

Georgia Textbook/Instructional Materials Recommendation Program

Georgia's Legislative Provision of 1937, known as the Free Textbook Law, directed the Georgia Board of Education to provide textbooks for use in the elementary, middle, and high schools.

Georgia Code provides that the "Georgia Board of Education is authorized to prescribe, by regulation, the definition of the term "textbook" to include but not be limited to "systematically designed instructional material in any medium, print or non-print, that constitutes the principal source of study for or directly enhances the instruction of a state-funded course" and to prescribe the textbooks to be used in the various grades in the public schools of this state, including the elementary grades and high school grades. The state board may provide, by regulation, for multiple listings of books for use in the various grades and may, in its discretion, authorize the county school superintendents or the superintendents of independent school systems to exercise a choice between books so listed or adopted for any particular grade." (20-2-1010)

In order that the core instructional materials are of the highest quality, the state board has established procedures for evaluating and recommending textbooks in state-funded courses (Georgia Board of Education Rules 160-4-4-.10 and 160-4-4-.20).

Each year publishers of record are given notice of courses and grade levels for which textbooks will be recommended. The notice includes dates for the recommendation cycle and process and other directives regarding information to be submitted. Interested publishers are provided complete recommendation information from the department of education including requirements for submitting bids, forms to be completed, regulations and deadlines.

Annually, the State Board of Education appoints committees to serve in an advisory capacity, coordinating the evaluation of texts submitted for recommendation in specified subject areas and making recommendations to the board for textbooks to be state recommended. The State Textbook Advisory Committees consist of professional educators and lay members, appointed from each congressional district and the state at-large.

During the summer, the State Textbook Advisory Committees coordinate evaluations of all titles submitted by publishers. The committees then meet in July to recommend to the state board those titles that meet predetermined criteria. There are no numerical restrictions regarding the number of titles to be selected for state recommendation. The determining factor governing recommendation is instructional quality. The recommended list of textbooks is submitted to the State Board of Education for state recommendation, normally at its September or October meeting. A list of these recommended textbooks is then prepared and distributed to Georgia school systems by January.