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Nevada's textbook adoption policy: The role and influence of parents and interest groups

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Nevada's Textbook Adoption Policy:
The Role and Influence of Parents and Interest Groups

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Introduction

The textbook adoption process in the State of Nevada has its share of flaws, bureaucracy red tape, and "legal E's" however; its intentions are meant to benefit all instructors and students in the state. Textbooks are as integral to education as school buildings and teachers, and they should be part of the free, public education provided by the state and school districts (New Sentinel Editorial, 2006). In the complexity of this process, legislators have deemed it important to have parents involved to assist with providing appropriate material for students. What appears to be justifiable and logical thinking has created basic questions. To what extent are parents involved? And, what role and influence do parents or interest groups have on the process? As integral as textbooks are in education, the limited knowledge of parents into the process has stifled the intent of the adoption process as policymakers intended it. Parent's role in this process is muddled with political, administrative and policy chaos which provides no true structure to an issue that is fundamentally the base of our youth's education. While administration and legislation have mandated that parents participate in the Nevada textbook adoption process they have yet to find an effective way to utilize parents in this process.

Policy History

The State of Nevada Revised Statutes "Nevada Plan" provides a "reasonably equal educational opportunity" for each student regardless of the wealth of the district or costs of education to the district (Nevada Education QuickFacts). To ensure this equity among Nevada Children, the state "supplements local financial ability" by employing the Nevada Plan, a formula distributing funds partially based on per pupil and per program
bases (Nevada Education QuickFacts). Previously, Nevada used a more centralized process with a state textbook commission, yet now operates under the hybrid selection model (Strader). On the other hand, districts used to contract directly with publishers, yet now work through state-negotiated contracts.

**Policy Description**

Textbook Adoption in Nevada is outlined in Chapter 390 of the Nevada Administrative Code and Nevada Revised Statues. The definition of a textbook stated by NRS 390.005 is (1) “Basic textbook” or “textbook” means any medium or manual of instruction, including, without limitation, software for computers, containing a presentation of the principles of a subject and used as a basis of instruction. (2) “Supplemental textbook” means any medium or material, including, without limitation, software for computers, used to reinforce or extend a basic program of instruction. (3) A basic or supplemental textbook becomes “unserviceable” when four years have elapsed since its removal from the adopted list.

Textbook adoption systems, in which a committee selects or recommends what books and other core instructional materials reach local classrooms, are practiced in up to 22 states. Dating back to the Reconstruction era, adoption is done mainly in the South and West (Ezarik, 2005). According to the Nevada Administration Code (NAC) 390.10, the superintendent of a school district must appoint a committee to evaluate and recommend textbooks and electronic media to be used in public schools before the district may forward any such recommendation to the State Board of Education for adoption (NRS 385.085, 390.140). The committee must consist of:
• A teacher or teachers who are licensed to teach:
  o The subject areas of the textbooks or electronic media being considered if the textbooks or electronic media are for use in secondary grades; or
  o Elementary education if the textbooks or electronic media being considered are for use in elementary grades;
• An administrator or a specialist in curriculum who is employed by the school district;
• A parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school district; and
• Any other member or members the superintendent deems necessary to serve on the committee.

NAC 390.030 extends the provision of opportunity for members of community to review textbooks and electronic media and submit comments. (NRS 385.085, 390.140) If a textbook or electronic media adopted by the State Board of Education has not been evaluated by a committee appointed by the superintendent of a local school district pursuant to NAC 390.010, the superintendent of that school district shall afford the parents of pupil enrolled in the district and other members of the community an opportunity to review the textbook or electronic media and submit written comments to the school district.

Following state approval, districts use the state contracting process, based on the Master Price Agreement, to purchase textbooks (Master Price Agreement-TA-07). Once a textbook receives state approval, it is listed with the state and may be purchased by any district in the state at the same price regardless of order volume for a seven year period.
Textbooks become unserviceable after four years following removal from the list. A district may audit a non-approved textbook in the classroom for a period not to exceed one year (State Textbook Adoption Program handouts, NRS 390).

Policy Environment

Nevada’s diverse population and geography combine to form a unique policy environment. With the majority of the population concentrated in two areas, most of the state lacks the resources necessary to fully evaluate textbooks for every subject and grade. While smaller districts benefit from the state’s list of approved texts (reviewed mainly by two districts), these small counties lose flexibility as they are forced into choosing texts. Although texts must meet Nevada standard, districts use various methods to select texts from committees to schools and teachers. Thus, the values of a few individuals may affect the selection of texts for more than just their school. Politics has also affected the policy environment with powerful superintendents or principals using unapproved textbooks (Stanley).

Policy Problem

The Textbook Adoption Program in Nevada is aimed at solving several issues that have been identified nationally, and addressed by the National State Board of Education. This would include controlling alignment with state standards, screening out inappropriate content, saving the district time and money, and ensures that state money is properly spent. It also intends to uniform Nevada school districts adoption processes while addressing state/national requirements. This allows Nevada to utilize purchasing power to receive textbooks at a lower price along with incentives from publishers, which
can maximize statewide textbook spending. State administration has control over the process that ensures counties such as Esmeralda with only 68 students can purchase textbooks at the same price as Clark County (302,000 students) (Nevada Education QuickFacts). Smaller counties, lacking resources to perform significant textbook evaluations, benefit as well from the larger counties' ability to evaluate and receive approval for a myriad of texts.

In addition to equity among counties, a state policy is vital to ensuring compliance with federal education standards and programs. The intent also includes the social content of the materials utilized by Nevada students. Nationally in 1960s, content and sensitivity to the diversity of students in school begin to become prevalent. Thus, a portion of the textbook adoption process requires the textbooks meet the standard of race, sex, or cultural ethic in each book. The issue of textbook adoption for Nevada is extremely important based on the national statistics rating Nevada nationally (49th by Morgan Quitno’s Smartest State Award Result http://www.morganquitno.com/edrank.htm) as one of the lowest achieving states in the country.

According to the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, “There is no evidence that textbook adoption contributes to increased student learning” (Thomas B. Fordham Institute). If textbooks do not significantly matter, what policy would still ensure equity, yet allow greater flexibility for educators in the classrooms? There is universal agreement among faculty that student ability to comprehend text material is of paramount importance, followed by relevance, text exposition quality, timeliness, and accuracy of text and basic support material (Smith and Muller, 1998).
The bigger problem of textbook adoption can edge toward some solutions. Start with one question, get consensus, and move on. Yet people who have spent a lot more time examining this problem have remained split on this basic question. This group includes experts who know the problem first-hand, but do not have a financial stake in the process, as well as people who know the problems but do have a financial interest in the final outcome (D'Orio, 2005). Many feel a deep sense of hurt when districts seem to abandon trust in the educator’s decision making about student's literacy lives in favor of prescriptive programs. Teachers are too vulnerable to consider acting alone. Most districts include teachers in adoptions because district administrators want to be able to claim that teachers were involved in the process and, therefore, have no basis to complain about the choice. Getting one's voice and the voices of like-minded colleagues on these committees is crucial (Meyer, 2007).

The rosier outlook comes thanks to the slate of upcoming state textbook adoptions, improved forecasts for state spending on education, and the provisions under the federal No Child Left Behind Act that call for research-based instruction and annual testing of students. During the current school year, California, Texas, and Florida are all scheduled to select books in key subjects and allocate hundreds of millions of dollars to enable districts to buy them. Those states are the largest of the 21 so-called adoption states, which designate which texts can be purchased with state money. The three states spend, on average, a combined $1 billion on instructional-materials purchases annually. (Manzo, 2005).

**Methodology**
Study Population:

To answer the exploratory research question “what is the role and influence of parents and interest groups in the textbook adoption process?”, the researchers first had to determine the study population. Because the study specifically relates to high school social science textbook adoption, parents of current high school students make an ideal population. Parents with children who graduated high school within the past four years could also provide valuable information on not only their role and influence while their child was a student, but also information regarding how textbooks contributed to preparation for the work or college environment. Similarly, the researchers sought opinions of recent high school graduates now attending the University of Nevada Las Vegas to gain a first-hand perspective on textbook impact.

Operationalize concepts:

In order to provide a common reference and understanding, the researchers had to operationalize the concepts of “role” and “influence” for parents and interest groups. To operationalize the role and influence of parents, researchers sought to examine the factors of parental participation, awareness, relevance of textbooks to education, and the perceived impact parents have on the textbook adoption process. Similarly, researchers measured interest group participation, awareness, and impact on the textbook adoption process.

Intended Data Collection and Treatment

The researchers initially developed a three-fold approach to determining the role and influence of parents and interest groups in the textbook adoption process. First, the researchers planned to examine state and district textbook adoption forms. Next, the
researchers sought to survey parents from all seventeen Nevada school districts. Finally, after exploring the scope of many potential interest groups, the researchers planned surveys or focus groups with the interest groups deemed to have a potential role and influence in the process.

**Research Subject Protection- Human Research Course:**

To ensure research subjects received all due protections, each research team member completed the Human Research Course through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), on the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative web training system. Although the researchers did not intend to investigate any protected subjects, the researchers felt the course could provide important background for researching human subjects using surveys and focus groups.

**Research Subject Protection- Institutional Review Board (IRB):**

In addition to each member completing the Human Research Course, the researchers also sought UNLV IRB approval. Although not required for this study, the researchers completed the IRB application and included sample survey questions, focus group questions and consent forms. Despite the diligent efforts of the researchers to provide complete information, the IRB continuously returned the proposal for corrections over a two-month period. With time quickly slipping away on the project and no research on protected subjects, the researchers withdrew the IRB application and concentrated efforts on the project itself.

**State/District Textbook Adoption Forms:**

The researchers sought to gather information from both state and district textbook adoption forms. The adoption forms capture, to some extent, the role and influence of
parents and/or interest groups participating as a member of the textbook adoption committee or as an interested party. The researchers planned to randomly sample both state and Clark County adoption forms for the most recent year of social science textbook adoptions to gain the state and largest district perspective. While initially receiving cooperation from the state and district, researchers were unable to access the forms during the critical data gathering and analysis portion of the project.

Parental Survey:

The great diversity in population among Nevada’s seventeen school districts necessitates representative viewpoints. The researchers sought to survey approximately 350-400 parents using a stratified sample by population of all state school districts.

The researchers initially contacted the Nevada Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) to determine contact information for high school PTA members. The researchers hoped the high school PTA members would provide a great litmus test for involvement among all parents. If the PTA members had little knowledge and/or interest in the textbook adoption process, one could infer less involved parents would have even less interest or involvement in the process, and thus indicate poor awareness/involvement overall. Unfortunately, no high schools had active PTA associations. Thus, the PTA pilot project did not produce the desired gauge of parental involvement.

While many avenues, including phone and mail, existed to survey parents statewide, the researchers chose to contact the school districts to request parental contact information. The researchers only received replies from two of seventeen districts and the two districts requested the researchers complete a separate district IRB process prior to forwarding the survey to parents in their district. While simultaneously attempting the
UNLV IRB process, the researchers had little time available to attempt another IRB process and thus, abandoned the districts as a source of parental contact.

**Actual Data Collection and Treatment**

**Interest Groups:**

With incredible diversity in potential interest groups, the researchers used experts in the state, district and from textbook publishers, to determine the most relevant interest groups. The researchers received valuable information regarding the textbook adoption process from several guest speakers representing the state, district, teachers, book depository and publishers. From these discussions and database literature research, the researchers developed potential interest group contacts and attempted to contact interest groups such as unions, teachers’ organizations, ethnic groups, publishers, religious groups, political organizations, high school principals and charitable organizations. The complete list of organizations can be found in the appendices.

**Surveys:**

To gain parental and interest group perspective, the researchers utilized data from two surveys- one statewide teachers survey and one survey to students/parents at UNLV. The researchers have included both surveys in the appendices.

**Policy Evaluation Criteria**

The goals of the current textbook adoption policy and any future changes are seemingly clear in nature. Quality public education is at the root of the textbook adoption laws NRS and NAC 390 as well as the basis for the remainder of the public education system. It would seem fairly straightforward that all activities that contribute to textbook
adoption, including legislative, financial and public processes would be focused on this goal.

Many factors other than quality education come into play in the textbook adoption process and must be considered in any recommendation of changes to the policy. These other factors include availability of textbooks, financial expense, efficiency, transparency, public involvement, compliance with state standards, fairness and equity between school districts, accountability, timeliness and appropriate representation of viewpoints (may be different as defined by any group involved). This list of factors for consideration is not intended to be exhaustive, but just to illustrate the complexity of the factors involved in the adoption process and public education in general.

Each of the criteria listed above may be more or less important to each of the given stakeholders in the process. Some of the stakeholders involved include students, teachers, school and school district administrators, parents, local and state lawmakers, publishers, political and religious groups, nonprofit groups unions and others. While all stakeholders can agree on the overall goals of quality education and availability of textbooks, there may be great disagreement between the stakeholders regarding the importance of one of the other factors. Timeliness of textbook adoption, for example, may be very important to one or more stakeholders and not nearly as important to others. Teachers, parents, and students may desire frequent adoptions in order to accurately reflect historical changes and current events, particularly in social science and science texts. School districts, in contrast, desire a less frequent adoption cycle in order to make the best use of financial resources (adopting every two years rather than every seven
years would be substantially more expensive) as new textbooks would likely be required at each adoption.

The goals, values and objectives of each individual stakeholder shape the importance of each of the policy evaluation criteria. Additional research is needed to determine the importance of each criterion to different stakeholders as that was not the primary focus of this research. Information regarding the factors themselves and the importance of the factors was discovered anecdotally while collecting information from among the various stakeholders and a more in-depth data collection would be needed to make an effective analysis of the criteria to each stakeholder group.

Ideally, the evaluation criteria could be assessed and given a rank order as a part of the analysis of any possible policy alternatives. At this time, the criteria that will be focused on in the evaluation of policy alternatives are:

- Economic Cost
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Timeliness
- Fairness
- Equity

These criteria were selected as they were among the frequent responses of stakeholders and recurring themes in the public policy literature. In addition, these criteria make intuitive sense when considered in the context of the adoption process. Once these criteria have been accepted (at this stage in the research), it is possible to determine the desired or undesired outcomes of a particular policy alternative against the criteria. While this may be difficult to measure in some cases and certainly needs further development, the application of these evaluation criteria may be useful in assessing
policy alternatives. The table below shows how the policy goals are broadly measured and the evaluation criteria should contribute to these outcomes.

Table 1: Policy Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Desirable Outcome</th>
<th>Undesirable Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning</td>
<td>Improved Learning</td>
<td>Diminished Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Greater Accountability</td>
<td>Reduced Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Standards</td>
<td>Meeting Standards</td>
<td>Not Meeting Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Input</td>
<td>Increased Public Input</td>
<td>Decreased Public Input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that these criteria present a very basic framework for analysis of a particular policy or policy alternative and may not be effective for assessment in cases where another factor is perceived to be more important, such as when representation of a particular or opposing viewpoints is valued by stakeholders.
Findings

Based on the research conducted, the following information represents the findings relating to the role and influence of parents and interest groups on the textbook adoption process. The current process for involvement of these groups in the textbook adoption process will be discussed first. This will be followed by an examination of parents and various interest groups involvement and interest in the process as well as some of the expressed interests for future involvement.

Both parents and interest groups have the opportunity to participate in the process in accordance with state law under NRS and NAC 390. Both groups may provide input during public meetings and hearings at the local and state level. Parents additionally have the ability to serve on a textbook selection committee in their school districts. Both parents and interest groups also have the ability to lobby any public official in the manner that they see fit.

Opportunity, and the exercise of that opportunity stand in sharp contrast to each other in this case. While both parents and interest groups have the ability to be involved as described above, neither group exercises that ability with any regularity in the State of Nevada. As an example of the lack of involvement of these groups, Bill Strader, the State Department of Education official most closely associated with textbook adoption indicated during an interview that neither parents nor interest groups contact the Department or the Board of Education with any regularity regarding textbook adoption (Strader, 2007). This is one of many examples of the disparity between the opportunities for these groups to be involved and their actual involvement in the process.
Findings also showed that very few, if any parents or interest groups were even aware of the textbook adoption process. This lack of awareness may be a major contributing factor to the lack of interest and involvement in the process. The interviews conducted with interest groups, survey of state teachers and survey of parents all indicated that most individuals outside of the education system were not even aware of the process. In fact, there were a high number of teachers (37%) that did not even know how to become involved in the selection process if they desired to do so (Teacher Survey, 2007). This lack of knowledge of the process among educators intuitively suggests that far fewer parents are aware of the process (or that there is a process) than educators.

Parents

Parents showed a general lack of knowledge relating to the textbook adoption process through the course of the research. While parents generally agreed that textbooks were important to the education of a child, very few were aware of the textbook adoption process or had ever participated in the process. In the study of UNLV students conducted regarding this matter, only 27% of the parents surveyed were aware of the textbook adoption process (2007). Additionally, teachers that have participated in textbook selection indicated that 42% of selection committees contained no parents (Teacher Survey 2007). While these findings are the result of only two surveys and represent a small number of respondents, if future research reflects the same type of results, this calls for additional public education as to the textbook adoption process. Parents from the UNLV survey indicated that additional knowledge of the process including meeting times and schedules (55%) as well as invitations from school
administrators (64%) would be most likely to increase involvement of parents in the adoption process.

As a result of the difficulties in contacting parents regarding textbook adoption, special interest groups, the state, and the schools were contacted and asked to provide anecdotal information relating to the interest and involvement of parents in the process. All groups responding indicated that they had never had any parental interest shown to their group regarding textbook adoption. This included the State Department of Education, State Parent Teacher Association, teachers unions, and a number of nonprofit groups, most notably, the Nevada Public Education Foundation. It should be noted that researchers contacted high school principals, but none responded to requests for information. A number of schools contacted indicated that this was due to the research being conducted during the summer months.

Since parents have a demonstrated lack of knowledge regarding the textbook adoption process it will be difficult to assess their interest and desired involvement in the process unless they can first be adequately informed of the process.

**Interest Groups**

Interest groups have little or no involvement in the textbook adoption process currently in Nevada. With two notable exceptions, all of the other interest groups contacted for this research either did not respond to repeated requests for information or reported no involvement in the textbook adoption process. Textbook publishers and the textbook depository system both have a substantial interest and involvement in the textbook adoption process and will be discussed at the conclusion of this section. It is
remarkable that not one of the groups contacted, including groups such as the Nevada Public Education Foundation, State PTA and teachers unions have had no involvement in the process. It is also noteworthy that most groups contacted did not respond to requests for information, including the State Democratic and Republican Parties and the American Civil Liberties Union. A complete listing of interest groups contacted is included as an appendix at the conclusion of this work.

The lack of involvement in the textbook adoption process by special interest groups was generally represented as something that the group had never considered. Most groups found the topic to be interesting and one education-related interest group even commented that a nonprofit group should be formed to work with the process. Many groups indicated that they had no awareness of the textbook adoption process and had never had a concern relating to textbooks. All individuals contacted also generally expressed an interest in quality education and thought that textbooks were an important part of that education.

The lack of knowledge of the textbook adoption process even among education-related interest groups reinforces the concept that more public information regarding the process would be needed in order to effectively evaluate the interest or desired influence of these groups.

**Textbook Depository**

The Mountain State Schoolbook Depository is the primary book depository involved in the provision of textbooks in Nevada. The depository staff is fully aware of the textbook adoption process and takes a neutral role in the process as their role
is in supplying adopted textbooks to school districts. While some view the depository as a monopoly in textbook supply, school districts actually may purchase textbooks from other depositories or directly from publishers (Strader, 2007). The depository serves as a technical resource to schools and school districts and serves as an intermediary in the procurement process. The Mountain State Depository indicates that it provides districts with more consistent service and lower shipping prices and direct ordering of textbooks (Stanley, 2007). While neither of these assertions could be independently verified, the vast majority of Nevada textbook purchases are done through the Mountain States Depository.

Textbook Publishers

Publishers are the second interest group that is fully aware of the textbook adoption process and has a major financial stake in the adoption process. Recent consolidation among textbook publishers has progressively resulted in less textbook options for school districts nationwide and there are now only four major textbook publishers in operation in North America. Publishers have begun to customize books for Nevada (as a result of the size of Clark County) in the same manner as they have for California and Texas in the past (Loop, 2007). Additionally, publishers have the dual role of submitting textbooks for consideration for adoption and then selling adopted textbooks to school districts following the adoption process. While it is clear that there is a definite financial motive among publishers, the publishing industry as a whole is responding to the requirements of the state and school districts in their work. Publishers create textbooks in response to the state standards and then submit them for consideration in adoptions, where their only tools to gain advantage are the quality of the textbook and the financial incentives offered.
on secondary materials. Publishers are not active on a state level in lobbying lawmakers, influencing standards or during adoption proceedings (Strader, 2007).

Policy Solutions

On its surface the Nevada Textbook Adoption program seems to work well. However after having carefully explored the process, these researchers have found it to contain many floors, floors that should be corrected for the process to work more effectively.

The following represents the current textbook adoption process as it stands today.

1. Check the Department of Education textbook list for names of all textbooks currently eligible for adoption in the subject area under review. (coming soon)
2. Convene a committee similar to that described in NAC 390.010 to review current approved textbooks and/or any other textbooks not on the approved list but available for purchase.
3. Complete Form TA-01 for evaluation and/or piloting of textbooks during this adoption cycle and submit to the Department of Education. Remember the suggested deadline for submitting the TA-01 is December 31st. These planned evaluations will be shared with other districts in order to assist them in their own textbook review process by accessing the web site www.nde.state.nv.us/hrt/llr/index.html
4. Before the textbooks are given a final evaluation by the district committee, districts may pilot books (not to exceed one year). (NAC 390.060)
5. The committee completes the evaluation of all textbooks, as specified in NAC 390.010-.040. Form TA-02 is then completed by district staff and submitted to the Department of Education no later than April 15th.
6. Upon State Board of Education approval, districts proceed with the purchase of the recommended and approved textbooks, based on the Master Price Agreement (form available from Textbook Consultant, Department of Education).
A problem clearly exists when a segment of teachers that receive the textbooks, choose not to use them in their classroom. According to a survey conducted by a teachers group found that nearly 40% of high school teachers surveyed did not use the pre-selected textbook. Assuming this to be true and there is some percentage of teachers that fall into this category than their students go without a textbook and the school system purchases books that are not used. To correct this, a method must be devised to encourage those teachers to participate in the selection process and possibly provide the teachers with a choice in their textbook selection. Currently there are too few teachers involved in the overall process. Instead the entire practice is left to the bureaucrats who ultimately decide on what textbook a teacher will teach out of.

Classroom teachers are the number one source of education of today’s youth, as such they need to have a greater amount of flexibility in choosing the textbook, the one they feel is most appropriate for their students. There can be no assumption that one book fits all, when it comes to educating Nevada’s public school students.

For this process to be effective, not only do “qualified” classroom teachers need to serve on committees, they must have the ability and method to choose the book they feel is best for the their students, in their classroom.

Our research has concluded that as it stands today, very few parents, teachers or other interest groups are aware of the textbook adoption process, and most of those that are aware don’t care. One of the problems seems to be that over the past decade, the process has become very political. By this, we mean that somewhere down the line the Nevada legislators chose to include parents and special interest groups on committees.
It is felt that neither one of these groups should be mandated to serve on a committee since in most cases, they are not qualified and there is a strong likelihood that they tend to create problems for other members of that committee. Although these groups were added at some point, the legislature provided no formal way to provide them with advance notification.

The current practice of negotiating book purchases based on the amount of free merchandise received must be prohibited. The problem with this practice is that the State never knows the actual cost of the textbook being purchased. It is naïve to believe that free merchandise is really free.

To make the system work better, the board of education should negotiate the cost of each individual textbook prior to its adoption and that number should include all delivery costs to the individual school.

The goal should be to purchase quality textbooks at the lowest possible cost and thus assure that each student receives their own individual textbook for use at home. An additional set should be purchased for use in the classroom.

To correct these problems the following statute must be changed, it was found to be far to broad.

NAC 390.010 Committees to evaluate and recommend textbooks and electronic media: Appointment; membership. (NRS 385.080, 390.140) The superintendent of a school district must appoint a committee to evaluate and recommend textbooks and electronic media to be used in public schools before the district may forward any such recommendations to the State Board of Education for adoption. The committee must consist of:
1. A teacher or teachers who are licensed to teach:

(a) The subject areas of the textbooks or electronic media being considered if the textbooks or electronic media are for use in secondary grades; or

(b) Elementary education if the textbooks or electronic media being considered are for use in elementary grades;

2. An administrator or a specialist in curriculum who is employed by the school district;

3. A parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school district; and

4. Any other member or members the superintendent deems necessary to serve on the committee.

The proposed new law would look like this:

NAC 390.010 Committees to evaluate and recommend textbooks and electronic media: Appointment; membership. (NRS 385.080, 390.140) The superintendent of a school district must appoint a committee to evaluate and recommend textbooks and electronic media to be used in public schools before the district may forward any such recommendations to the State Board of Education for adoption. The committee must consist of:

1. Each committee shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven educators who have three or more years experience and hold a current Nevada license to teach in the subject of the textbook currently being evaluated for adoption:

2. The committee may by a majority vote approve up to five different textbooks containing the same or similar subject matter to be adopted for use in Nevada Public Schools.

3. The State must notify the local districts no less than 90 days in advance of committee formation.
4. The districts must notify the local principals no less than 60 days in advance of committee formation.  
5. All teachers must be notified by their principal no less than 30 days in advance of committee formation

The law can be changed either directly through the Nevada State Legislature or by the use of a Referendum. The Referendum (Article 19, Section 1 of the Nevada Constitution) is the method of choice, since its passage is based on the gathering of signatures equal to 10% of the registered voters that voted in the previous election and than having it either passed by the legislature or if they choose not to act it will appear on the ballot during the next general election. The statute’s modification should easily pass since there is no associated cost to the tax payers, and it is thought to improve the quality of education to our public school students.

Another possibility exists and that is to; piggy back or modify the California law regarding textbook adoption. It appears to be a lot more function able than Nevada’s law.

The California Adoption Process

• District adoption committees are formed for each subject area being adopted.
• Each committee is comprised of teachers from various grade levels and the curriculum leader of the subject area being adopted.
• The committee compiles a list of needed materials.
• Publishers submit samples based on the list of needs.
• Committee members evaluate the publishers1 samples based on that State Content Standards 2 and verify compliance with social content standards.
• Instructional materials are ranked on a scoring rubric developed by the committee.
• A 30-day public display is held to allow parents, administrators, and teachers to view the textbooks being recommended and to provide input.
• The recommended program is presented to a Committee of Review made up of various district administrators.

If recommended by the Committee of Review, the textbooks are presented to the district Board of Education for approval.

The majority of the people of the State of Nevada rely on the Public School system to educate their children. To do this in the best way possible, teachers need to be given the tools required to complete their tasks. The basic tools in this case are the textbooks.
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