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The Textbook adoption process in the state of Nevada: The teacher's perspective

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**THE TEXTBOOK ADOPTION PROCESS
IN THE STATE OF NEVADA
THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE**

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PUA 791: Policy Analysis
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THE TEXTBOOK ADOPTION PROCESS IN THE STATE OF NEVADA

The Teachers' Perspective

Part I. Introduction

The textbook adoption process for the State of Nevada is outlined in Chapter 390 of Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) and Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). When a teacher is interested in purchasing a textbook for use in the classroom, he or she must check the eligibility list of adopted books on file with the Department of Education. If the book is not on the list, they must begin the process of having the book adopted before being able to purchase it.

The process. The first step towards eligibility is the review or evaluation of the textbook. A committee is appointed by the superintendent of the school district. The committee must consist of a teacher (who teaches the subject if the textbook is for secondary grades or who teaches elementary grades if the textbook is for elementary school), an administrator or curriculum specialist who works for the school district, a parent of a student in the school district, and anyone else that the superintendent thinks is appropriate.

After the committee reviews the textbook, they must submit textbook adoption recommendations to the Department of Education. When the State Board of Education has approved the textbook, the school districts proceed with the state contracting process for state adopted textbooks. This is based on the Master Price Agreement. When the textbook publisher signs the Master Price Agreement, the school district sends the contract to the Department of Education. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction signs the contract as agent for the state. At the point, the school districts can begin ordering the adopted textbooks.

The Department of Education keeps a file for each adopted textbook and a copy of the contract. The Department of Education sends a copy of the contract to the district that began the

approval process for that particular textbook, the textbook publisher, and the textbook depository. The Nevada State Department of Education keeps a schedule of the adoption cycle of each textbook for K-12. The textbook cycle is seven years long. The first three years of the cycle are for evaluation and adoption. The sixth year allows for revision of State Course of Study and the seventh year allows for revision of district curriculum goals and objectives.

The environment. Most of the school districts in the State of Nevada are in rural areas. Nevada has one very large school district which is Clark County with over 290,000 students. Washoe County is the second largest school district in the state with just over 63,000 students. There are 15 other school districts that do not come close to the size of either of these. Esmeralda County is the smallest with less than 100 students and has no high school. Each of the school districts can determine how money is disbursed in their county. For example, Clark County allows the schools to control their money and Washoe County controls the money at the school district level.

The problem. The NAC and NRS are specific in the details of the process. The problem lies in how they are interpreted and how they are followed by the teachers, school districts, and the state. The question that we seek to answer is “Do teachers find merit in the textbook adoption process?” To assist in measuring this question, three additional questions must be addressed: (1) Does the process provide quality teaching material? (2) To what extent are teachers actually involved in the process? (3) Does the process complement proficiency standards or is the process overshadowed by proficiency standards?

It is important to look at textbook adoption from the perspective of the teacher because the teacher is the main stakeholder and is ultimately the one who decides whether to use the textbook. Our assumption is that they have the least input or affect on the process. Teachers

have been contacted throughout the state and their opinions and viewpoints will be represented in this paper.

Part II. Literature Review

In conducting studies, it is important to locate previous research that relates directly to the current topic of discussion.

In an article entitled, “Why Don’t We Fix Our Textbooks,” written by Jay Mathews and published in the Washington Post on 22 March 2005, a multitude of issues related to the textbook adoption process were addressed. The author has spent a great deal of time reading what should be done to improve high schools. He states, “I have read these important documents carefully and have yet to find one that gives any prominence to what would be one of simplest, least expensive, most popular and most useful changes, that is, getting states to stop telling high school teachers which textbooks to use” (Mathews 2005, 15).

As we have found, and Stein, et al., acknowledge, there has not been very much research on the topic of the textbook adoption process. Stein, et al. goes on to say that this “is surprising given that commercially developed instructional materials have an impact on a large amount of teachers and students across the United States” (2001, 7).

Some of the issues with the textbook adoption process include a deficiency of training of those serving on textbook review committees and the shortness of time that is actually given to the process (Stein, et al. 2001, 8). “The problem is accentuated in that teachers and administrators are often not provided release time to do the serious and time consuming business of instructional evaluation, but rather are expected to do this in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities” (Stein et al. 2001, 9).

Stein, et al. also note that textbook adoption review committees are often made up of members who have been selected because of the number of years they have been teaching. They believe that while experience may be an important factor, committee members should also have good interpersonal and communication skills (2001, 11).

According to Stein, et al, “the textbook adoption process is the primary means educators have of ensuring that they have access to well-designed instructional materials” (2001, 21).

Part III. Methodology

In addition to conducting the literature review to provide a background for our exploratory study, several interviews were conducted with individuals at different levels in the process. As well as providing the framework of the textbook adoption process, these interviews laid the groundwork for many of the assumptions we formulated at the beginning of the study and the types of questions we included in our survey. These interviews included:

- the State Department of Education employee with ‘part-time’ assignment to the textbook adoption process
- an employee who currently works for the Mountain State Depository who was a former Clark County School District (CCSD) teacher
- the current CCSD Director of Literacy
- a representative for one of the major textbook publishers who was a former CCSD teacher
- numerous teachers who have been involved at different levels of the process

It was decided that the main basis for our research would be a survey conducted with Nevada high school social science teachers and focus groups of interested teachers. A survey was created on SurveyMonkey.com which included thirty-five questions with logic built in that evaluated the participants experience and skipped any questions that did not pertain to them. The survey included a variety of questions related to their teaching experience, school district they taught for, use of textbooks in the classroom, textbook adoption committees, and the textbook

adoption process. Simultaneously to preparing the survey; our group was securing University Institutional Review Boards (IRB) approval for the study.

The survey was distributed utilizing an e-mail message which gave a brief description of the study and the link to the survey. Our initial survey population was every high school social science teacher in Nevada. To identify our population sample a search was conducted of Nevada school district websites for those that included teacher directories containing teacher e-mail addresses. After our initial search revealed that many listings did not identify the subject taught, and due to time constraints, we modified our survey population to include any Nevada high school teacher. For those districts that did not provide directories we obtained the e-mail address of the Superintendent of the District.

The survey was distributed to those teachers whose e-mail address had been located as well as to the superintendents of the districts for which there were no individual listings. The superintendents were asked to forward the survey request to their high school teachers. A second e-mail was distributed two weeks after the first e-mail to the original group as well as additional individual teacher e-mail addresses we had obtained.

Review of the survey results showed that 62.50% of the school districts had some response to the survey. We feel that respondent demographics gave a good representation of the school district demographics. For example, Clark County had the largest number of participants, Washoe County was second, and many of the smaller counties had a percentage of response very equal to the percentage of the District size in relation to the entire state. Although the actual response rate was roughly 10%, which may be relatively low by survey standards, it was higher than we anticipated gathering. The survey was distributed during the final week of school instruction for many of the districts and after school had let out for several of the districts. Due

to the fact that we were relying on teachers to check their e-mails during their summer break we were pleased with the amount of responses we received.

Survey results were analyzed based on the categories of questions and their applicability to the study questions. Filters were also added to allow for data comparison. For example, results between those who had served on a textbook adoption committee and those who had not were compared. Comparisons were also made between Clark, Washoe, and Lyon counties. Clark County was chosen due the fact that it is the largest district and has its own adoption process. Washoe County was chosen to represent a large northern county as well as the fact that it had been labeled a best practice county for its adoption process. Lyon County was chosen to represent the smaller counties based on the fact that it had the largest number of respondents of the smaller counties.

Due to time constraints caused by the difficulty receiving IRB approval and the fact that most teachers were unavailable over summer break it was decided that we would not be able to conduct any focus groups.

Part IV. Data Analyses and Recommendations

To measure the extent teachers find merit in the current textbook adoption process an analysis of survey and interview results was performed. These results then led to the culmination of several recommendations to enhance the process. The analysis and recommendations related to the three policy questions established at the beginning of the study are presented in this section.

Policy Question 1: Does the process provide quality teaching material? Several questions that were asked on the survey pertained directly to quality teaching material. These will be referred to when discussing the first policy question.

The survey shows that teachers do not use the textbook as often as was thought. Tables 1 and 2 refer to how often textbooks are used for classroom teaching and homework assignments. It is interesting to note in Table 1 that when asked about using the textbook in classroom teaching, a summary of all districts indicated textbooks are used five days per week while the largest school district (Clark County) gives the highest response to none. Washoe County gives the highest response to five days. Lyon County (a smaller school district) gives the highest response to “Other”. Some of the comments that teachers included when they answered “Other” included the following: varies with content objectives, do not use textbooks, rarely use text, prefer alternative methods, seldom, one to three times a year.

TABLE 1. How often per week do you use the textbook for actual classroom teaching?							
School District	None	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days	Other
All Districts	19.8%	5.2%	7.8%	12.1%	6.9%	29.3%	19.0%
Clark County	23.7%	5.1%	8.5%	17.0%	5.1%	22.0%	18.6%
Lyon County	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	30.0%	40.0%
Washoe County	15.0%	0.0%	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%	30.0%	10.0%

TABLE 2. How often per week do you assign reading or homework assignments from the textbook?							
School District	None	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days	Other
All Districts	24.1%	8.0%	17.9%	10.7%	4.5%	22.3%	12.5%
Clark County	29.3%	10.3%	22.4%	6.9%	1.7%	19.0%	10.3%
Lyon County	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%
Washoe County	25.0%	5.0%	15.0%	15.0%	10.0%	30.0%	0.0%

As shown in Table 2, most teachers either do not assign homework from the textbook or they assign homework five days per week. A summary of all districts and Clark County have

more responses for no homework from the textbook, while Washoe County has more responses for five days per week. Once again, Lyon County has more responses for “Other”. Some of the comments that teachers included when they answered “Other” included the following: once about every two months, rarely, 1-2 times per semester, 3 or 4 times a year or less, occasionally—but not weekly.

If teachers are not regularly using textbooks it would lead to the assumption that teachers do not use textbooks as the only teaching tool or even as the primary one. Tables 3 and 4 refer to how textbooks are used and how teachers feel students are best able to learn. Table 3 shows that most teachers in all districts, Clark County, and Washoe County use the textbook as a reference tool for students. Apparently, teachers do not feel that textbooks are the tool that best facilitates learning as shown in Table 4. Clark County teachers chose teacher lecture the most while all districts, Lyon County, and Washoe County chose “Other”. Some of the comments from teachers when they answered “Other” included the following: student’s hands-on activities, a combination of all of those, discussion, lecture with student discussion, activities that make the students do the concept being taught, depends on the student, study guides prepared by the teacher, active student participation, all of the above in combination.

School District	Primary Teaching Tool	Reference Tool for Students	Supplement for Planning Lessons	Supplement to Other Teaching Material	Supplement for Classroom Discussion	Guide for Student Lessons	Other
All Districts	39.5%	63.3%	42.2%	38.5%	41.3%	36.7%	14.7%
Clark County	29.1%	67.3%	40.0%	38.2%	47.3%	34.6%	18.2%
Lyon County	50.0%	50.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Washoe County	50.0%	70.0%	55.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	10.0%

TABLE 4. Which tool best facilitates learning? (Select all that apply)

School District	Textbook	Teacher Lecture	Workbooks	Computer Program	Don't Know	Other
All Districts	12.5%	25.9%	5.4%	1.8%	0.9%	53.6%
Clark County	8.5%	23.7%	10.2%	3.4%	0.0%	15.8%
Lyon County	10.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	70.0%
Washoe County	31.6%	15.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	52.6%

Teachers rely on the textbook and feel that it is important to teachers in their school.

Tables 5 and 6 represent teacher responses for how important they feel the textbook is and whether they rely on it for classroom teaching. As can be seen in Tables 5 and 6, most teachers have indicated they agree and strongly agree with this statement. Responses shown in Table 7 indicate that most teachers across the state feel that the textbook meets their needs as a teaching tool.

TABLE 5. I rely on the textbook for classroom teaching.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	7.2%	18.9%	12.6%	14.4%	35.1%	11.7%
Clark County	11.9%	18.6%	11.9%	22.0%	27.1%	8.5%
Lyon County	0.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	50.0%	10.0%
Washoe County	0.0%	10.5%	15.8%	10.5%	42.1%	21.1%

TABLE 6. The textbooks are important to teachers in my school.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	2.7%	5.4%	5.4%	20.7%	49.5%	16.2%
Clark County	5.2%	3.4%	6.9%	27.6%	43.1%	13.8%
Lyon County	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%
Washoe County	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	15.8%	47.4%	26.3%

TABLE 7. The textbook meets my needs as a teaching tool.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	5.5%	13.6%	16.4%	20.0%	35.5%	9.1%
Clark County	10.3%	8.6%	15.5%	17.2%	37.9%	10.3%
Lyon County	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Washoe County	0.0%	26.3%	15.8%	26.3%	26.3%	5.3%

From the responses to the above questions we find that even though teachers may not use the textbook daily or on a regular basis, they do rely on it and feel that it is important. This may support the responses that indicate that teachers feel the textbook is not the tool that best facilitates learning. The survey answers also seem to indicate that the textbook meets their needs. This seems to be a contradiction to what we have heard and to comments from the teachers. However, as one teacher commented, “Teachers will do what they need to do in the classroom regardless of which book anyone decides will be the 'book of the month' for this year”.

Table 8 shows responses of how teachers feel about the current textbook adoption process results in quality textbooks. The interesting response for all districts is that 39.6% disagree/strongly disagree while 31.5% agree/strongly agree. When referring to individual school districts Clark County and Washoe County each had the most responses to strongly disagree, while Lyon County had the most responses to agree.

TABLE 8. The current textbook adoption process results in quality textbooks.						
School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	4.5%	22.5%	17.1%	24.3%	25.2%	6.3%
Clark County	8.5%	23.7%	20.3%	27.1%	18.6%	1.7%
Lyon County	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%
Washoe County	0.0%	36.8%	21.1%	15.8%	10.5%	15.8%

It is interesting to note that overall for the state, there is no strong and clear choice. This leads us to believe that there could be other factors affecting the teachers’ opinion on this question. These factors could be teaching experience, whether or not they have been involved in the review/adoption process, or whether they may have had other positive or negative experiences in dealing with the school district or other administrators.

One way to improve the quality of the textbooks is to take advantage of NAC 390.060, which allows a textbook to be used on an experimental basis for one year to evaluate its

effectiveness before putting it on the approved adoption list. The state could also consider changing the NAC and the NRS to make this mandatory on most or all textbooks. Evaluating the effectiveness of a textbook in this way would ensure that the textbooks used would be appropriate for the students and would show positive results on the tests. Since this pilot evaluation period is something that is already in place, it would be simple to take advantage of this element of the state code on a regular basis. However, the process may still be bogged down with the approved adoption list and all of the red tape and bureaucracy that goes with it.

Comments from the teachers indicate that a wider range of approved textbooks for each subject would be beneficial. The teachers would be better able to pick a textbook that would best fit the needs of their classrooms, since not all teachers have the same teaching style and not all students are able to learn in the same way. However, this larger number of approved textbooks could produce more paperwork and most likely prove burdensome on the system to have more than one or two approved textbooks for each subject.

Another way to improve the quality of the textbooks is to incorporate an evaluation of the textbook once it has been used in the classroom. Teachers could complete an evaluation form that describes the demographics of their classroom and community, how the textbook was used, and the successes and failures of the textbook. This would be posted with the approved adoption list so teachers who are considering purchasing an adopted textbook can review the evaluations and make an informed decision about how successful the textbook may be in their own classroom. Challenges would be whether teachers would actually complete the form and whether the information on the form would be required to be so “politically correct” that it would no longer be useful.

Policy Question 2: To what extent are teachers actually involved in the process? In order to measure the extent teachers are involved in the process we needed to evaluate their awareness of the process, their involvement in the process, and their feelings regarding their influence in the choices of textbooks. Several questions that were asked on the survey pertained directly to these areas and will be referred to when discussing this policy question.

To fully understand teacher involvement we first must ask the basic question of their awareness of the textbook adoption process. Table 9 refers to the number of respondents who are aware of the process. It is interesting to note in Table 9 that when viewing all counties 31.3% of the teachers state they are unaware of the process. This is an alarming number when considering one third of teachers do not know how a textbook becomes approved for classroom use. When comparing the responses of the individual counties we see that Lyon County has a greater percentage of teachers who are not aware of the process. The higher percentage of awareness in Clark and Washoe counties may be due to the fact that they have a District adoption process also in place.

TABLE 9. The textbook adoption process includes committee review, evaluation, and recommendation of textbooks. The process also includes an opportunity for members of the community to review textbooks and submit comments. Are you aware of the textbook adoption process?

School District	Yes	No
All Districts	68.7%	31.3%
Clark County	66.0%	34.0%
Lyon County	55.6%	44.4%
Washoe County	73.7%	26.3%

For those respondents that are aware of the textbook adoption process we then asked if they had ever served on a review or evaluation committee. Table 10 details the results and we see that almost 70% have served on a committee. Based on these results we anticipated that we

would have enough data to evaluate the other questions related to the teacher involvement. We also learn in Table 11 that those who have not served on a committee would if given the opportunity.

TABLE 10. The textbook review committee is one part of the textbook adoption process. Have you ever been on a textbook review committee? (asked only of those who are aware of the textbook adoption process – see table A)

School District	Yes	No
All Districts	69.6%	30.4%
Clark County	67.7%	32.4%
Lyon County	80.0%	20.0%
Washoe County	50.0%	50.0%

TABLE 11. I have never been on a textbook review committee, but would if given the opportunity.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	1.9%	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	55.8%	19.2%

When evaluating whether teachers feel involved in the textbook adoption process, we can see in Table 12 that responses are fairly evenly split between those that agree and disagree. In Washoe and Clark counties, the percentage answering negatively was slightly larger than the smaller counties. A reason for this may be the larger number of teachers in those districts or the fact that since both of those counties have a more independent school district process they continue to utilize the same teachers for the committees.

TABLE 12. I feel involved in the textbook adoption process.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	8.2%	26.5%	13.3%	15.3%	25.5%	11.2%
Clark County	12.0%	28.0%	16.0%	16.0%	22.0%	6.0%
Lyon County	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	33.3%	11.1%
Washoe County	5.6%	38.9%	16.7%	11.1%	16.7%	11.1%

When looking at whether teachers have an impact on which textbooks are adopted and ordered for the classroom we see that the percentage of positive responses increases. (Table 13)

Additionally, Table 14 shows us that respondents do feel that teachers and/or the department head have the greatest influence on the textbooks that are ordered for the classroom. It appears that although teachers do not feel that strongly involved in the actual textbook adoption process they do feel that they have influence in the textbooks that are ordered. Interestingly, Washoe County has a much higher percentage of respondents who do not feel involved in the process. This seems to contradict information we have received from interviews and does not fit with the opinion that Washoe should be looked to as a “best practice” county.

TABLE 13. I feel that I have an impact on which textbook is adopted and ultimately purchased for my classroom.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	5.1%	25.3%	11.1%	15.2%	31.3%	12.1%
Clark County	7.8%	25.5%	9.8%	17.6%	29.4%	9.8%
Lyon County	0.0%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%
Washoe County	5.6%	38.9%	27.8%	0.0%	16.7%	11.1%

TABLE 14. At your school who has the most influence on which textbook is ordered?

School District	Teachers	Dept. Head	Admini- strator	Publisher	District Recommen- dation	Don't know	Other
All Districts	30.6%	19.8%	1.8%	1.8%	21.6%	12.6%	11.7%
Clark County	27.1%	27.1%	3.4%	3.4%	23.7%	11.9%	3.4%
Lyon County	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	20.0%
Washoe County	5.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	27.8%	11.1%

In analyzing the opinions related to the teachers’ actual role on the review and adoption committees we find that currently there are teachers with varied experience serving on the committees with the highest number of responses listed as “Don’t Know”. (Table 15) Even though there is a high percentage of respondents who are not aware of the current committee make up, Table 16 details that the highest percentage feel teachers with at least five years of experience or who are subject matter experts should serve on the committees.

TABLE 15. Which teachers are normally chosen to participate on textbook review committees? (Select all that apply)

School District	New Teacher (1-4 yrs)	Teacher w/some exp. (5+ yrs)	Expert in subject Matter	Dept. Head	Don't Know	Other
All Districts	11.9%	26.6%	14.7%	28.4%	41.3%	19.3%
Clark County	6.9%	20.7%	10.3%	22.4%	43.1%	19.0%
Lyon County	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%
Washoe County	11.1%	27.8%	5.6%	22.2%	55.6%	16.7%

TABLE 16. Which teachers do you feel should be represented on a textbook review committee? (select all that apply)

School District	New Teacher (1-4 yrs)	Teacher w/some exp. (5+ yrs)	Expert in subject matter	Dept. Head	Don't Know	Other
All Districts	38.5%	76.2%	56.9%	51.4%	3.7%	14.7%
Clark County	31.6%	66.7%	59.7%	43.9%	7.0%	10.5%
Lyon County	33.3%	88.9%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	11.1%
Washoe County	52.6%	94.7%	42.1%	42.1%	0.0%	21.1%

It is interesting to see that many respondents feel that parents and students should be included in the review process. (Table 17) It is very clear to see that the consensus is that teachers are the most important player in the committee process. Overall, respondents also feel that the state and school district participation should be limited. It also appears that Lyon County, as well as other small counties, rated the state and district involvement higher. This may be due to that fact that teacher and individual school resource pools are smaller than either Clark or Washoe counties.

TABLE 17. Who do you think should be on a textbook review committee? (select all that apply)

School District	Teachers	School Admin	School District Admin	State Officials	Parents	Students	Don't Know/ Other
All Districts	97.3%	37.3%	22.7%	9.1%	46.4%	50.0%	6.4%
Clark County	96.6%	29.3%	17.2%	8.6%	37.9%	44.8%	7.0%
Lyon County	100.0%	44.4%	33.3%	11.1%	66.7%	44.4%	0.0%
Washoe County	100.0%	21.1%	15.8%	10.5%	52.6%	68.4%	5.3%

While the analysis of the above tables helped clarify the actual involvement and roles of the teachers in the process it was many of the free form comments given by respondents that helped formulate recommendations to enhance the process.

One of the most alarming facts is 31% of teachers are unaware of the textbook adoption process. Communication of the process needs to be increased. One recommendation to accomplish this is to include a session in new employee orientation and required teacher in-service days to explain the NRS, NAC, State and District processes, and the importance of the committee review process.

It is also clear that more teachers need to be involved in the process. Most respondents feel that the current committee structure should remain in tact but that there should be a supplemental process that allows more teachers the opportunity to review proposed textbooks prior to the committee submitting their decisions. The recommendation again focuses around incorporating the ability to review proposed textbooks as part of required teacher in-service days or allowing teachers to use their free period to review books prior to the committee meeting.

Incorporating student and parent involvement also seems key. Since the students are the actual end consumer of the textbooks their opinions on proposed textbooks might be very insightful. Communication at both the school and district level should be increased to parents to allow them the opportunity to review proposed textbooks.

Although there are varied perspectives on the current feeling of involvement in the process, most teachers agree that their involvement should be increased.

Policy Question 3: Does the process complement proficiency standards or is the process overshadowed by proficiency standards? Another aspect of the Nevada textbook adoption process is to ensure teachers and students have the best textbooks possible to prepare students to

pass the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam. The passing of this exam is a requirement for receiving a high school diploma in Nevada. In a report provided by the Nevada Department of Education in 2005 (<http://www.nevadatestreports.com>), of eleventh graders tested throughout the state only 45.4 % in math and 59.6% in reading met the proficiency standards.

The survey asked questions that were related to the Nevada textbook adoption process as it relates to Nevada proficiency standards. Table 18 below shows the results of the first two questions presented. The first question asked for a rating of “The textbooks help me prepare the students for proficiency exams.” Of the teacher responses collected, 30% agree that the textbooks help prepare students for the proficiency exam. In an article published in The Las Vegas Sun dated March 15, 2005, “nearly 20% of the Clark County 2004 senior class failed to earn regular diplomas solely because they could not pass the math proficiency exam” (Richmond 2005, 1). Clark County is not alone here in this dilemma. In 2003, 25% of seniors statewide failed to pass the math test.

TABLE 18. The textbook helps me prepare the students for proficiency exams.						
School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	13.0%	18.0%	14.0%	23.0%	30.0%	2.0%

Another important value to examine is that 23% of the teachers who responded are neutral on this question. Did these teachers answer this response because they are not aware of the state requirements on proficiency exams or are they not aware that the information they are teaching relates to proficiency standards?

The next statement to be evaluated is “The textbooks are chosen based solely on proficiency standard requirements rather than subject content”. Table 19 illustrates only 9.3% of the teachers’ surveyed agreed with this statement. The results also illustrate that 33% were neutral and 48.4% of the teachers disagreed with the statement. The amount of teachers that

disagreed with the statement is significant because it means the textbooks have been chosen for other reasons. Perhaps they are not aware of the Nevada proficiency standards even though they have been involved in the textbook adoption process. These responses generate questions related to whether textbooks should be selected solely on proficiency standards. It should go without saying that textbooks that meet proficiency standards most likely will contain the correct subject content.

TABLE 19. The textbooks are chosen based solely on proficiency standard requirements rather than subject content.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	9.3%	23.7%	24.7%	33.0%	6.2%	3.1%

In addition to being asked the above two questions, teachers who served on a textbook review committee were asked how they would respond to the following statement -- “I feel having to focus on the proficiency exam requirements hinders the textbook review process.” (Table 20) Of the 48 teachers that responded to this statement, 33.3% selected the neutral response. This value has no significance. However, 33.4% agreed that focusing on proficiency standards hinder the textbook review process. It is not clear in what way proficiency standards hinder the process. This value could mean that more work is required in reviewing a book for acceptance that the teachers feel is not necessary. The other value reported consisted of 29.2% of the teachers responded that proficiency standards did not hinder the textbook review process. The value could represent that they are aware of the proficiency standards during the textbook review process.

TABLE 20. I feel having to focus on the proficiency exam requirements hinders the textbook review process.

School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	4.2%	12.5%	16.7%	33.3%	18.8%	14.6%

It can be concluded that more teachers prioritize other adoption factors over proficiency standards in selecting one book over another. This information will be very useful for future research. This relationship could be helpful in determining which one of these selection criteria would increase the percentage of high school seniors who passed the Nevada proficiency exam.

Part V. Conclusion

After surveying teachers in Nevada, it was determined that many teachers agree that the textbook adoption process should be changed. (Table 21) Many of those remaining neutral feel that the current process may not need to be changed but should be enhanced in some way. The original question of whether teachers find merit in the textbook adoption process has varied answers. It could be surmised, however, that because teachers feel the process should be changed, they do not feel the process has merit. This study has clearly shown that there is interest in the topic and that the textbook adoption process warrants a more complete and detailed study.

TABLE 21. The current textbook review/adoption process should be changed.						
School District	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All Districts	5.1%	4.0%	8.1%	35.4%	35.4%	12.1%

Teachers rely on the textbooks and use them to the extent they feel assists in student learning. Overall, there is no clear choice on whether the textbook adoption process produces quality textbooks. However, we know that teachers will what they need to, regardless of what the textbook is like. This analysis has illustrated that textbooks are important to teachers and they want to be part of the process of selecting them. Increasing awareness and involvement of teachers in the adoption process will enhance the process and improve the quality of the textbooks adopted. The policy question regarding proficiency standards was found not to have

as much impact as was originally expected. Currently it appears that the textbook adoption process is not overshadowed by the proficiency standards nor do they complement the process.

It is assumed by most people that we have contacted during the course of this study that textbooks have one goal which is to enhance a child's learning experience in a particular subject. Teachers feel that the textbooks are a supplement to the curriculum and the teaching style of the teacher. All of these things should result in positive test scores. The textbook adoption process is a tool towards that end and by increasing teacher involvement the quality of adopted textbooks should increase.

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