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Sept. 20, 2013

Largest online textbook review under way

AUSTIN - The largest review of primarily online textbook materials in state history is under way by the State Board of Education (SBOE) with 429 products still under consideration.

More than 1,200 instructional material products were originally submitted by publishers for possible use in Texas public schools. However, many publishers, who had not participated in the state's process before, withdrew their products upon discovering the extensive and intensive review process used in Texas.

The materials still under consideration include:

- 277 science products for kindergarten through 12th grade;
- 131 math products for kindergarten through eighth grade; and
- 21 technology application products.

"The State Board of Education, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), works hard to make sure only the highest quality textbooks and instructional material are selected for use in our public schools," said SBOE Chair Barbara Cargill.

"Our adoption process involves many people, primarily educators and other subject-area experts, who review the submitted material and provide input. A large number of these reviewers have advanced degrees or lengthy experience in the subject they are reviewing. The Board also conducts two public hearings to receive input from citizens," she said.

Here is a synopsis of the process that will ultimately lead to the adoption of instructional material by the board in November.

- In 2012, the State Board of Education issued a proclamation—or bid document—calling for new instructional material in the areas of K-12 science, K-8 mathematics, and Technology Applications.
- In response to the proclamations, publishers submitted one complete, electronic, pre-adoption sample copy of instructional material.
- Publishers provided these sample materials to the TEA as well as each of the 20 regional Educational Service Centers across the state, so the public would have an opportunity to review the material.
- The TEA solicited nominations from the SBOE, educators, and Texas citizens seeking people to serve on the state review panels.
- Those citizens selected to serve on the review panels are typically placed in three to five member teams, depending on the subject they are to review. The panel members are placed on teams to achieve diversity in years of experience, education, and to ensure balanced geographic representation.
- These state review panels examine the submitted instructional materials to identify the required Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) that are covered by the materials, and to identify any factual errors. In the current process, 280 products have been found to cover 100 percent of the standards
- For each product for which a state review panel does not identify sufficient coverage of the TEKS and ELPS, the publisher is provided an opportunity to submit new content to address the missing standards.
- If new content is submitted, the state review panels then examine the new material to determine if it addresses the missing standards.
- A publisher that disagrees with the findings of a state review panel may request a hearing to contest the results.
- Publishers may also withdraw their products from consideration at any time during the process.
- As part of the review process, the panel members are also asked to identify factual errors. Panel members may also suggest editorial corrections, such as correcting grammatical errors.
- Publishers must correct all known factual errors prior to introducing the materials into schools. Failure to do so can result in fines being levied against the publisher.
- The SBOE holds two public hearings to allow citizen input about the new products.
- The board is scheduled to adopt products submitted in response to Proclamation 2014 in November 2013.
- In April 2014, school districts and charter schools may begin ordering Proclamation 2014 instructional material.

- The Proclamation 2014 materials arrive in Texas classrooms at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

"Much of our rigorous adoption process has worked very well," Cargill said. "But because this is the first adoption that has involved hundreds of electronic submissions, we have definitely learned lessons that we will apply to future adoptions."

Cargill plans to ask the board at its November meeting to discuss adjusting the timelines in the bid document in the next series of adoptions so that additional content and corrections are submitted sooner in the process.

Texas remains one of the larger purchasers in the textbook market. About \$419 million is available to schools through the instructional materials allotment this year for the purchase of new materials, previously adopted materials, technology, or technology support.

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