as strategies to facilitate pupils communication?

Content Curricula Alignment and Content Consideration

1. Is it aligned with district approved curricula?
2. Is it researched-based?
3. Is it aligned with the New Jersey Core Content Standards?
4. Is the content and information accurate?
5. Does it have appropriate reinforcement?
6. Does it demonstrate the integration of multisensory activities?
7. Does it address various learning styles?
8. Does it have teacher friendly manuals?
9. Does it have appropriate support materials and resources for staff?
10. Does it integrate technology?
11. Does it assist in differentiated instruction to address all ability levels including basic skills and gifted & talented pupils?
12. Does it make real world connections?
13. Does it promote literacy skills?

14. Does it demonstrate connections to other subject areas?
15. Are there applications for use and reinforcement at home?
16. Is the reading level appropriate?
17. Is the workbook, if available, appropriate?
18. Is there clarity of concepts?
19. Is the pacing appropriate for the grade level?
20. Are there multiple and authentic assessments?
21. Does it promote inquiry and/or independent thinking?

Evaluation

Evaluation tools will be mutually developed by the administration and staff, with final approval by the Superintendent. Tools will be developed appropriately for the type of program or subject area. Tools may include a rubric, checklist or other appropriate instrument.