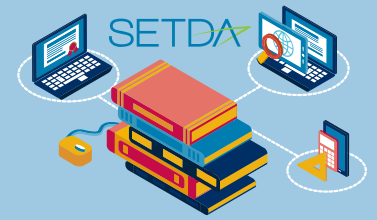


State K12 Procurement Case Studies: Spotlight on Digital Instructional Materials Acquisition



Excerpt

Louisiana

In Louisiana state leaders are demonstrating leadership in the movement towards digital learning environments as evidenced by the enactment of a state statute encouraging the adoption of digital instructional materials and an updated definition of instructional materials to include digital resources. The statute requires the [State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) to make every effort to ensure that electronic versions are available for every title approved for placement on the state list of approved instructional materials.

The purchase of electronic textbooks, instructional materials, and other media or content shall be maximized to the extent possible.

– State Statute RS17:351.1.B.4

When inviting publishers to participate in the state adoption process, the state board clearly communicates the state’s desire to increase the availability and accessibility of electronic textbooks and instructional materials in the public elementary and secondary schools. Louisiana also requires all publishers to provide electronic versions of the products they offer for state adoption, whether in addition to, or in lieu of, the printed version.



Louisiana’s textbook adoption policy, [Bulletin 741, Section 1703 - Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators, Revised December 2016](#) states that schools shall provide instructional materials for all students; adopt policies and regulations for the adoption and use of instructional materials; and ensure that instructional materials are free from bias.

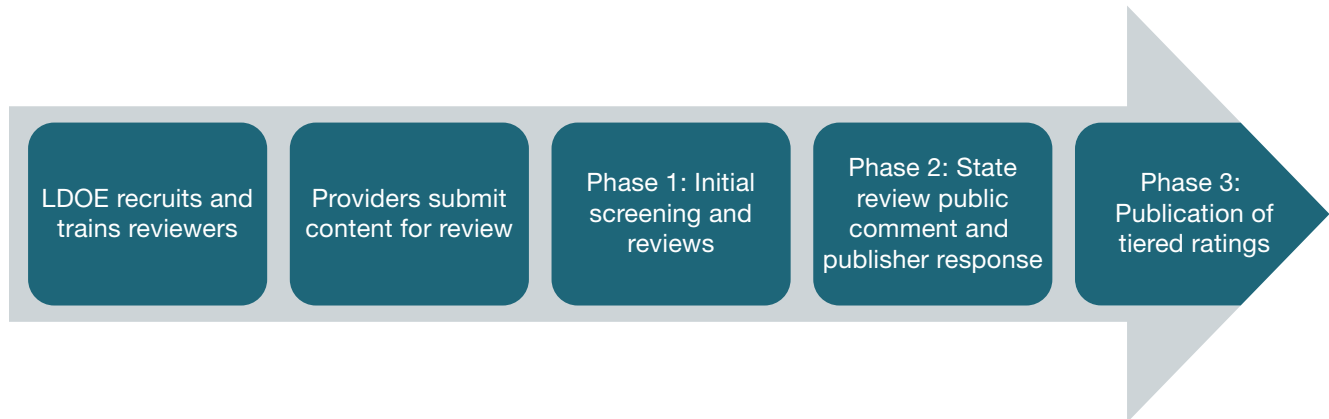
As a local control state, local school systems determine whether instructional materials are appropriate to meet the educational needs of their students. As a service and benefit to school systems, Louisiana reviews publisher submitted instructional materials and negotiates pricing for those materials, awarding state contracts only to products that receive a tier 1 rating, the highest level of standards alignment. School systems may, but are not obligated to, purchase instructional materials from the state contract. Local school systems have three options when adopting textbooks and purchasing instructional materials:



- Select materials evaluated through the state review process, which involves educators and parents;
- Engage in a local review process of materials not reviewed by the state; or
- Adopt a combination of state-reviewed materials and locally reviewed materials.

State Process

In Louisiana, materials are evaluated by a committee of Louisiana educators selected through an annual application process. Any current Louisiana public school educator can apply to be a part of a review committee as a [Teacher Leader Advisor](#). Publishers are invited annually to submit materials for state review, including OER, in all core subjects using a competitive bid process.



Resources that support the three phase state review process are available online 24/7 at the [Online Instructional Materials Reviews](#) website. The [Publisher's User Guide](#) provides detailed information about the instructional materials review and selection process, while the rubrics disclose the criteria that will be examined. The Publisher's User Guide also explains that companies must be licensed to do business in the state and provides a hyperlink to licensing information through the [Secretary of State's Corporate Division](#). Minimum criteria for participation is also found in the Publisher's User Guide and includes the following:

- Copyright date of 2015 or later
- Designed to cover standards as addressed in the latest state rubrics available online in core subject areas
- Available for review online or in digital format
- Student editions or full sample set of benchmark and interim test items and tasks are accessible
- Accessibility standards are disclosed
- Technology requirements to utilize the program are disclosed

Assurance of Accessibility Standards Checklist

- Complies with [WC3](#) for webpages
- Complies with [NCAM](#) for movies, web and multimedia
- Available in [NIMAS](#) standard

Louisiana sets state review priorities in core subject areas and seeks programs that fully align to the state's academic content standards and grade-level expectations. Publishers are encouraged to submit both video and printed "navigational roadmaps" to explain how to access their online content. In order to deal with volume and capacity, a priority review list is based on the following criteria:

- Requests from school systems
- Full course curricula
- Integrated early childhood curricular resources content that is integrated across multiple domains of learning and development
- Curricular resources currently in use
- Benchmark or interim assessments

Louisiana also utilizes a communication plan where providers are emailed throughout the process to confirm the completion of one phase and the initiation of the next. Additional support is provided through the [Louisiana Instructional Materials Review Weekly Report](#). Participation by parents and members of the public is encouraged through the [Public Review](#) portal for a four-week period, where publishers provide secure access to student materials. Upon completion state reviews are organized on a tiered basis based on their quality or alignment to state academic standards:

- **Tier 1** – Exemplifies Quality: Meets all non-negotiable criteria and scored the best possible on all indicators of superior quality.
- **Tier 2** – Approaching Quality: Meets all non-negotiable criteria and some indicators of superior quality.
- **Tier 3** – Not Representing Quality: Does not meet non-negotiable criteria.

Statewide Master Contracts

Louisiana invites publishers of instructional materials with Tier 1 ratings to enter into a statewide contract and complete the online state procurement registration process. Final state reviews are posted on the [Curricular Resources and Annotated Reviews](#) website organized by tier rating and content area. Reviews include the full evaluation, including public and publisher comments. Louisiana negotiates the pricing with publishers and posts the vendor price list on the [Instructional Materials Review Contract Pricing](#) portion of the website. Louisiana also



has state master purchasing contracts available for districts and schools to purchase digital devices for those vendors who meet Tier 1 status. The state provides access to WSCA contracts and negotiates discounted consortium and individual district procurement purchases rates based on these contracts.

Local School Systems Process

Local school systems in Louisiana have three options when adopting and purchasing instructional materials:

- Select materials evaluated through the three-phase state review process
- Select materials evaluated locally that have not been reviewed by the state
- Select a combination of state-and locally-reviewed materials

The [Louisiana Instructional Materials Review Weekly Report](#) can be used to determine the review posting timeline and upcoming reviews. Based on the academic needs of their students, local school systems can use this information to make decisions on whether to select state reviewed materials or engage in a local review process. For school systems interested in conducting a local review, Louisiana's [Guidance for Instructional Materials Review](#) provides guidance on the instructional materials review and selection process. In this guidance, Louisiana emphasizes the importance of selecting high quality instructional materials that are fully aligned to state standards and encourages the use of digital materials whenever practical. School systems can use the information in this document to update their local policies and regulations, including a local adoption timeline. School systems conducting a local review and adoption process must establish a local review committee, develop evaluation criteria, and provide opportunities for parental and public input prior to the final adoption of instructional materials.

Funding

Louisiana provides districts with state and local funding to cover its operational costs through the [Minimum Foundation Program \(MFP\) block grant](#). These funds may be used to purchase textbooks on the state-recommended lists, academically related ancillary materials or computer hardware. School systems interested in purchasing instructional materials from the statewide contract must submit orders to the publisher's depository between March 15 and May 15 for deliveries that are expected to begin on or after July 1. Local school systems may also enter into contracts directly with publishers provided that the local school system conducts a competitive procurement process.



Challenges and Considerations

This section presents some of the challenges and considerations for conducting procurements identified during interviews with state leaders and independent research.

Assurance of Accessibility

Louisiana requires publishers to complete an Assurance of Accessibility Standards Checklist to ensure that instructional materials comply with accessibility requirements, including [WC3](#) for webpages; [NCAM](#) for movies, web and multimedia and that materials are available in [NIMAS](#) standard.

Statewide Master Contracts

Statewide contracts for instructional materials offer districts the option to purchase materials from the list at negotiated pricing rates. Louisiana posts the vendor price list on the [Instructional Materials Review Contract Pricing](#) portion of the website.

Guidelines for Local Review Process

If a school system conducts a local review and adoption process, they must follow certain requirements. They must establish a local review committee, develop evaluation criteria, and provide opportunities for parental and public input prior to the final adoption of instructional materials.