

Executive Summary: Language Arts Textbooks

Administration was charged with reporting the following:

#1 – Textbook needs to support the Language Arts curriculum revision

Actions to Date:

1. The language arts curriculum for grades 6 – 12 was completed by the staff and presented to the Board for final approval in March 2009.
2. Teachers viewed presentations from Pearson/Prentice Hall, Glencoe and Holt MacDougal who are the three major producers of English Language and Literature textbooks.
3. A rubric was created and all presentations were rated by regular education language arts, reading specialists and special education staff. The top two choices were Pearson/Prentice Hall and Holt McDougal with about four points separating them on the rubrics.
4. A meeting was facilitated to bring the language arts, reading and special education teachers together after school. Teachers spent time in grade level groupings comparing the texts and talking about the literature, grammar and writing components. Teachers were encouraged by Mrs. Ludwig and Mrs. Hetrick to look at the texts from the perspective of student need, the ability to provide continuity of curricular delivery and the series that would best allow all students to succeed with the material. Teachers expressed a strong desire to be able to use the technology components that were included with each of the top two series.
5. Mrs. Ludwig and Mrs. Hetrick visited all of the schools and met with the language arts staff in each building so that each teacher had the opportunity to discuss their choice and the reasons and rationale behind that choice. The clear favorite that day was the Pearson/Prentice Hall series.

6. Mrs. Hetrick and Mrs. Ludwig met with representatives from Pearson/Prentice Hall and Holt McDougal to request quotes for specific materials which are attached.
7. After evaluating the materials offered and the quotes provided, the administration is recommending the Pearson/Prentice Hall purchase for the following reasons:
 - A. The materials offer two readings for each section so that teachers can choose the level of difficulty as appropriate for the reading abilities of their students while still accomplishing the same standards within the lesson. This allows for challenging the more capable students and supporting those who struggle with reading.
 - B. Pearson/Prentice Hall has invested time and effort creating a textbook that embraces the philosophy of differentiated instruction and has provided the teachers with the resources to implement the differentiated instruction strategies within their daily teaching.
 - C. The Pearson/Prentice Hall on-line book includes the entire textbook and all activities are reproduced in the online text and may be printed as appropriate by students and teachers. The Holt McDougal on-line book includes most, but not all of the materials.
 - D. The Pearson proposal provides a number of additional resources for our special education teachers to use to adapt materials appropriately for their students. In most cases, the Pearson materials are packaged in such a way that students would have a very difficult time recognizing any difference between special education and regular education materials so those students feel like they have the same English materials as any other student. Holt did not provide these supportive materials for re-teaching and remediation.
 - E. Both companies would provide ongoing support following the purchase including teacher in-service in the use of the materials at no additional charge, however, Pearson/Prentice Hall offered to provide support each year of the curriculum cycle as needed to reach out to new teachers and teachers that would like a refresher.
 - F. Pearson/Prentice Hall offers all of their digital materials online for both teachers and students. Updates are ongoing, so supporting video clips are added, new interactive practice modules and resource materials can be added regularly. Holt offers student materials online, but teacher materials are provided on a flash drive to each individual teacher so that once they have the materials, updates are not completed as often.
8. Mrs. Stewart and Mr. Collopy talked several times throughout this process with representatives from the companies to ensure that the technology is appropriate and that our system can deliver the technology that is available to the teachers. Mrs. Stewart has summarized their comments below:

After the teachers narrowed their choices based upon the curriculum, technology resources were evaluated.

It is evident, at this point, that the textbook companies are not willing to forego textbook sales revenue to offer books and materials on-line. The on-line text is either a “throw-in” after the traditional text is purchased, or there is one cost for both the traditional

and on-line versions. Neither of the companies reviewed as final choices offered the opportunity to buy only the on-line version for any sort of savings. It is understood that we are not in a position to be looking at a complete on-line solution, but wanted to note that this appears to be the trend. At one time, it was expected that we might see significant cost savings by looking at on-line textbooks, but at this time, this does not seem to be the case for those curriculum materials that our teachers are selecting as options.

The recommended publisher, Pearson, offers student and teacher materials on-line. The quality of the site, and the ease of use was appropriate. The on-line materials, referred to as their “Digital Pathway” is robust enough to be utilized in a one to one computer environment or within a traditional classroom with several work stations. The content is highly visual and includes a considerable amount of streaming media. This is positive for the learning experience within the classroom, but definitely requires a more robust computer work station for our teachers in language arts classrooms. Thin clients will not adequately get this job done.

The “Digital Pathway” is quite conducive for use with an interactive white board, Smart Board, and although it is not necessary, my recommendation is that we implement the Smart Board technology along with the new curriculum as we did with the math curriculum. It has been very successful, and I have confidence that we will enjoy similar success stories with language arts if we afford teachers this opportunity to integrate this powerful technology into their classrooms.

I see considerable advantages for students of all ability levels to utilize the digital resources that Pearson has to offer.

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Financial Implications:

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Currently, there is \$464,000 in the curriculum account for textbooks. If we were to purchase the Pearson/Prentice Hall materials that are presented here for regular education and special education the total cost would be \$294,901.19. Typically, we would support the purchase with additional novels and dictionaries and other accoutrements for the classrooms. The teachers have been surveyed and believe that they have sufficient supplementary materials at this time if we were to instead support the purchase of SMARTBoards, computers and projectors for the language arts classrooms so that they could have the resources to fully implement the technology components of the curriculum. The approximate cost for this has been estimated by the Technology department as follows:

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40 Smart Boards - \$50,800

40 Computers / Monitors – \$25,171

40 Projectors with bulb warranty - \$40,200

Total of \$116,171

This totals \$411, 072.19 which would still leave \$52, 927.81 for additional supplementary materials as needed by the teachers to support enhanced vocabulary instruction or additional novels as requested by the individual buildings and teachers.

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of School Directors support the purchase of the Pearson/Prentice Hall materials and SMARTBoards, projectors and computers for the language arts department to fully implement the adopted language arts curriculum for Warren County School District.