

Date: June 20, 2019
For ACTION X
For INFORMATION
Board Agenda: Yes X
No

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Anne Booth, Ed.D., Instructional Coordinator for Textbooks and Library Media
Sarah Whelan, Social Studies Instructional Specialist

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

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

TOPIC: Social Studies Textbook Adoption, Grades 3-4 (FY 19 funds)

SUMMARY

In 2015, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) adopted a revised History and Social Science Standards of Learning. In 2017-2018, the VDOE administered the textbook review process for the Board of Education and made recommendations on approval to the Board. In March 2018, the Board of Education approved a list of recommended history and social science textbooks for grades K-12. At the elementary level, the recommended publishers include Five Ponds Press for grades K-4 and McGraw-Hill for grades K, 3, and 4. The complete list of approved textbooks is available [here](#). In March 2019, ACPS initiated a local textbook review process, in accordance with Policy IIAA, Textbook Selection and Adoption, to provide needed materials for the 2019-2020 school year and beyond.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Anne Booth, Instructional Coordinator for Textbooks and Library Media Services, and Sarah Whelan, Social Studies Instructional Specialist, led the Textbook Selection Committee (TSC), which was comprised of 25 members with diverse educational backgrounds and experiences. Each school principal selected an instructional staff member to represent their school. School-based instructional staff members included sixteen classroom teachers, two English Learner (EL) teachers, and two assistant principals. In addition, instructional specialists from the Offices of Specialized Instruction and English Learners served on the committee, as well as the Instructional Specialist for Talented and Gifted (TAG) Education. It is also important to note that, in addition to their instructional responsibilities, three committee members served on the ACPS Equity Advisory Committee.

The TSC carefully compared VDOE-approved texts with the ACPS social studies curriculum to identify topics addressed within each text. The Committee utilized the following guiding questions when reviewing instructional materials:

1. Which instructional materials best support students' learning of the standards for social studies content and skills?
2. Which instructional materials best support social studies instructional best-practices?
3. To what extent do lessons regularly feature tasks that engage students in reasoning, analysis, comparing multiple perspectives, and organizing information?
4. To what extent do materials incorporate the four social studies disciplines: economics, geography, history, and civics?
5. What supports do the teachers' editions provide for effective implementation for these lessons? Do they provide a range of suggestions for multiple types of learning activities?
6. To what extent do materials provide teachers with strategies and materials for meeting the needs of a range of learners, including both struggling and advanced learners?
7. To what extent do materials suggest accommodations and modifications for English Learners that will support their regular and active participation in class?
8. To what extent do materials provide a balanced portrayal of various demographic and personal characteristics?

The TSC reviewed the following VDOE-approved textbooks for possible use with the elementary social studies program:

Five Ponds Press	
○ Our World: Our Community, Kindergarten	○ Our World: Ancient World Cultures, Gr. 3
○ Our World: Our State, Gr. 1	○ Our Virginia: Past and Present, Gr. 4
○ Our World: Our United States, Gr. 2	

McGraw-Hill	
○ Virginia Social Studies; Living, Learning, and Working Together, Kindergarten	
○ Exploring People, Places, and Cultures, Gr. 3	
○ Virginia Studies, Gr. 4	

The review process resulted in consensus over which set of resources were better aligned with the Standards of Learning and ultimately favored for use in ACPS. It is important to note that, while the recommended textbook addresses the standards, the ACPS social studies curriculum goes beyond the standards to provide a more complex and diverse understanding of history and social science. While a textbook is not the sole resource to be used in Social Studies instruction, staff will continue to enhance and support the curriculum with additional materials and resources, including required cornerstone lessons that address the complexity of history and social science.

RECOMMENDATION

The Textbook Selection Committee (TSC) recommends School Board approval of the following textbooks:

- Our World, Ancient Cultures (Five Ponds Press) for Grade 3
- Our Virginia: Past and Present (Five Ponds Press) for Grade 4

IMPACT

For the 2019-2020 school year, ACPS anticipates that approximately 1,435 students will enroll in grade 3 and 1,364 students in grade 4. The cost of the textbook purchase, including teacher resources, ancillary materials, and professional development is \$162,942.50 (\$57.50 per student). The Instructional Coordinator for Textbooks and Library Media Services will work with the Social Studies Instructional Specialist to order the textbooks by June 30, 2019, with distribution to schools occurring by July 22, 2019. As part of the new adoption, the vendor will provide the social studies teachers with three days of in-person training on division-designated professional development days with ongoing digital support in order to implement the textbook and instructional materials successfully. Professional development will be ongoing throughout the year, including after-school sessions, job-embedded professional development through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and professional development for administrators and instructional leaders.

ATTACHMENT

1. 190620_VBOE_Approved_HSS_Textbook_Contract_Prices
2. 190620_Evaluation_Criteria_for_Elementary_Social_Studies
3. Copy of Grade 3 and 4 Textbooks

CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Dr. Anne Booth, anne.booth@acps.k12.va.us, 703-212-4917
2. Sarah Whelan, sarah.whelan@acps.k12.va.us, 703-619-8020