



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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November 1, 2025

The Honorable Glenn A. Youngkin
Governor
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations
Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 1404
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Ghazala F. Hashmi
Chair, Senate Education and Health
Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 616
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 123
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Sam Rasoul
Chair, House Education Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 910
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin and Chairs Lucas, Hashmi, Torian and Rasoul:

Pursuant to Enactment Clause 7 of Chapters [680](#) and [683](#) (2025 Acts of Assembly), please find a report on Virginia's Textbook Review Process, which was last updated and approved by the Virginia Board of Education on March 24, 2011.

In 2025, the General Assembly enacted Chapters [680](#) and [683](#), requiring the Virginia Department of Education to consult with experienced teachers, division-level content specialists, and subject matter experts to evaluate any changes to its current textbook review and approval process that may be necessary to address challenges presented by such process, improve such process, and fully comply with the provisions of the act.

This report first reviews the evaluation of changes to the current textbook review and approval process, followed by an identification and consideration of best practices for textbook review and approval processes. Finally, the report makes recommendations on (1) revising Virginia's Textbook Review Process, (2) improving the selection and training process for statewide

textbook review committees, (3) increasing opportunities for public comment on review and approval of textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials, and (4) updating Department procedures to support the process of reviewing and approving textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Anne Gullickson", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Emily Anne Gullickson, M.Ed. J.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

EAG/TBD/mw

c: The Honorable Aimee Rogstad Guidera
Virginia Secretary of Education

REPORT ON VIRGINIA'S TEXTBOOK AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Chapters 680 and 683 (2025 Acts of Assembly)
Enactment Clause 7



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INTRODUCTION

Virginia's Textbook Review Process was last approved by the Virginia Board of Education in 2011. Pursuant to Enactment Clause 7 of Chapters [680](#) and [683](#) (2025 Acts of Assembly), the Virginia Department of Education (Department) was tasked with consulting with experienced teachers, division-level content specialists, and subject matter experts to evaluate proposed changes to the current textbook review and approval process. Through this consultation with educators who had engaged in recent review processes, as well as those who are division leaders, teachers, or other educators who have not engaged in review processes, the Department was able to gather information to inform updates to the current textbook review process.

This report first reviews the evaluation of changes to the current textbook review and approval process, followed by an identification and consideration of best practices for textbook review and approval processes. Finally, the report makes recommendations on (1) revising Virginia's Textbook Review Process, (2) improving the selection and training process for statewide textbook review committees, (3) increasing opportunities for public comment on review and approval of textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials, and (4) updating Department procedures to support the process of reviewing and approving textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials.

EVALUATION OF CHANGES TO THE CURRENT TEXTBOOK REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Current Textbook Review Process

Section [22.1-253.13:1](#) of the *Code of Virginia* provides that:

B. The Board shall establish educational objectives known as the *Standards of Learning*, which shall form the core of Virginia's educational program, and other educational objectives, which together are designed to ensure the development of the skills that are necessary for success in school and for preparation for life in the years beyond.

The statute in the Standards of Quality further provides that:

School boards shall implement the *Standards of Learning* or objectives specifically designed for their school divisions that are equivalent to or exceed the Board's requirements. Students shall be expected to achieve the educational objectives established by the school division at appropriate age or grade levels. The curriculum adopted by the local school division shall be aligned to the *Standards of Learning*.

It is the collective responsibility of the Board of Education (Board), the Department, and local school boards to ensure that the *Standards of Learning* are taught and assessed in Virginia's public schools. The standards are the foundation of the Commonwealth's educational program and as such, are to be taught and assessed through the use of high-quality instructional materials with discipline specific instructional guides to support the planning and delivery of instruction. High-quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), textbooks, and the standards are to work in tandem, not separately to fulfill the expectations of the *Code of Virginia* and the priorities set forth in the Board of Education's [Comprehensive Plan \(2024-2029\)](#).

The Virginia Literacy Act, codified in the [Standards of Quality](#), requires the adoption of core literacy programs in K-5, supplemental programs in K-8, and intervention programs in K-8. The Department's statewide partners at the Virginia Literacy Partnerships Office at the University of Virginia leads the review process for these materials. While Chapters [680](#) and [683](#) do not include K-5 literacy, the Department recommended that the process developed for the review of HQIM be utilized during the review of K-5 literacy materials and follow the timeline presented for English Language Arts (ELA) 6-12 materials to provide consistency and efficiency for our reviewers and school division stakeholders.

The current textbook review process was approved by the Board on March 24, 2011. The Department administers [the textbook review process](#) for the Board and makes recommendations on approval to the Board. Statewide review committees composed of teachers, division-level content specialists, and subject matter experts compare submitted materials with relevant content in the *Standards of Learning* (SOL) and report on the correlation between reviewed items and the SOL.

The textbook review process places primary responsibility on publishers to ensure the accuracy of their textbooks. Publishers must certify that textbooks submitted for approval have been thoroughly examined and reviewed by qualified content experts for factual accuracy. The findings of the review committees, coupled with the publishers' certification and agreement form, forms the basis of the Department's recommendations to the Board on the approval of textbooks.

An overview of Virginia's current State Textbook Approval Process is provided below.

1. The Board approves the textbook review process and determines the schedule for review of specific content area textbooks.
2. The Department administers the review process on behalf of the Board.
3. The Department invites publishers to submit textbooks for review.
4. Publishers indicate their intent to submit textbooks on the completed textbook publishers' certification and agreement forms.
5. The Department reviews the certifications and agreements and works with publishers to address concerns. An incomplete certification or agreement may result in the textbook being removed from consideration for review.
6. The Department seeks nominations for qualified educators and division content experts to serve on the textbook review committees.
7. Review committees of K-12 educators and content experts with advanced degrees in the field are determined by Department staff.

8. The Department notifies the publishers of evaluation committee members for the purpose of sending all textbooks under consideration to these reviewers.
9. Committee members use the evaluation criteria to review the textbooks independently for SOL correlations, content, bias, and design for instructional planning and support.
10. Members of the review committee submit their individual textbook analyses to the Department for aggregation.
11. The full evaluation committee convenes to reach consensus on their reviews of the submitted textbooks.
12. The consensus evaluations are shared with publishers.
13. Publishers are given an opportunity to respond to the committees' reviews and recommendations. Requests by publishers for reconsideration are reviewed.
14. The Board receives the proposed list of textbooks for first review, along with information from the textbook publishers' certification and agreement forms.
15. During a 30-day public comment period, the public is invited to review copies of the books that have been placed at review sites around the state and to provide comment to the Board.
16. The Board reviews all public comment, considers the list, and approves the textbooks.
17. The Department posts a list of approved textbooks with prices and information from the textbook publishers' certifications and agreements on the Department's website.
18. The public may provide ongoing feedback regarding inaccuracies in an approved textbook. The Department staff will inform publishers of errors identified. Publishers will be given the opportunity to contest the errors or propose a corrective action plan for approval by the Board.

The [Code of Virginia](#) § 22.1-238 et seq. permits local school boards to use textbooks not approved by the Board. If a local school board opts to use a textbook that has not been approved by the Board, a local textbook review process is conducted that includes components similar to the state level review. Such components include a correlation with the *Standards of Learning* for the particular subject area and a review of strengths and weaknesses in instructional planning and support. Additionally, the publisher of the textbook certifies the accuracy of the content of the textbook and signs an agreement to correct all factual and editing errors found in a textbook, at its expense. Finally, the publisher should certify that the books meet other requirements of the *Code of Virginia* related to textbooks. This process was last approved by the Board on September 22, 2011.

Stakeholder Selection for Feedback

Per the requirements of Chapters [680](#) and [683](#), the Department consulted with experienced teachers, division-level content specialists, and subject matter experts to evaluate the need for revisions to the current textbook review and approval process. The purpose of this evaluation was to identify and address improvements in the existing process. Stakeholders were selected based on at least one of the following criteria:

- Committee members of the most recent textbook adoption processes held in school year 2024-2025 for English and Mathematics, which included teachers, division-level content specialists and subject matter experts;

- Committee members in science and history who participated in a previous textbook review process;
- Division leaders who oversee the implementation of discipline *Standards of Learning*, curriculum development, the purchase of textbooks and instructional materials, and the development of instructional resources; and
- Division level leaders or designees who are responsible for overseeing the following areas which are impacted by adoption of textbooks and high-quality instructional materials: Advanced Learning, Gifted Education, Special Education, Multilingual Learner Education, and Educational Technology/Digital Learning.

Stakeholders were sent a survey to complete to provide feedback on the current textbook review process and recommendations for a revised textbook review process. Stakeholders were also invited to attend one of five focus group meetings, which took place throughout September 2025.

Additionally, Department staff engaged with a textbook vendor who provided feedback from the publisher perspective of the textbook approval process. While not comprehensive from all vendors, it was stated that the vendor experience has been positive, noting that Virginia has been clear and transparent about the expectations for vendors throughout the process and that they have received good support throughout the process by the Department. The vendor expressed timelines could be clearer and that the feedback loop should remain in the process as they work to support Virginia educators.

Focus Groups and Surveys

Five focus group meetings with stakeholders were held September 29-30, 2025, targeting division leaders and educators, as well as educators having served previously on textbook and instructional materials committees. Leaders and educators represented the following disciplines or groups – English, Mathematics, History and Social Science, Science, Educational Technology/Digital Learning, Multilingual Learner Instruction, Advanced Learning, and Special Education. Leaders, educators, and superintendents were sent email invitations to participate in the focus group meetings. Stakeholders also were provided a survey to complete, which was open for two weeks. In total, there were 169 stakeholder participants during focus group meetings, including division leaders, instructional leaders/coaches, and teachers. Overall, 64 of the 131 school divisions were represented in the focus group meetings. Additionally, 260 stakeholder surveys were completed, with at least 89 divisions represented (an additional 111 survey respondents did not identify the division), 39 recent textbook review committee members for either English or Mathematics, and representation from division leaders, classroom teachers, instructional coaches, school leaders, and other educators. Survey questions focused on the appropriateness of the training, grade-level meetings, a review support structures provided throughout the existing textbook review process, strengths of the process, areas for improvements, and considerations for the revised textbook and HQIM process which included the priorities outlined in the legislation.

The focus group meetings consisted of two parts. The first part provided participants with background information on the current textbook review process. The second part shared an overview of the legislation in Chapters [680](#) and [683](#). Following each meeting segment, participants joined breakout sessions facilitated by Department staff to share feedback on the existing process and provide input on potential revisions to strengthen and improve the textbook review process.

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

As a result of the five focus groups meetings, the Department staff identified the following general themes:

- The overall feedback concerning the organization of review teams, the structures used in the current process, and the level of Department support was favorable. Previous textbook committee members indicated that the Department staff provided training, support, and documents that were easy to use and understand.
- Instructional support for special populations was identified as a critical need, and participants recommended including a review of embedded supports as part of the textbook and instructional materials review process. Explicit guidance on the embedded instructional resources for special populations for each approved HQIM should be reflected in summary reports shared by the Department. Special populations include English Learners, Advanced Learners, and Special Education.
- Alignment of textbook and instructional materials to the discipline *Standards of Learning* should remain a priority in the revised textbook and instructional materials process.
- The rubrics used as part of the current process used three indicators: adequate, limited, and no evidence. Focus group members indicated that the indicator “adequate” did not allow differentiation between aligned resources and high-quality instructional resources.
- In addition to the HQIM components reflected in legislation, the focus group indicated that instructional materials should provide in-depth content support to facilitate teacher understanding of the overall HQIM package, particularly at the elementary level. In addition, the rubrics should reflect discipline-specific components, such as an emphasis on the individual discipline skills and practices as identified by the Board-adopted *Standards of Learning*.
- Timelines and workload constraints were cited as a significant hurdle for both committee members involved in previous review cycles and for divisions adopting materials to support new *Standards of Learning*. It was recommended to build additional time into the new process to allow committee members time to review the assigned materials and for divisions to review and adopt materials as part of their local curriculum to support Standards implementation.
- Divisions used the state process and approved list to guide their local adoptions. Division leader participants requested training on the process and the use of support documents to inform local adoption processes, particularly for new teachers and leaders who may have never engaged in a textbook and instructional materials review process.

Survey data provided by stakeholders revealed the following information.

- Overall, the feedback on the appropriateness of the training, grade-level meetings, and the review support structures (scoring rubric and consensus document) for the state review committees was overwhelmingly positive. Most reviewers felt the meetings were appropriate, helpful, and provided the necessary support and insight for the textbook review process.
- Recent review committee members indicated that the timeline for the review process was rushed, which impacted the ability of committee members to fully explore and consider each assigned textbook and instructional materials publisher submission. Some responders indicate that the compressed timeline reduced the time that reviewers could collaboratively meet throughout the process and in the creation of the final consensus documents.
- A majority of respondents indicated the textbook review committee member application and performance task were easy to complete, and the resources and support provided by the Department were clear as they completed the work.
- The rubric used by committee members to review publisher submissions was easy to complete when clarification and additional support were provided. Reviewers indicated that the portion of the rubric focused on instructional design and support (Part II) should be enhanced to make the rubric selection more self-explanatory, reducing the dependency on real-time clarification.
- Areas that worked well in the current review process included: the combination of individual and collaborative work by committee members, the Department staff support and availability, rubric effectiveness, team dynamics and communication, and digital access.
- Areas to improve included: the time allocated to the review, workload, and compensation for those serving on committees, the need for orientation videos, and streamlined communications from the Department.
- The factors that were most valuable in the review process to inform local decisions included: *Standards of Learning* alignment, an adequacy of materials in addressing required content, instructional practices that are aligned with general and discipline-specific research evidence, support for teachers and advanced learners, cohesiveness of materials, and integration of technology.
- Respondents emphasized the need for timeliness of release of Board-approved textbooks and HQIM which allows for a crosswalk year between *Standards of Learning* adoption and textbook/HQIM adoption. The crosswalk year has previously been instituted to allow divisions to make instructional shifts and adjust the changes of the revised or newly adopted Standards. During the crosswalk year, divisions teach previous and new Standards to begin their processes of revising local curriculum and pacing guides and incorporating supporting training and materials provided by the Department which outline the updates to the adopted Standards, while the Department led the state's textbook and HQIM process. Once textbooks and HQIM were adopted by the state, the divisions would lead their local process to adopt textbook's and HQIM for full curriculum implementation. Respondents indicated that the state review should ensure that materials are robust, comprehensive, and based on strong pedagogy. This includes a

focus on rigor and alignment, pedagogy and skills, and the inclusion of scaffolds and extensions.

- With a shift toward digital platforms, respondents indicated that publishers should be asked to provide explicit details on how their products work in a school environment. These details include Learning Management Systems (LMS) compatibility, data security and privacy, accessibility and offline access, and technology transparency.
- In moving forward, respondents indicated that the highest priority legislated components of HQIM, in ranked order, are trustworthiness, demonstrated record of success, research and evidence-based practices, enrichment for above-grade learners, guidance for English learners and students with disabilities, and resources for teachers to develop content knowledge.

Highest Priority (Rating 4)

Items receiving a rating of **4** are considered the "**highest priority when reviewing resources**":

Textbook and HQIM Component	Priority Rating
Trustworthiness of resources for teachers that support the implementation of instructional practices.	Highest Priority
Resources for teachers that support the implementation of instructional practices should have a demonstrated record of success .	Highest Priority

High Priority / Easy to Measure (Rating 3)

Items receiving a rating of **3** are considered "**a priority and/or easy to measure in local HQIM review**":

Textbook and HQIM Component	Priority Rating
Instructional practices that are aligned with general and discipline-specific research and evidence-based practices .	High Priority
Guidance for meeting student needs with a focus on enrichment for above grade level-students .	High Priority
Guidance for meeting student needs with a focus on English Learners .	High Priority
Guidance for meeting student needs with a focus on students with disabilities .	High Priority
Resources for teachers to develop content knowledge .	High Priority

IDENTIFY AND CONSIDER BEST PRACTICES FOR TEXTBOOK REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Survey of Curriculum Use in English and Mathematics

From September 2024 – February 2025, the Department and Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy (the Institute) collaborated to understand the depth of implementation of high-quality English Language Arts and math curricula as the state was initializing its transition into HQIM and professional learning. The project was designed to inform decision-making at both the state and division levels in reference to the use and integrity of implementation of HQIM. The Institute’s *Teacher Curriculum Use Survey* addressed the following questions at both the macro- and micro-levels:

1. Which curricular materials do teachers use to plan lessons?
2. Which online sources do teachers also consult?
3. What do teachers say about their resources?
4. Which teaching techniques are teachers using?
5. Do teachers collaborate on planning and instruction?

The Teacher Curriculum Use Survey was distributed through the Department’s communication platforms and external partnerships via the Virginia Education Update Newsletter (September 2024), and direct correspondence to division superintendents and Virginia’s leadership organizations. The survey was initially open for 30 days in which participants were to respond with an extension to given to divisions for an additional 15 days (a total of 45 days) to ensure that a state response rate was at or above 25%.

The Institute developed the survey to reflect the components indicated by the Department. This included the use of HQIM reviewed through national vetting processes. These were utilized since the Board had not approved textbooks for 6-12 English and K-12 Mathematics at the time of the survey. One resource utilized was EdReports, which is a national organization that has developed rigorous rubrics to determine ratings for HQIM and alignment to national standards. EdReports criteria is comprised of three gateways that measure text quality and complexity; building knowledge; and usability. The criteria were created by educator review teams. Virginia criteria also address these components in section 2 of the Virginia Textbook Review Process.

The *Teacher Curriculum Use Survey*, launched in September 2025, (September 2025) was comprised of a total sample size of completed survey results of 6,151 K-12 English and mathematics teachers from 110 Virginia school divisions. The summary presented reflects the following data are delineated below for each discipline. The [summary of these data](#) was also shared with the Virginia Board of Education at its July 30, 2025, Work Session.

English-Language Arts Curriculum Use Baseline Survey

- **ELA teachers' use of instructional materials (HQIMs):** 63% of ELA teachers reported using HQIM most frequently. The two most frequently used HQIMs were *Benchmark Advance K-5* (18%) and *Into Literature Virginia 6-12* (21%) (see ELA Research Question 1, below).
- **ELA unaligned instructional materials:** Approximately 37% of teacher reported using materials that did not meet EdReports' alignment and usability standards.
- **How often instructional materials are used for ELA practices:**
 - **HQIM:** The majority of teachers who use HQIMs (73%-90%) responded "All the time" or "Often" to using the curriculum for most ELA lesson activities.
 - **Non-HQIMs:** Approximately half of teachers who use non-HQIMs (50-60%) responded "All the time" or "Often" to using the curriculum for most ELA lesson activities.
- **Perceptions of resources:** Most teachers viewed six curricula favorably for supporting students below and above grade level. A notable challenge of all six curricula were the majority perception (75%-85%) that curricula were not adequate to support vulnerable students (those with IEPs and/or English Language Learners).
- **Curriculum Based Professional Development:** The majority of teachers (87%) attended ELA professional development and viewed the PD favorably. A majority (58%, 1,516 teachers) attended the Department led professional development. Most teachers did not perceive professional development as helpful in supporting struggling readers.

Mathematics Textbook and HQIM Baseline Survey

- **Mathematics teachers use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIMs):** Only 10% of mathematics teachers reported using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) most frequently. The most frequently used HQIM was *enVision Math K-12*, which meets EdReports' alignment and usability standards. *Go Math K-8* was also selected by 9%; however, this curriculum only meets partial standards for EdReports.
- **Mathematics unaligned instructional materials:** Approximately 80% of teachers reported using materials that did not meet EdReports' alignment and usability standards.
- **How often instructional materials are used for mathematics practices:**
 - **HQIM:** A small percentage of teachers who use HQIMs (15%-27%) responded "All the time" or "Often" to using HQIM for mathematics lesson activities.
 - **Non-HQIMs:** A majority of teachers who use non-HQIMs (70-75%) responded "All the time" or "Often" to using non-HQIM curriculum for most lesson activities.
- **Perceptions of resources:** Most teachers viewed non-HQIMs curricula favorably for supporting students below and above grade level. The majority of all respondents (75%-85%) found all five curricula (two HQIMs and three non-HQIMs) inadequate to support vulnerable students (those with IEPs and/or English Language Learners).
- **Curriculum Based Professional Development:** The majority of teachers (87%) had attended mathematics professional development and viewed the PD favorably. A majority

(58%) attended the VA DOE professional development. Most teachers did not perceive professional development as helpful in supporting struggling students.

Based on the results and implications of the survey, the Institute provided the Department with the following recommendations:

- 1. Provide opportunities for teachers to attend ongoing training on the Science of Reading and mathematics process goals which will likely support teachers' confidence in using HQIM.**
 - *Rationale:* As Core Curriculum is grounded in the Science of Reading; and, leveraging the mathematics process goals of communication, connections, problem-solving, reasoning, and representations are embedded within sound best practice for mathematics instruction, Mathematics *Standards of Learning*, and resulting instructional guides, it is necessary that teachers are provided opportunities to engage in professional learning needed to sustain evidence-based, proven practices to advance student performance outcomes.
- 2. Provide professional learning lasting at least 20 hours and spanning at least three months' time to occur in collaboration with colleagues from the same school or division to support sustainability.**
 - *Rationale:* Sustained professional learning significantly enhances teaching practices and improve student performance outcomes. Such tangible outcomes for educators include increased teacher efficacy and effectiveness, collaboration and innovation, feedback and reflection cycles, support for specialized populations, and a skilled workforce (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).
- 3. Explore how curricula and professional development can better support vulnerable students (e.g., specialized populations) and English Learners.**
 - *Rationale:* Sustained professional learning significantly enhances teaching practices and improve student performance outcomes, particularly with students who have extenuating circumstances which may impact their learning outcomes.
- 4. Administer a targeted survey to gather higher response rates from larger divisions with students from under-resourced communities and diverse populations.**
 - *Rationale:* Targeted survey data will allow the Department to shape professional learning and technical assistance to divisions of most need to include schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) that may need wrap-around assistance in implementing evidence-based practices as a part of the school improvement and support process.

Note: At the time of this survey which launched in Fall 2024, the Department was involved in the review process for mathematics textbooks which were adopted in Winter 2025, after the completion of the survey. Core curriculum for English Kindergarten - Grade 5 was previously adopted by the Board and divisions were implementing for the first time in Fall 2024. This impacts the survey results as there was a statewide requirement to adopt core curriculum in English Kindergarten – Grade 5, while it was not a state requirement for mathematics.

Textbook and HQIM Practices Utilized by Other States

In 2017, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), in collaboration with a cohort of interested states, launched the High-Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Development (IMPD) Network. The IMPD Network is dedicated to ensuring that every student, every day, is engaged in meaningful, affirming grade-level instruction. Today, the IMPD Network formally collaborates with 15 states to support their districts (divisions) in selecting high-quality curricula and in providing their educators and aspiring educators with curriculum-based professional learning. CCSSO supports leaders in these states to develop and implement strategic plans that are transforming both policy and practice – all in service of improving teaching and learning.

Virginia formally joined CCSSO’s IMPD Network as of January 2024. The Office of Instruction maintains regular involvement in executive coaching led by the IMPD Network and participates in relevant strategic planning conferences and webinars. This commitment focuses on delivering deep, ongoing, curriculum-based professional learning to teachers, leaders, and aspiring educators, while simultaneously promoting the selection and systematic utilization of high-quality instructional materials.

CCSSO’s IMPD Network has compiled a list of state policies for the adoption of HQIM. This resource can be found in Appendix A. In summary, states utilize varied approaches for the evaluation of instructional materials. The two review models include partnerships with third-party organizations, who review reports such as EdReports for independent analysis, or the contracting of vendors to train and manage internal review teams. Review frequency also varies significantly: some states employ an annual, rotating content-area review cycle, while others conduct comprehensive material reviews only when standards are updated (every six to seven years), supplementing this with a mid-cycle review for recently developed materials.

ExcelinED is a national organization that advances policy changes to improve student learning. They have created a [document](#) that provides summary information on states’ implementation of HQIM. In the recent 2024 report, ExcelinED indicates “...33 states have HQIM guidance, only 8 states have HQIM adoption lists from which districts (divisions) may choose – Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.”

Summary of Best Practices

Upon review of HQIM research, a synthesis of how other states adopt textbooks and HQIM, and survey results from the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy HQIM curriculum use survey, the Department has outlined key considerations for updating the state’s textbook and HQIM process to ensure divisions are provided with quality materials to support local curriculum implementation of the Standards. These best practices for materials selection and implementation of HQIM are outlined below. The alignment of textbooks and HQIM with the state’s academic standards provides a foundation for student success.

The Department has started implementing these practices through various means:

- [English Kindergarten – Grade 5](#) adoption of core instructional programs;
- English Kindergarten – Grade 8 adoption of [supplemental programs](#);
- English Kindergarten – Grade 8 adoption of [intervention programs](#); [professional learning offered for English K-12 educators](#), which includes pairing textbooks and HQIM resources with the Standards for successful implementation;
- initial adoption of [Mathematics Kindergarten through Grade 12](#) textbooks and HQIM; and
- mathematics grant opportunities for divisions that support the implementation of HQIM.

The Department has made available a [Virginia Literacy Act \(VLA\) Implementation Playbook](#) to assist divisions with HQIM selection and implementation processes. The Department plans to expand this tool to include textbook and HQIM selection and implementation for all content areas. The Department will make recommendations to the Board for revisions to current Virginia’s State Textbook Approval Process Fall 2025 to align the resources used in the process with the following best practices. The Department will offer training to division and school leaders following the Board’s approval of a revised textbook and HQIM adoption process.

Textbook and High-Quality Instructional Materials Selection Best Practices

1. Engage committees in a rigorous HQIM vetting process.

- *Prioritize Alignment to Standards:* Use the [Virginia Board of Education-Approved List of Textbook and Instructional Materials](#) or other resources that align to mathematics SOL and the [VDOE Correlation documents](#) to ensure materials are deeply and comprehensively aligned to the full scope and rigor of the Virginia *Mathematics Standards of Learning*.
- *Evaluate Instructional Design:* Verify that materials incorporate research-based and evidence-based instructional practices specific to the discipline. Look for proof of a demonstrated record of success (efficacy data).
- *Content Adequacy and Accuracy:* Ensure the materials provide adequate content to support student mastery and are factually accurate and up to date.

2. Review HQIM and determine gaps with accessibility.

- *Support All Learners:* Materials must include embedded, high-quality supports and scaffolds for all student populations, including English Learners (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), and Advanced learners. Reviewers should check for differentiation and accessibility features.

3. Conduct a practical and technical review.

- *Teacher Usability:* Reviewers should determine if the materials are teacher-friendly, manageable, and structured logically to reduce preparation time, allowing teachers to focus on instructional delivery.
- *Technical and Cost Transparency:* Demand detailed technical specifications from publishers, including Learning Management System (LMS) integration, Single Sign-On (SSSO) compatibility, device requirements, and transparent, long-term cost breakdowns (including all core and supplemental components).

Textbook and High-Quality Instructional Materials Implementation Best Practices

1. Provide targeted professional learning.

- *Deepen Content and Pedagogy*: Provide sustained, content-specific professional learning (PL) that moves beyond simple platform navigation. Training should focus on the instructional shifts and underlying pedagogical philosophy required by the new materials.
- *Build Content Knowledge*: Offer resources and PL to help teachers, particularly those new to the profession or content, build their own subject matter expertise to teach the materials effectively.
- *Ongoing Coaching and Support*: Establish a system of embedded professional learning through coaching, professional learning communities (PLCs), and team-based feedback cycles to support fidelity of use.
- *Implement curriculum based professional learning (CBPL)*: Training to support and strengthen HQIM instruction, connecting content knowledge and instructional strategies to the materials teachers use in their classrooms, is essential. Permissible vendors can be found through [Rivet Education](#) or other professional learning vendors with merit to support the selected HQIM classroom implementation.

2. Develop and implement a strategic plan for HQIM rollout.

- *Phased Implementation*: Whenever possible, allow for a "crossover" or pilot year where teachers can explore and train on the new materials before full accountability begins. Avoid rushing the rollout, as this is the most common pitfall.
- *Communicate the "Why"*: Clearly communicate the rationale for adoption (the "why") to all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and parents. Emphasize how the materials address specific student needs and align with division goals.
- *Set Clear Expectations for Fidelity*: Establish clear, non-punitive expectations for the fidelity of HQIM usage while still allowing teachers the professional judgment to differentiate instruction. Use observational tools to support and monitor implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Revising Virginia's Textbook Review Process

Following the legislative actions required in Chapters [680](#) and [683](#), stakeholder feedback from experienced teachers, division level specialists, and subject matter experts; a review of processes used in other states, and a review of best practices, the Department will make the following recommendations to revise the Virginia's Textbook Review Process:

1. Incorporate the tenants of the definition of "Textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials" to be included in the rubrics for review of such materials.
 - i. Adequate content and materials for student mastery of corresponding *Standards of Learning*;
 - ii. Instructional practices that are aligned with general and discipline-specific research evidence;

- iii. Assessments to monitor student mastery of curriculum content;
 - iv. Guidance for meeting student needs including enrichment for above-grade-level students and intensification for students who are at-risk of not mastering curriculum content, including English language learners and students with disabilities; and
 - v. Resources for teachers that develop content knowledge, support implementation of instructional practices that are based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence and have a demonstrated record of success and build understanding of the rationale for curricula components.
2. Incorporate the identification of how textbooks and HQIM will support Advanced learners, English/Multilingual Learners, and students with disabilities.
 3. Identify a timeline for textbook/HQIM cycles for Board review.
 4. Incorporate additional training for textbook reviewers at the local division level once publishers and resources have been Board-adopted.
 5. Identify the processes for Department to solicit additional feedback on materials being considered for adoption, including suggestions for local divisions to help facilitate communication with local stakeholders.
 6. Make technical changes to the process to reflect present-day technologies (i.e., include online review of materials).

Deployment of the *Teacher Curriculum Use Survey*

The Department remains committed to supporting educators in using standards-aligned textbooks and instructional materials. As such, the Department is exploring the need to deploy another *Teacher Curriculum Use Survey* to compare the baseline data gathered fall 2024 to 2025.

Additional support has been provided since the launch of the first survey such as:

- Release of [approved instructional programs](#) per the Virginia Literacy Act were first implemented beginning the 2024-2025 school year;
- Approval of English textbooks for [grades 6-12](#) on December 3, 2024;
- Approval of [mathematics textbooks and HQIM](#) on February 27, 2025, and March 27, 2025; and
- The passage of [HB2777](#) legislation.

Outcomes of the survey will inform support and the development of the curriculum-based professional learning vendor list.

Improving the Selection and Training Process for Statewide Textbook Approval Process

Currently, the Department incorporates training for all textbook reviewers on the textbook review process and the role of a reviewer. Most recent adoptions included training for reviewers on identifying high-quality instructional materials during the review process. Based on the

feedback provided by experienced teachers, division level specialists, and subject matter experts, additional training is needed for local school divisions to be able to review and understand the materials that will be reviewed for local adoptions.

The Department will make the following recommendations to revise Virginia's Textbook Review Process to incorporate training for review teams:

1. Specify in the document the training requirements for Virginia review teams, to include an overview of HQIM.
2. Ask publishers to submit high-level overviews of the textbooks/HQIM which will facilitate the understanding of what is included in the overall package. (i.e. short video overviews, presentations, or other product overviews)
3. Following a state review of textbooks/HQIM, provide training available to divisions to explain Virginia's Textbook Review process which will facilitate the localities' efforts to lead local adoption processes.

Increasing Opportunities for Public Comment on Review and Approval of Textbooks and other High-quality Instructional Materials

Currently, the Department incorporates a legislated 30-day public comment period around the time of the first review of the recommended materials for the Board. This posting of such comment periods is adjusted to allow a full 30-day public comment period on Virginia's Town Hall. Following the 30-day period, staff reviews and summarizes the feedback received on each item included on the recommended list of publishers. In recent review processes, publishers have provided electronic copies of materials for content reviewers. These links are then published on the Department website during the 30-day public comment period. Zero textbooks and HQIM in recent English and Mathematics reviews were provided in hard copy.

During local school review processes, localities should be providing the materials for parent and community input. This is typically done in school libraries, and more recently, using the online links. Divisions offer request hard copies for their local reviews.

The Department will make the following recommendations to revise Virginia's Textbook Review Process to aim at increasing parent and community feedback on recommended textbooks and HQIM:

1. Share review periods through multiple media (website, emails to division leaders, agency publications, social media accounts, etc.)
2. Specifically request that local divisions help advertise Virginia's textbook review 30-day public comment periods by sharing messages released through media.

Separate from the revised textbook review process, the Department plans to create an HQIM Implementation Playbook to support and guide divisions through successful adoption processes. This is currently in existence Literacy K-5 and mathematics. These documents will be revised to be content-agnostic and support examples of adoptions in the four core content areas of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.

The Department remains committed to recommending textbooks and instructional materials of high quality from which school divisions will select for local use. HQIM research, alongside the Board-approved Virginia *Standards of Learning* and companion content areas Instructional Guides, will further strengthen instruction in Virginia classrooms. There are misconceptions that HQIM alone will 100% address student needs. There is no core instruction program of HQIM that will perfectly align to the expectations of the Virginia *Standards of Learning*. This is true of the current textbook approval process as well. Therefore, Board-recommended textbooks and HQIM *should be paired* with the Virginia *Standards of Learning* and supporting Instructional Guides to guide local school division curriculum implementation.

Updating Department Procedures to Support the Process of Reviewing and Approving Textbooks and Other High-Quality Instructional Materials

Upon Board-approval of an updated Virginia Textbook and HQIM Approval Process, the Department will begin the process of implementing the review and approval of textbooks and HQIM according to the outline of Chapters [680](#) and [683](#). The Department will complete the process of reviewing and approving textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials as required pursuant to § [22.1-238](#) of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, and subdivisions K 1 and 2 of § [22.1-253.13:1](#) of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, (i) no later than January 1, 2027, for English language arts for grades six through 12; (ii) no later than January 1, 2028, for mathematics; (iii) no later than January 1, 2029, for science; and (iv) no later than January 1, 2030, for history and social science. As per the Chapters, the Department may make adjustments to this schedule to better align with the relevant *Standards of Learning* review and revision schedule.

The specific procedures that the Department will implement to support the new process will be dependent on the updated Board-approved Virginia Textbook and HQIM Approval Process. At a minimum, the Department will establish procedures which do the following:

1. Ensure that educators are properly trained on textbook and HQIM definitions, research, and best practices, as aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning.
2. Ensure that stakeholder feedback is sought wide and deep by providing more information to school divisions to share information with local stakeholders as the state adoption process is ongoing.
3. Ensure that divisions are provided training once textbooks have been approved so they can successfully lead local adoption processes.
4. Provide supporting documents to for school divisions to facilitate local school division adoptions, including correlation documents that are easy to read and understand.

CONCLUSION

The Department is committed to ensuring that Virginia’s children have access to the highest quality instructional materials which also align to Virginia’s rigorous *Standards of Learning*. Through stakeholder feedback sessions, it was clear that divisions are concerned with alignment

of materials to the *Standards* to support their local curriculum development. While, overall, the feedback on the existing process was positive, the stakeholders expressed that the most recent mathematics approval felt rushed and therefore they recommended that more time be allowed for vendors to align their materials with thoughtful consideration.

From the input from stakeholders, a review of nationwide best practices from other states, and Department reflection on the current processes, a new Virginia Textbook and High-Quality Instructional Materials Process will be developed and provided to the Board in Fall 2025 for approval. This will take place between December 2025-January 2026 which will allow for the adoption cycles for Textbooks and HQIM to be implemented according to Chapters [680](#) and [683](#).

APPENDIX A

State Level Textbook Adoption Processes

State-Level HQIM Adoptions Process Scan, updated September 2025, provided by CCSSO's IMPD Network.

State	Summary	Resource Links
Arkansas	Partners directly with EdReports to train agency Mathematics and Literacy Specialists to lead materials review in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science.	Customized Arkansas EdReports website HQIM PL Roadmap visualizes the state's guidance on and resources for supporting both HQIM and HQL. HQIM Info Card, published in November 2022, which is designed to facilitate conversations about HQIM. Building Pathways to HQIM guidebook was published in March of 2022. - Website to house information, messages, and opportunities related to the state's HQIM initiatives with sections for educators, school leaders, EPPs, and families.
Delaware	- Bases their approvals directly on EdReports' list and updates the approved list yearly. - The state does independent reviews of their K-5 literacy HQIM as required by legislation.	DE HQIM landing page K-5 ELA Reviews
Kentucky	In early 2025, HB 298 was passed which required the Kentucky Department of	High-Quality Instructional Resource Adoption -

State	Summary	Resource Links
	Education (KDE) to publish approved lists of high-quality math and reading/writing materials to support districts in their selection processes, which was completed. • KDE Starts with EdReports, and then reviews: - o (1) substantial evidence of both KAS alignment (using the Instructional Resource Alignment Rubrics, as applicable, or a vendor crosswalk to the KAS) and - o (2) the research-basis demonstrating external validity and reliability. • KDE's Model Curriculum Framework which includes definitions of HQIMs (HQIRs in KY) and HQPL, as well as instructional alignment rubrics for determining quality of materials. KDE was supported by EdReports, Instruction Partners and Leading Educators in the development of the updated materials.	Kentucky Department of Education
Louisiana	• Provides reviews of specific materials in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. They have	• HQIM Review Landing Page • Curricular Resources • Annotated Reviews • Publisher Guidance (detailed)

State	Summary	Resource Links
	developed their own rubrics and train educators to do the reviews. Rubrics are posted on the landing page about halfway down on the lefthand side. Reviews are required to be conducted every seven years by law, and are conducted yearly, with content areas that a getting standards updates not accepted for review in the year prior to the standards release.	
Massachusetts	- Partners with CURATE (Curriculum Ratings by Teachers) to review materials in literacy and mathematics (EdReports Is the "floor" for submission to CURATE review). - Reviews are conducted yearly.	<u>CURriculum RATings by TEachers (CURATE) - Center for Instructional Support</u>
Maryland	- The Maryland State Department of Education has started HQIM reviews relatively recently and has conducted reviews yearly for the last two years. - Student Achievement Partners supported the state to develop rubrics for each content area, and while EdReports green-rated materials are prioritized, teams rate for items that are not rated by EdReports.	<u>HQIM - Maryland State Department of Education</u>
Mississippi	Provides definitions, rubrics and reviews of specific materials, completed by teachers.	<u>Mississippi Instructional Materials Matter High Quality Teaching Materials</u>

State	Summary	Resource Links
	Reviews are done yearly, with a rotating schedule of content areas.	
New Mexico	- New Mexico created a series of rubrics for materials reviews and leverages in-state educators to comprise review committees. - Reviews are conducted yearly, with a rotating schedule of content areas such that content area materials are reviewed every 3-4 years.	Instructional Materials New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) Adoption Information New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) Instruction Materials [Review Process]
Ohio	- Ohio relies on supports for the local review and adoptions process to support HQIM across the state. The Department points to the Curriculum Support Guide for the review and selection process and the HQIM Rubrics to signal quality and to support local decision making. HQIM Rubrics are available for Computer Science/Technology, Fine Arts, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, World Languages and Cultures. - The state has developed an approved list for English Language Arts.	Ohio Materials Matter Ohio Department of Education and Workforce
Rhode Island	The Rhode Island Department of Education Partners with EdReports for reviews. Their list is updated alongside EdReports review cycles.	RIDE Curriculum Landing Page Guidance document for selecting and implementing high-quality curriculum for districts.

State	Summary	Resource Links
	The state requires district-level adoptions processes to check for supports for Multilingual Learners, foundational literacy skills instruction and culturally responsive instruction.	
Tennessee	- Tennessee has established a Textbook Adoption Quality Commission to support the review of HQIM. - Materials are reviewed yearly with a schedule of rotating adoptions – content areas are reviewed every 6-7 years.	<u>Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission</u>
Texas	- Texas established the Instructional Materials Review and Adoptions (IMRA) process in 2023. - Reviews are done by educators and content experts yearly, with rotating grade bands and content areas each cycle.	<u>Instructional Materials Review and Approval Resources Texas Education Agency</u> <u>Instructional Materials Review and Approval (IMRA) State Board of Education</u>

APPENDIX B

Resources

Brookings: [Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core | Brookings](#) (April 10, 2012)

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). [Effective Teacher Professional Development](#). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Education Elements: [A Comprehensive Guide to High Quality Instructional Materials \(HQIM\) - Education Elements](#) (2025)

[EdReports](#) (2025)

[Evidence for ESSA](#) (n.d.)

Gallup: [Walton Family Foundation-Gallup: Teach Tomorrow Report](#) (April 22, 2025)

Rand: [American Instructional Resources Surveys: 2024 Technical Documentation and Survey Results](#) (December 23, 2024).

Steiner, D. [Curriculum Research: What We Know and Where We Need to Go](#). Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy (March 2017).

TNTP Research: [The Opportunity Myth - TNTP](#) (2018)

TNTP Research: [The Opportunity Makers - TNTP](#) (2024)