



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

District updating instructional materials adoption policy Digital, audio and district-created learning materials to be included

The use of technology-based educational material is increasing in classrooms. To ensure the quality and standards of those materials, the district is updating its instructional materials policy.

The last time the policy underwent a significant revision, textbooks were still the primary source for classroom material, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Logan Toone told members of the Board of Education on Tuesday.

“We want to create a space where the modern instructional materials that our teachers and students have access to are included in our policy and make sure they fit all of the requirements and expectations we have for content,” he said.

The updated policy will define primary instructional material, which is the foundational document for the course.

“If we rewound 15 years from today and referred to primary materials, we would be talking about the adopted textbook,” Toone said.

While there is still a place for traditional textbooks in classrooms, he said, many courses throughout the district are turning to other primary resources, such as online material, audio or district-created content.

“We want procedures that clearly outline for that and we want assurances in place to ensure quality and grade appropriateness,” Toone said.

Currently, the district screening process for instructional materials selection and approval involves several committees made up of district members, educators and parent representatives.

Teaching and Learning Director Belinda Kuck told board members it can be a heavy load to review continually changing software.

“We have thousands of software materials available for use and for teachers and principals to review. That is currently the way it is handled, so there are some changes that will be coming in the procedures to make that ... more streamlined,” said Kuck.

Board Member Liz Mumford agreed that including a digital content component in the updated policy is critical.

“In the past, we picked a textbook and it just stayed the same,” Mumford said. “So now we are adopting curriculum that is going to be evolving and adapting (and we need some process for evaluating that ... where there is a feedback loop with that committee and those stakeholders, making sure it still meets our standards.”

“I believe this will probably be the policy that will have the single most impact on our kids because it will im-

impact students every single day and every classroom, so I think it’s really critical to get right,” she said.

Included in the policy update will be the importance of educator reviews, Toone said.

“One of my favorite phrases in all of these documents is that teachers shall review in its entirety,” he said. “The existence of our digital materials as articles are changing, and substance on web-based resources are in flux, so the teacher now has an increased obligation ... to review and make sure that it does meet the standards.”

“Teachers have degrees, experience and content background. They know the standards. They are the most important voice in this process. We also care deeply about the perspective of administrators and parents, who are critical to this process of primary course material adoption,” he said.

The board will further review the proposed policy at the next meeting on May 4.

In other business, the board:

- Approved food lab refurbishments at Mueller Park Junior High, Farmington Junior High and Syracuse High School.
- Received annual compliance training and reviewed Land Trust and TSSA plans.

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— Assistant Superintendent Dr. Logan Toone