

BOARD BRIEF

Date: June 12, 2020

BOARD INFORMATION: _____
MEETING PREPARATION: X

FROM: Terri H. Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Tanja Mayer-Harding, Humanities Coordinator
Sarah Whelan, Social Studies Instructional Specialist

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Social Studies Textbook Adoption

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

Goal 4: Facilities and the Learning Environment

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Academics

Communications and Customer Service for External Stakeholders

SUMMARY

In 2015, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) adopted the revised Standards of Learning for History and Social Science. In March of 2018, the Board of Education approved a list of recommended textbooks for K-12 history and social science. The complete list of approved textbooks is available [here](#). In January 2020, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) initiated a local textbook review process to provide needed materials for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond, in accordance with *Policy IIAA, Textbook Selection and Adoption*. An RFP process was initiated to allow for a review of materials beyond the VDOE-approved list to provide a more extensive selection with the potential to meet the needs of students in ACPS.

BACKGROUND

Social Studies Instructional Specialist, Sarah Whelan, led the elementary and secondary Textbook Selection Committees (TSC), which included members with diverse educational backgrounds and experiences. Each school principal was invited to select instructional staff members to represent their school. The TSC, including the following:

- 25 classroom teachers, two English Learner (EL) teacher, and two assistant principals;
- Instructional Specialists from the Offices of Specialized Instruction and English Learner (EL) Services;
- Coordinator for Talented and Gifted (TAG) Education; and
- Technology Integration Specialist and a representative from Technology Services.

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Please see the attachments for the guiding questions used for the review process, the evaluation criteria, and the list of materials that were reviewed.

The TSC sought feedback from school-based staff through individual reviews and meetings of professional-learning communities to evaluate specific offerings by grade level and course. Based on the feedback regarding alignment with Standards of Learning and other identified criteria, specific textbooks were recommended for each course.

Careful consideration was given to the proposed materials' inclusion of multiple perspectives, cultural responsiveness, and appropriate discussion of essential historical context. Committee members sought materials that give thorough attention and voice to typically marginalized and under-represented groups in history.

It is important to note that, while the recommended textbooks address the Standards of Learning, the social studies curriculum goes beyond the standards to provide a more complex and diverse understanding of history and social science. The textbook is not the sole resource to be used in social studies instruction and the ACPS curriculum will continue to be enhanced and supplemented with other materials and sources. This includes material developed in partnership with City of Alexandria representatives and resources to include vital local history topics in our curriculum that help our students understand the current moment and the urgent need for change.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the materials recommended by the Textbook Selection Committees (TSC):

- **Grades K-2:** Five Ponds Press materials
- **Grades 6-12:** National Geographic/Cengage (Grades 6, 7, World History, US/Virginia History, and US/Virginia Government) and McGraw Hill (Grade 8).
- **Advanced Placement:** Cengage, Bedford Freeman and Worth, McGraw Hill, and WW Norton.

Please see the attachment for a full list of titles by grade level. Please see the attachment for instructions on how to review the recommended materials.

IMPACT

ACPS plans to purchase digital materials and classroom sets of print resources. Funding for the textbook adoption was approved as part of the FY2021 Capital Improvement Budget in the amount of \$1,089,885.

The Instructional Coordinator for Textbooks and the Social Studies Instructional Specialist will work with the Department of Finance to order the textbooks by July 20, 2020, including digital access. Plans are in process to adjust the purchase and distribution of print materials in alignment with the ACPS 4.0 Educational Continuity Plan.

As part of the new adoption, vendors will provide social studies teachers with training on division-designated professional development days with ongoing digital support to implement

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the textbook and instructional materials successfully. Professional development will be provided online as necessary as part of the ACPS 4.0 Educational Continuity Plan.

ATTACHMENTS (provided as links and printable attachments)

1. [Guiding Questions, Selection Criteria and Recommended Textbooks/Resources](#)
2. [List of Recommended Books by Grade Level](#)
3. [Directions for Accessing Recommended Textbooks for Review **ONLINE**](#)
4. [Directions for Accessing Recommended Textbooks for Review **IN PERSON**](#)

CONTACTS

Tanja Mayer-Harding, tanja.mayer-harding@acps.k12.va.us

Sarah Whelan, sarah.whelan@acps.k12.va.us