



## Roles and Responsibilities in the Instructional Materials Adoption Process

### State Legal Requirements

Basic education in Washington is defined by the Legislature [RCW 28A.150.210](#). As required by state law, OSPI develops the state's learning standards [RCW 28A.655.070](#) and oversees the assessment of the learning standards for state and federal accountability purposes. The [Washington State K-12 Learning Standards](#) describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. They incorporate the [Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics](#) and the [Next Generation Science Standards](#).

Our learning standards are developed through collaborative, public processes led by curriculum associations across the state and nationwide.

### School District Legal Requirements

In the state of Washington, [RCW 28A.320.230](#) 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 [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. The following resource from OSPI helps district in reviewing materials for compliance with these laws.

[Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials](#).

Federal law, through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), requires that districts provide access for appropriate print materials to blind and other print disabled persons. Visit the [National Center on Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\)](#) for information on [K-12 Education Accessibility Policies](#). With the shift from print to digital, education leaders must also proactively consider the accessibility of digital resources for all students, including students with disabilities.

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.

**Course Design** is the process that includes identifying and sequencing essential content supporting students' skill development towards state learning standards. Course design involves providing appropriate instructional materials, professional development, and support systems for teachers as they implement the course.

**Instructional Materials** include all materials designed for use by students and their teachers as learning resources to help students to acquire facts, skills, and/or to develop cognitive processes. Types of instructional materials include core, alternative core, intervention, supplemental, and temporary supplemental.

These instructional materials, used to help students meet state learning standards, may be printed or digital, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational media, and assessments. They may carry different licensing types from open to all rights reserved.

## School Board of Directors

Local school boards approve the policies and procedures for the development and maintenance of course design, selection of instructional materials, assessment of student academic achievement, and district program evaluation.

The board is responsible for the adoption of all core materials used in the district. 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.

[RCW 28A.150.230](#) – District school directors' responsibilities

[RCW 28A.320.230](#) - Legal requirements for district selection and approval of instructional materials.

Model Policy 2020 and 2020P: [Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials](#) | [Washington State School Directors' Association \(WSSDA\)](#)

## Role of Superintendent/District Office

Superintendents and district office administrators have direct responsibilities for the course design and instructional materials selection process. The superintendent, or designee, will establish procedures for core material, alternate core, and intervention material selection and adoption using criteria around evidence-based practices.

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 this 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 4th 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 course design 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 because of the curriculum revisions and new materials.

## Instructional Material Committee (IMC) Member Characteristics

### [From RCW 28A.320.230](#)

*This committee shall consist of representative members of the district's professional staff, including representation from the district's curriculum development committees, and, in the case of districts which operate elementary school(s) only, the educational service district superintendent, one of whose responsibilities shall be to assure the correlation of those elementary district adoptions with those of the high school district(s) which serve their children. The committee may include parents at the school board's discretion: PROVIDED, that parent members shall make up less than one-half of the total membership of the committee.*

The Instructional Materials Committee (IMC) is formed to establish and monitor procedures necessary for the evaluation and recommendation of core instructional materials used by the district in conformance to stated criteria. All instructional materials will be selected in conformance with:

1. Applicable state and federal laws;
2. Goals and/or learning standards of the district and state; and
3. Procedures established by the instructional materials committee which address the criteria detailed in the district's adopted instructional materials selection and adoption policy.

Model Policy 2020 and 2020P: [Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials](#) | [Washington State School Directors' Association \(WSSDA\)](#)

## IMC Representation

When reviewing instructional materials, it is critical to look at materials through different lenses. Committee makeup will vary; however, it is important to have all the following areas represented in some capacity:

- **Content Expertise** (teachers, curriculum directors, content coaches, specialists in EL, SPED, HiCap)  
Evaluation of alignment to learning standards, effectiveness
- **Technology Expertise** (educational technology directors, technology specialists, digital resource managers, librarians)  
Digital requirements, access, security and student privacy issues
- **Administrative Expertise** (principals, assistant superintendents, superintendents)  
Professional development capacity, accessibility, state/district policies
- **Curation Expertise** (teachers, librarians)  
Permitted usage, attribution, resource organization
- **Community Expertise** (students, parents, educational associations, museums, afterschool programs)  
Ease of use, internet access, access outside of school

Any review team should include both beginning and experienced teachers and reflect gender and ethnic diversity as well as district demographics. The best committee members can 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 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.
- Gather information from teachers and other staff members using interviews, surveys or other methods.
- Examine the learning standards 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)

In a larger district, it may be possible to convene a K–12 steering committee along with instructional material level committees for specific content areas or grade bands. In a 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.

[Building the right review team](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

## Role of Facilitator

Careful selection of the facilitator is required. The facilitator must have an in-depth understanding of content-area curriculum, the state Learning Standards in the content area targeted for instructional materials adoption, as well as the personal and professional skills to ensure a fair and effective selection process. 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, the success of an adoption is contingent upon the knowledge and skills of the facilitator, and his/her ability to anticipate what lies ahead.

## Formal Adoption Procedures

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

- 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



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