

Supplemental Memorandum

To: STATE BOARD MEMBERS

Date: June 24, 2003

From: Tom Adams, Executive Director, Curriculum Commission

Re: ITEM #24

Subject Instructional Materials Review Process

The attachment presents information about revisions to the instructional materials process, including additional training on the State Board of Education's *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content*.

Revisions to the Review Process for Instructional Materials for Kindergarten and Grades One through Eight

Recommendation

CFIR staff recommends that all reviewers of instructional materials need to be trained in the State Board of Education's *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content* <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/cfir/socialcontent.pdf>>. This will ensure that materials are reviewed twice for these issues.

Issue

Senator Marta Escutia in a letter dated April 2, 2003, requested changes to *SRA/Open Court Reading 2002*. President Reed Hasting wrote to Senator Marta Escutia, California State Senate, on April 28, 2003 and promised to make the requested changes to the *SRA/Open Court Reading 2002*. On June 12, 2003, Luis Rodriguez, member of the State Board, requested a review of the adoption process. At issue is whether the instructional materials review process is able to detect flaws in instructional materials and prevent problems such as found in *SRA/Open Court Reading 2002*.

Background

Roles of the State Board of Education and the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission: State Board of Education (SBE) under Article IX, Section 7.5 of the California Constitution has the authority to adopt textbooks in grades one through eight (Article IX, Section 7.5). The Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission (Curriculum Commission) advises the State Board on the adoption of K-12 curriculum frameworks and K-8 instructional resources. Education Code Sections 60204 and 60605 define the Commission's duties. The Commission shall:

- (a) Recommend curriculum frameworks to the State Board that comply with the provisions of *Education Code* Sections 60605 (f) to ensure that curriculum frameworks are aligned with statewide standards.
- (b) Develop criteria for evaluating instructional materials submitted for adoption so that the materials adopted shall adequately cover the subjects in the indicated grade or grades and which comply with the provisions of Article 3 (commencing with Section 60040) of Chapter 1. The criteria developed by the commission shall be consistent with the duties of the State Board pursuant to Section 60200. The criteria shall be public information and shall be provided in written or printed form to any person requesting such information.

How K-8 Instructional Materials Adoptions are conducted by the State: The instructional materials adoption process involves three concurrent steps:

- Legal compliance review: The legal compliance review, also known as the "social content review", is conducted to ensure that all instructional resources used in California public schools are in compliance with *Education Code sections 60040-60045 and 60048* as well as State Board guidelines contained in the document, *Standards for Evaluation of Instructional Materials with Respect to Social Content*

- Public review and comment: The adoption process is designed to ensure that the public has the opportunity to review and comment on resources considered for State Board adoption. Samples of instructional resources submitted for adoption are available for public review at the twenty-four Learning Resources Display Centers (LRDCs) throughout the state. Written comments on the resources are forwarded to the Curriculum Commission and the State Board for consideration. In addition, three separate public hearings are held prior to adoption: one before the appropriate Subject Matter Committee of the Curriculum Commission, one before the full commission, and one before the State Board.

- Education content review: The education content review is based on specific evaluation criteria (typically contained in the curriculum framework for each subject) and the content standards (in the core subject areas) they embody. The criteria, like the frameworks, are developed by the Curriculum Commission and adopted by the State Board. Following a statewide recruitment and thorough application process, the Curriculum Commission recommends and the State Board appoints members of the Instructional Materials Advisory Panel (IMAP) and the Content Review Panel (CRP). The IMAP is composed primarily of classroom teachers (but also includes a broad range of other participants, e.g., school administrators, curriculum specialists, university faculty, and parents) who evaluate materials according to all elements of the criteria. The CRP is composed of scholars, recognized subject matter experts who review materials according to the content criteria and standards to ensure that the materials are accurate, adequate in their coverage, and based on current and confirmed research. CRP members review only those materials or parts of them that pertain to their expertise. They are a resource for the IMAP. IMAP and CRP receive training on the State Board-adopted criteria and individually review the submitted programs. The CRP examines the content adequacy of each submission. The IMAP and CRP present a report of findings to the Curriculum Commission on whether programs meet the criteria.

The Curriculum Commission makes its adoption recommendations based on all the reports and comments received, including IMAP/CRP recommendations, publisher responses, and written and oral comments from the public. Commissioners also study the submitted resources independently and, as noted above, conduct public hearings prior to recommending resources to the State Board. The Curriculum Commission develops a written report containing the Commission's recommendation on each submission. This report is forwarded to the State Board. The State Board considers the Curriculum Commission's recommendations, related documents, and public comment prior to adopting (with or without conditions) or not adopting each submission. The State Board of Education's list of adopted materials appears on the CDE website at <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/cfir>>.

SRA/Open Court Reading 2002: The problems that were highlighted in Senator Escutia's letter and are found in the "English Language Development Guide" for Open Court fall under the SBE's *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content*. More specifically, the cited material does not conform to standard 1 under "Ethnic and Cultural Groups": "1. *Adverse reflection*. Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize minority are prohibited."

SRA/Open Court Reading 2002 underwent all three concurrent steps of review, but the obvious errors in the program were not detected. The reason is that the review process did not make full

use of all of its reviewers. Legal compliance review is done by community volunteers who include parents, teachers, administrators, and students. They examine the materials according to *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content* with attention focusing on images and pictures. In turn, the IMAP and CRP are composed of educators and subject area experts who determine if the submitted materials are aligned to the content standards, framework and criteria. IMAP and CRP are most familiar with the text of the program but have not been trained to examine materials for social content. For the RLA/ELD adoption, legal compliance review was done by volunteers reviewing only for social content with attention to images and pictures and did not include the people who were most familiar with the content, the IMAP and CRP.

Proposed Revision

The proposal is to conduct a double read of materials for legal compliance review. The current process with volunteers examining materials would be augmented by having IMAP and CRP examine materials for compliance to the *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content*. The effectiveness of this approach is already demonstrated in the 2003 Foreign Language Adoption. For this adoption, IMAP and CRP were trained on the standards and have conducted their review. They have been finding examples of where the text of programs, as well as images and pictures, conflict with the social content standards. For example, one reviewer found the following in a Spanish-language program:

Casi todos los hispanos tienen una personalidad muy agradable. Son alegres y divertidos. Tienen mucho talento para la música y el baile. (Almost all Hispanics have very agreeable personalities. They are cheerful and entertaining. They are very talented in music and dance.)

This publisher is being cited and will have to make changes to the program if it wants to be used in California's schools. The reviewers for the Foreign Language Adoption have shown the necessity of having a double read for social content. The proposed change will prevent adverse stereotypes from appearing in state-adopted materials.