



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

TITLE: Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials

NUMBER: BUL-5209.1

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DATE: August 22, 2016

ROUTING

Local District Superintendents
Local District Administrators of
Instruction
Local District Directors of
Instruction
Principals
Library Media Personnel
Teachers

PURPOSE: To target priority instructional initiatives, the District has mandated the use of specific instructional materials. Where mandated materials have not been designated, it is the policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District that the selection of instructional materials be delegated to each school.

MAJOR CHANGES: This revision replaces BUL-5209, dated August 13, 2010, *Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials and Off-Site Instructional Materials*. The content has been revised to reflect the current District organizational structure and policy and to update information about the evaluation resources that are available and the materials compliance evaluation form.

BACKGROUND: Although most instructional materials, including audiovisual materials, library books, technology resources, and textbooks, are selected from State- and District-approved lists, school site decision-making and local school budget authority have increased the responsibility of schools for their own local evaluation. Instructional materials used with all students must support the curriculum, the California frameworks and California Standards, and instructional strategies; comply with *California Education Code* requirements regarding the evaluation of materials; and be appropriate for the grade, ability, language proficiency, and maturity level of students being taught.

This bulletin identifies the procedures for selecting instructional materials. It provides school personnel with the evaluation criteria for selecting instructional materials of high quality for use in the classroom and the school library media center. These criteria include the *California Education Code* compliance guidelines and specific evaluation criteria. This bulletin also identifies State and District lists of evaluated instructional materials and District websites that can be used as resources.



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GUIDELINES: The following guidelines are in effect:

A. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The school selection of instructional materials should involve purposeful consideration by the school and follow these procedures:

1. Form a school site evaluation and selection committee comprised of administrators, teachers, library media personnel, parents, and possibly, students.
2. Establish a school policy on the evaluation and selection of instructional materials for the classroom and the library media center.
3. Develop an instructional materials evaluation form (see Attachment A for a model).
4. Review District and state lists of evaluated resources in order to save time and money. Resources on these lists have been evaluated by teachers, teacher librarians, and administrators who have received special training in materials evaluation. See Section C in this bulletin.
5. Utilize additional central office assistance with the evaluation of instructional materials. For example, Library Services and KLCS-TV.
6. Review unevaluated materials, e.g., those listed in publishers' catalogs sent to schools, donations of materials received by schools, or items from conferences. Reviewers should check with the appropriate District office to see if the materials have been evaluated (see Section C). If not, they should read reviews published in professional journals such as *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *School Library Connection*, *VOYA*, or request free copies of materials to preview.
7. Determine budgets, prioritize selections, and order materials.

B. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

The criteria listed below should be considered when evaluating and selecting materials in order to best meet the instructional needs of all students.

1. State Legal Compliance Guidelines

Material must comply with standards relating to various compliance issues as set forth by the *California Education Code* in Sections 60040 through 60044, 60048, and 60200; the California State Board of Education; and the Los Angeles Board of Education. These legal compliance guidelines are contained in the "Instructional Materials Compliance Evaluation Form" included in Attachment B.



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2. Curricular Relevancy and Organization

- a. Content, scope, and sequence should align with the State frameworks and content standards for Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Science/History, Health, Foreign Languages, and Visual/Performing Arts.
- b. Content must be accurate and current.
- c. Content should be organized for effective learning.
- d. Level of difficulty should be appropriate for diverse student learners. Access to the subject matter content for special education, English Learners (ELs), Standard English Learners (SELs), intervention, and GATE students should be considered.
- e. Instructional materials should help students reach stated objectives.
- f. When possible, all sides of a controversial issue should be presented.
- g. When selecting fictional materials, schools should consider effectiveness of literary style, plot, theme, and characterization.
- h. Factual materials should come with instructional aids, e.g., bibliographies, appendices, indices, glossaries, and study aids (e.g., self-tests, summaries, reviews, and suggested activities) helpful to students and staff.

3. Technical Considerations

- a. Format, type size, color and quality of paper, and binding should be appropriate.
- b. Pacing should be regulated enough to convey content to the intended audience.
- c. Narration and dialogue should be clear, precise, and appropriate to the content.
- d. Audio levels should be consistent and in synchronization with visuals.
- e. Color, graphics, music, and other sound effects should be used in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from the content.
- f. Visuals should be appropriate, accurate, sharp, properly exposed, and creatively enhance the presentation.
- g. Labels or captions should appear as needed and must be clear and accurate.
- h. Program design of technology-based instruction must be effective and appropriate.
- i. Interactive materials should provide appropriate and effective feedback to users.
- j. When appropriate, the materials should meet the District's technology requirements.
- k. Packaging should be attractive, durable, and appropriate.



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4. Criteria for Evaluating Primary Language Materials

In addition to the above criteria, the following criteria should be used for materials in languages other than English:

- a. Translation should be accurate and fluid in style.
- b. Materials should be relevant to the curriculum; however, expecting materials published in other countries to match the California frameworks or Standards is not realistic. Schools should determine the degree of acceptable match.
- c. Point of view should be considered, especially if materials are produced in another country.
- d. Illustrations and content should address diversity, but materials produced in other countries might lack acceptable portrayals of diverse ethnic groups. The presence of diversity should be determined and evaluated at school sites.
- e. Language style, e.g., dialect (social or regional), should be appropriate for effective learning.
- f. Cultural orientation of the content, e.g., political, social, and religious viewpoints, should be acceptable in school settings.
- g. Pedagogy and methodology should be compatible with instructional strategies used by staff with students.

5. Selection Criteria for a Nonfiction Book for Content-Based English Learner Instruction

- a. Text, written in English, should have high readability, e.g., simplicity of sentences, appropriateness of vocabulary, amount and use of white space, and the size of the print.
- b. Illustrations should be integral to the text, e.g., enhanced meaning, one-to-one relationship between the illustrations and the text, clear and attractive.
- c. Text should support the same curriculum that all students are receiving.
- d. Vocabulary should be highlighted, e.g., appear in bold or color print and include a pronunciation guide, a glossary, or an explanation.
- e. Text should be engaging to the reader, e.g. connect to the background of the student, personalize the meaning, and encourage interaction of the student with the text.

C. LIST OF DISTRICT- AND STATE-EVALUATED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

State and District guidelines and compliance issues have been used to screen materials in District-approved lists and in the provision of online instructional resources.



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1. Integrated Library and Textbook Support Services (ILTSS).
 - a. *Digital Library* (www.iltss.org) provides access to online subscription resources such as encyclopedias, periodicals, subject-specific reference information, bilingual dictionaries, and maps.
 - b. *Destiny*, the integrated library system, allows users to create various bibliographies including hi-low books. Tutorials provided on ILTSS website, www.iltss.org
 - c. Textbook Services posts the latest *Instructional Materials Surveys* and price list/order forms on its webpage: www.iltss.org
2. The [California Learning Resources Network](http://www.clrn.org) (CLRN) (www.clrn.org) is an information source that identifies supplemental learning resources aligned to state standards.

RELATED RESOURCES:

The following bulletins related to instructional media can be accessed via the District's e-Library:

- BUL-5208.1, *Procedures for Reviewing Challenged Materials*, Division of Instruction, August 29, 2016.
- BUL-5210.1, *Guidelines for the Use of Audiovisual Materials Not Owned, Broadcast, or Recommended by the District*, Division of Instruction, August 22, 2016.
- BUL-714, *Compliance with the 1976 United States Copyright Law*, Information Technology Division, January 8, 2004.
- REF-2111.1, *Field Trip Handbook*, December 14, 2015.

ASSISTANCE:

For assistance or further information. Please contact:

- For information about library, textbook, and e-resources evaluation, contact Esther Sinofsky, Administrative Coordinator, Integrated Library and Textbook Support Services, (213) 241-2733.
- For information about elementary school programs, contact Katie McGrath, Director, Elementary, (213) 241-5333.
- For information about secondary school programs, call Derrick Chau, Senior Executive Officer, (213) 241-6895.



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ATTACHMENT A

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
GENERIC EVALUATION FORM**

Recommend _____ Reject _____

Subject: _____ Course Title: _____ Grade _____

Author(s) (last name): _____

Title (as shown on title page): _____

Publisher: _____ ISBN: _____ Copyright Date: _____

Rate the materials by **circling** the appropriate number/level for each category.

1. Alignment to State standards	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2. Alignment to framework	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
	Poor	Below Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Not Applicable
3. Content/Alignment with curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Culturally relevant curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. Content level	Easy	Average	Advanced	Honors		
6. Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7. Organization of materials for effective learning	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. Measurable outcomes and goals	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. Tables of contents, indexes, glossaries, content summaries, references, and assessment guides	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10. Assessments (formative, summative, cumulative)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. Universal access for special education	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. Universal access for English Learners	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. Universal access for below grade level	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
14. Universal access for above grade level	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15. Instructional planning	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16. Teacher's edition, guides, teaching strategies	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17. Instructional support	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18. Pacing plan	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19. Electronic resources using appropriate strategies	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20. Electronic resources user-friendly	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21. Electronic resources technically sound	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Comments (see attachments)

Chairperson Date Evaluator(s) Date

(Evaluation for Legal Compliance required. See Attachment B)



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ATTACHMENT B

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS COMPLIANCE EVALUATION FORM

Instructional materials under consideration must comply with the following standards as set forth by the California Education Code, the California State Board of Education, and the Los Angeles City Board of Education.

Evaluators should take into consideration special circumstances dealing with the literary, historical or cultural perspective of materials, or a special purpose that might result in limited portrayals.

Please Circle the appropriate answer to the right.

Compliance?

Cite Place *

Materials considered for adoption shall not contain:

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|--|----------------|-------|
| 1. Any matter reflecting adversely upon persons because of their actual or perceived disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or occupation or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.
(Ed. Code 60040 (b), 60044 (a)) | Yes No N/A | _____ |
| 2. Any sectarian or denominational doctrine or propaganda contrary to law.
(Ed. Code 60044 (a), (b)) | Yes No N/A | _____ |

Materials considered for adoption shall also meet the following requirements:

- | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|
| 3. When appropriate to the comprehension of pupils, textbooks for social science, history, or civics classes shall contain the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.
(Ed. Code 60043) | Yes No N/A | _____ |
| 4. Where deemed necessary and proper, it is required that adopted materials encourage thrift, fire prevention, and the humane treatment of animals and people.
(Ed. Code 60042) | Yes No N/A | _____ |
| 5. Whenever possible and feasible, illustrations of or references to brand names, products, and corporate logos will be omitted in order to prevent unfair exposure for private producers or their products.
(Ed. Code 60048 and 60200) | Yes No N/A | _____ |
| 6. Whenever appropriate, emphasis will be placed on foods of high nutritive value and regular exercise.
(State Board of Education, 1986) | Yes No N/A | _____ |
| 7. Whenever possible and feasible, proper grammar and spelling should be used; literature and trade books are the exception.
(Ed. Code 60045) | Yes No N/A | _____ |

Materials shall also accurately portray the following whenever appropriate:

- | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|
| 8. The contributions of both men and women in all types of roles, including professional, vocational, and executive roles.
(Ed. Code 60040 (a), 60044 (a)) | Yes No N/A | _____ |
|---|----------------|-------|



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|-----|--|-----|----|-----|-------|
| 9. | The role and contributions of American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Black Americans, Mexican and other Hispanic Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, European Americans, and members of other ethnic and cultural groups to the total developed of California and the United States.
(Ed. Code 60040 (b), 60044(a)) | Yes | No | N/A | _____ |
| 10. | The role and contributions of the entrepreneur and labor in the total development of California and the United States.
(Ed. Code 60040 (c), 60044 (a)) | Yes | No | N/A | _____ |
| 11. | The place of human beings in ecological systems and the necessity for the protection of our environment.
(Ed. Code 60040 (a)) | Yes | No | N/A | _____ |
| 12. | The effects on the human system of the use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, restricted dangerous drugs, and other dangerous substances.
(Ed. Code 60041 (b)) | Yes | No | N/A | _____ |
| 13. | The diversity of roles and the specific contributions of people with disabilities in our society in the past, present, or future.
(Ed. Code 60044 (a) and LAUSD Board Resolution) | Yes | No | N/A | _____ |
| 14. | The diversity of activities in which older persons are involved with people of all ages. (State Board of Education policy, 1979 and LAUSD Board Resolution) | Yes | No | N/A | _____ |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT FOR COMPLIANCE **YES** _____ **NO** _____

*If material is not in compliance, cite page numbers in a book, time into a videocassette chapter.