

# **PROTOCOL FOR REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

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Pittsford Schools

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# Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials

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Pittsford Schools

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*The Pittsford Central School District community works collaboratively to inspire and prepare our students to be their best, do their best and make a difference in the lives of others.*

## PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE

The Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials is designed to be used by teachers, or teams of teachers, to assist in the identification of instructional materials (i.e. textbooks, software, library materials, supplemental materials) in support of district curricular expectations. The protocol has been designed to be aligned to, and in support of, the following Pittsford Central School District policies:

- Policy 8320: Selection of Library and Media Center Materials
- Policy 8340: Instructional Materials and Textbook Adoptions
- Policy 8331: Balanced Presentation on Controversial Issues
- Policy 3420: Educational Equity and Excellence

This tool is designed to support a comprehensive review of instructional materials that is aligned with the selection criteria established in regulations associated with Policies 8329 and 8340. Although this tool is geared toward the review of core instructional material that will be considered for district adoption, the criteria posed should also help guide selection of supplemental and intervention resources. Furthermore, aspects of this work should be embedded in larger district and community efforts focusing on anti-racism, equity, culturally responsive teaching practices, and inclusion.

*Instructional materials and supplies for District students shall be selected on the basis of the District's instructional goals and appropriateness to the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served. Responsibility for the process of all material selection shall rest with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.*

*Every care shall be taken to ensure that instructional materials and textbooks selected for adoption:*

- *Support the District mission, vision, and values;*
- *Are based on the most current research and development in the subject area;*
- *Address basic concepts as well as higher-order thinking skills;*
- *Reflect the District's commitment to inclusivity and culturally responsive practices;*
- *Meet the needs of students who need alternate formats*

*(source: PCSD Policy 8340: Instructional Materials and Textbook Adoptions)*

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS TOOL

This tool is to be used by teams of teachers responsible for the review of instructional material under consideration for district adoption. This would include, but not be limited to, the review of:

- Textbooks for all content areas;
- Fiction and nonfiction texts embedded in K-12 English/Language Arts curriculum;
- Common supplementary resources (print, digital and/or audio-visual) provided to all teachers of a course/grade level;
- Instructional resources provided to interventionists at multiple buildings.

The tool consists of four parts: **Content and Credibility, Text Complexity, Diversity and Representation, and Other Considerations**. It is important to understand that instructional materials for all disciplines and content areas are expected to be reviewed against these criteria, using this tool.

Prior to beginning the process, it is important to establish whether you are reviewing a comprehensive resource, such as a textbook, that would need – on its own – to meet the criteria from all four parts of the protocol, versus a resource that needs to be considered within the context of similar resources used throughout the unit or year. There may be justifiable reasons why a novel or a common supplementary resource, for example, might be approved for use even though – on its own – it may fail to meet some of the established criteria. **In those cases, the full complement of resources for a particular unit or year of instruction must be considered to be sure that the totality of instructional materials meets the standard for recommendation.**

## Process

### 1. Identify the material to analyze

Depending on the length of the material being considered you may need to select portions for review by the entire team or assign each individual on the team to different portions for review. Whenever possible, however, the entire team should review as much of the material as possible. Novels/nonfiction texts for English Language Arts courses should be read in their entirety by all members of the team.

### 2. Engage review team in professional learning

Before beginning the review process, it may be necessary to engage the team in some professional learning specific to various aspects of the review protocol.

#### **Text Complexity:**

If members of the review team are not familiar with the Lexile levels, or the process of analyzing a text for its Lexile level, [The Lexile Framework Overview](#) video should help. It is important to keep in mind that determining the Lexile level of a text is only one component of determining text complexity.

#### **Diversity and Representation:**

Prior to instructional materials review, teachers need an understanding of the role of implicit bias in decision making, identify their bias as well as any bias present in the materials, and the reason why those biases may be present. The goal is not to eliminate materials that may contain bias (this would be impossible), but rather to recognize it, understand it, and be able to respond to it appropriately with students. It is also critical that teachers understand the importance of representation as we consider our instructional materials. The following resources are provided to assist teachers in deepening their understanding of these issues prior to participating in the review of instructional materials:

[A Look at Implicit Bias and Microaggressions](#)

[Representation Concepts Unwrapped](#)

[Representation Matters Windows and Mirrors: Learning About Difference – and Belonging – Through Books](#)

[Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias](#) The PCSD Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials drew heavily from a protocol developed by the state of Washington. As such, this slide show complements and explains the Diversity and Representation criteria called out in our protocol.

### 3. Prepare for review: understand scoring guidelines and calibrate reviewers

1. The review team should read the entire protocol before beginning the review process. Discuss any statement or term that requires additional clarity or deeper understanding. Refer to the Key Terms beginning on page 6.
2. For Parts I and III, review the Scoring Instructions below. Discuss when it is appropriate to choose **not applicable** on the evaluation tool.
3. Calibrate team scoring responses with sample material.

#### Scoring Instructions for Parts I and III

**Met** Reviewers should be able to provide many specific examples from the instructional materials as evidence for the criteria.

**Partially Met** Reviewers should be able to provide some evidence from the instructional materials that the statement is accurate.

**Not Met** Reviewers are unable to find any evidence from the instructional materials that the criteria are accurate.

**NA – (Not Applicable)** There will always be exceptions to these criteria, particularly the criteria associated with *Part III Diversity and Representation*. Instructional materials may be focused on a specific culture intentionally or might not incorporate discussion of belief systems since it is not relevant to the course, etc. Materials for some courses may be heavy on numbers, formulas, technical terms, etc. and appear to have little connection to *Diversity and Representation*. However even those materials should be reviewed through this lens, with attention paid to language, images, and examples provided in the text. While many criteria may be marked NA, no department should assume that their instructional materials do not need to be reviewed using these criteria.

### 4. Evaluate

Have reviewers complete each section of the tool. Remember to provide a rationale for each response based on evidence from the instructional materials.

### 5. Interpret results

After responses have been collected, and before final review team group recommendation to the district, use any areas marked as **Not Met** or **Partially Met** (Parts I and III) or **No** (Part II and IV) as a launch point for further discussion.

- Were criteria marked similarly among team members? If not, what accounts for the differences in scoring? Use reviewer identified evidence from the instructional materials to inform your discussion.
- Did any new considerations/concerns arise out of this evaluation process?
- Is additional information required in order to provide an accurate evaluation of the instructional material? If so, who do you contact?

## 6. Complete the Cover Page and Submit Recommendation

Once the team has come to consensus, complete the cover page to record the team's final recommendations and/or concerns about the materials under review.

**New Textbook Adoption Proposal:** The complete protocol is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, as part of the New Textbook Adoption Proposal. The Cover Page will be included in the material forwarded to the Board of Education.

**Novels/Literary Nonfiction for ELA classes:** The complete protocol is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for approval, prior to purchasing and/or incorporating the text into instruction.

**Common Supplementary Resources:** The complete protocol is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for approval, prior to purchasing and/or incorporating the material into instruction.

**In the case of software/web-based applications:** The protocol is first submitted to the Director of Technology as part of the software approval process, which includes, among other things, an evaluation for Education Law 2-d (Personally Identifiable Information) compliance.

**Instructional Resources provided to Interventionists at multiple buildings:** The complete protocol is submitted to the Director of Special Education (for special education interventions) and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for approval, prior to purchasing or incorporating the material into instruction.

## KEY TERMS

### **bias**

Prejudice or preference toward a thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. Bias can be explicit/conscious or implicit/unconscious.

### **belonging**

When one's well-being is considered and one's ability to design and give meaning to society's structures and institutions is realized. More than tolerating and respecting differences, belonging requires that all people are welcome with membership and agency in the society. Belonging is vital to have a thriving and engaged populace, which informs distributive and restorative decision-making.

### **culture**

Encompasses the languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of social groups that make their social environments meaningful.

### **cultural competency**

Cultural competency "includes knowledge of student cultural histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students."

### **culturally responsive teaching**

Teaching that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. Characteristics of culturally responsive teaching include positive perspectives on parents and families; communication of high expectations; learning within the context of culture; student-centered instruction; culturally mediated instruction; reshaping the curriculum; and teacher as facilitator.

### **disability**

A physical, mental, or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic, or neurological conditions, which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques; or a record of such an impairment; or a condition regarded by others as such an impairment.

### **diversity**

All the ways we differ. Anything that makes us unique is part of this definition of diversity.

## **English language learners (ELLs)**

Students who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak or understand languages other than English, speak or understand little or no English, require support in order to become proficient in English, and are identified pursuant to Section 154.3 of New York State's Commissioner's Regulations.

## **equity**

Equity is the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept, and not as idealistic. Equity is often thought of as "everyone getting what they need" in order to have the opportunity to succeed.

## **ethnicity**

A social construct that further divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as a shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

## **ethnocentrism**

The attitude that one's own group, ethnicity, or nationality is superior to others.

## **gender expression**

The external ways in which a person expresses their gender identity to the world, such as through their behavior, emotions, style of dress, hairstyle, makeup, interests, or choice of toys, colors, or activities.

## **gender identity**

An individual's sense of being a man, a woman, a boy, or a girl, or sometimes outside of these binaries. Gender identity is internal and is not necessarily visible to others. (NYS Education Law 11(6))

## **identity**

The collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing or person is definitively recognized or known, or the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.

## **inclusion**

Bringing together; making someone a part of something bigger and embracing diversity in a beneficial way.

## **inclusivity**

Inclusivity takes the concepts of diversity and inclusion and turns them into action by creating a school environment of engagement, respect, and connection where ideas, backgrounds and perspectives are tied together in a caring environment.



## **Lexile**

The **Lexile Framework for Reading** is an educational tool that uses a measure called a Lexile to match readers with books, articles and other leveled reading resources. Readers and books are assigned a score on the Lexile scale, in which lower scores reflect easier readability for books and lower reading ability for readers.

### **Qualitative measure – meaning/purpose**

Literary texts with a single level of meaning tend to be easier to read than literary texts with multiple levels of meaning. (This includes text such as satires, in which the author’s literal message is intentionally at odds with his or her underlying message). Similarly, informational texts with an explicitly stated purpose are generally easier to comprehend than informational texts with an implicit, hidden, or obscure purpose.

### **Qualitative measure – structure**

Texts of low complexity tend to have simple, well-marked, and conventional structures, whereas texts of high complexity tend to have complex, implicit, and (particularly in literary texts) unconventional structures.

### **Qualitative measure – language features**

Texts that rely on literal, clear, contemporary, and conversational language tend to be easier to read than texts that rely on figurative, ironic, ambiguous, purposefully misleading, archaic or otherwise unfamiliar language or on general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.

### **Qualitative measure – knowledge demands**

Texts that make few assumptions about the extent of readers’ life experiences and the depth of their cultural/literary and content/discipline knowledge are generally less complex than are texts that make many assumptions in one or more of those areas.

### **Quantitative measure**

The aspects of text complexity include aspects such as word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion, that are difficult if not impossible for a human reader to evaluate efficiently, especially in long texts, and are thus today typically measured by computer software.

## **LGBTQ+**

An acronym used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning communities. The + allows space for other diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression groups. While LGBT and LGBTQ are often used as short-hand umbrella terms meant to capture multiple sexual orientations and gender identities, LGBTQ+ is ideal due to its more inclusive nature.

**multiculturalism**

Cultural pluralism or diversity (as within a society, an organization, or an educational institution) or as a multicultural social state or a doctrine or policy that promotes or advocates such a state.

**multilingual learners (MLL)**

Multilingual Learner refers to all students who speak or are learning one or more language(s) other than English, including: 1) current ELLs; 2) students who were once ELLs but have exited out ELL status; 3) students who were never ELLs but are heritage speakers of a language other than English; and 4) World Languages students.

**nonbinary**

An adjective that can be used to describe a gender identity that does not fall into one of the two traditional (binary) categories—male or female. It can indicate a gender identity that is something other than male or female, that is neither entirely male nor entirely female, or that blends elements of being male or female.

**othering**

To view or treat (a person or group of people) as intrinsically different from and alien to oneself. Opposite of belonging.

**race**

A socially constructed system of categorizing humans largely based on observable physical features (phenotypes) such as skin color and ancestry. There is no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.

**racism**

The belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race; a doctrine or political program based on the assumption of racism and designed to execute its principles; a political or social system founded on racism; racial prejudice or discrimination.

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

**rigor**

Instruction, schoolwork, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences, for example, help students understand knowledge

and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.

**sex**

The biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women (Male and Female denotes "sex").

**sexual orientation**

The sex to which person is sexually attracted; someone attracted primarily or exclusively to members of the opposite sex is character as straight or heterosexual. Someone attracted primarily or exclusively to members of the same sex is characterized as homosexual. A person with a strong or viable attraction to both genders is characterized as bisexual or pansexual. Note: Gender identity terms (e.g., cisgender, transgender, nonbinary) are not sexual orientation labels.

**stereotypes**

False, oversimplified, prejudiced, or exaggerated generalizations about an individual or group.

**transgender**

An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth (e.g., someone who was assigned female at birth, but whose gender identity is male).

# Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials – Form Cover Page

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Developer/Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Published: \_\_\_\_\_ Content Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level/Course for which the material is being considered: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part I: Content and Credibility

Criteria	Y/N	Comments
Do you recommend the use of this instructional material from the perspective of content and credibility?		

## Part II: Text Complexity

Overall Grade Level/Complexity: _____	Recommend for consideration (Yes/No):
Summary of Analysis and Reasoning:	

## Part III: Diversity and Representation

Criteria	Y/N	Comments
Do you recommend the use of this instructional material from an inclusive and unbiased content perspective?		

## Part IV: Additional Considerations

Criteria	Y/N	Comments
Do you recommend the use of this instructional material based on the additional considerations?		

**RECOMMEND FOR USE: Yes  No**

Name of Lead Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part I: Content and Credibility

Content					
Criteria	Met	Part Met	Not Met	NA	Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited
The content of the instructional materials are accurate as of the time of review.					
The content of the instructional materials are aligned with the learning standards for the course/discipline.					
The content is addressed with a level of depth and rigor that is aligned to the expectations of the course.					
The presentation of the content is done in such a way as to ensure high interest level on the part of the students.					

## Author's Credibility

Criteria	Met	Part Met	Not Met	NA	Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited
The author, or creator, of the instructional material is well qualified in their subject area.					
In the case of literature, the author is speaking with an "own voice", or has other credentials or experiences that provide them with authentic insight to the characters/story.					
Taken as a whole, the authors or creators of instructional material being reviewed for this unit/grade level represent diverse identities.					
Taken as a whole, the authors or creators of instructional material being reviewed for this unit/grade level represent diverse perspectives on controversial topics (if they exist within the unit).					

## Recommendations based on Content and Credibility

Criteria	Y/N*	Comments
Do you recommend the use of the instructional material from the perspective of content and credibility?		

**\*If NO – discontinue consideration of the material(s) under review and do not use.**

## Part II: Text Complexity

**Quantitative:** Quantitative aspects of text complexity include aspects such as word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion, that are difficult if not impossible for a human reader to evaluate efficiently, especially in long texts, and are thus today typically measured by computer software. To determine the quantitative text complexity of the materials under review go to <http://www.lexile.com>. Use the Lexile Tools box in the upper right, and click on "Find a Book" to see if your text already has a Lexile Measure. If not, copy and paste a portion of the text into the Lexile Analyzer. There are certain types of text that cannot be assigned a Lexile measure because they are not prose. These include poems, plays and song lyrics or texts with extensive dialogue. Check "NA" when working with these types of text.

Using the chart, below, indicate the Lexile measure, if available, for the materials under review.

Lexile Measure	Grade Band
<input type="radio"/> 420 – 820L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 2-3
<input type="radio"/> 740 – 1010L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 4-5
<input type="radio"/> 925 – 1185L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 6-8
<input type="radio"/> 1050 – 1335L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 9-10
<input type="radio"/> 1185 – 1385L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 11-12
<input type="radio"/> NA	<input type="radio"/> NA

**Qualitative:** Qualitative factors refer to those aspects of text complexity best measured or only measurable by an attentive human reader, such as levels of meaning or purpose; structure; language conventionality and clarity; and knowledge demands. Consider the four qualitative measures of text complexity, below, and how they make the text more or less complex. Identify where the text falls within its grade band for each qualitative measure.

Qualitative Measure	Notes and Comments on Text	Placement within Band				
		Not suited to band	Beginning of lower grade	End of lower grade	Beginning of higher grade	End of higher grade
Meaning/Purpose						
Structure						
Language Features						
Knowledge Demands						

Use both the Lexile Measure and the qualitative analysis to adjust the overall placement of the text within its grade band. Summarize your analysis and reasoning.

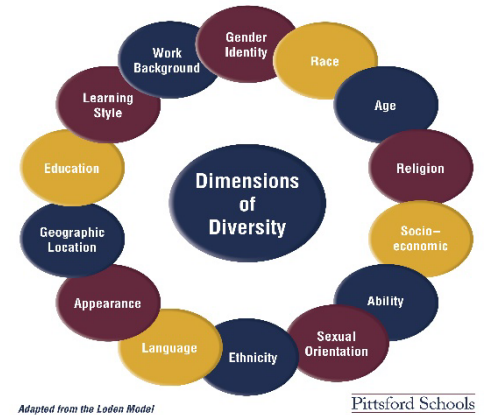
Overall Grade Level/Complexity:	Recommend for consideration: Yes/No*
Summary of Analysis and Reasoning:	

**\*If NO – discontinue consideration of the material(s) under review and do not use.**

## Part III: Diversity and Representation

PCSD is committed to being a welcoming and accepting community that engages in authentic dialogue in a respectful, trusting and collaborative environment. Our community celebrates diversity as a strength and fosters empathetic understanding of differences. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a source of pride for all PCSD members enabling each individual to reach their fullest potential and positively influence the world. (source: PCSD Inclusivity Advisory Council Success Statement, 2018)

One way that we live up to our commitment to equity and inclusivity is through the careful consideration of our instructional resources. Representation in instructional material should reflect the rich cultural diversity and lived experiences of all students. All students need and deserve to see themselves and their cultures reflected in the curriculum and instructional materials presented to them. Likewise, all students benefit from the opportunity to see, understand, and learn from and about perspectives, cultures, and representations that differ from their own. It is our responsibility, as educators, to carefully consider all instructional materials through the lens of Diversity and Representation in our ongoing efforts to achieve our goals of inclusivity and equity.



**Please REFER TO Pages 19-21 of this protocol and carefully consider each aspect of Diversity and Representation as it applies to the instructional materials under consideration.**

<b>Variety of Roles and Character Traits (FICTION Materials)</b>					<b>Criteria guidance</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Part Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited</b>
<b>Characters/figures central to the instructional material show diverse groups in a variety of roles and occupations.</b>					
different genders and gender identities					
different races/ethnicities/cultures/tribal citizens					
persons with disabilities					
persons of various socioeconomic status					
other identifiers (if present, notate in comments)					
<b>When present in the instructional material, character traits such as courage, leadership, intelligence, integrity, etc., are distributed among diverse groups.</b>					
different genders and gender identities					
different race/ethnicities/cultures/tribal citizens					
persons with disabilities					

persons of various socioeconomic status					
other identifiers (if present, notate in comments)					
Characters/figures are described by their behaviors, beliefs, and values rather than unnecessary socioeconomic descriptors.					
Characters of color are not assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment, and/or low income.					
Characters of diverse cultural backgrounds are not represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic.					
Problems faced by people of color or girls/women are not resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or boys/men.					

<b>Multiple Perspectives &amp; Contributions (NON-FICTION Material)</b>					<a href="#">Criteria guidance</a>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Part Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited</b>
<b>Biographical, contemporary, or historical materials infuse perspectives and contributions from members of diverse groups substantially, accurately, and respectfully.</b>					
different genders and gender identities					
different races/ethnicities/cultures/tribal citizens					
persons with disabilities					
persons of various socioeconomic status					
other identifiers (if present, notate in comments)					
The instructional material(s) presents multiple sides of any controversial and complex issues related to the content area.					
On balance, the instructional materials recognize the validity and integrity of knowledge systems based in communities of color, collectivist cultures, matriarchal societies, and non-Christian religions, as well as the knowledge systems of the dominant culture.					



<b>Multicultural Representation (ALL Materials)</b>					<b>Criteria guidance</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Part Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited</b>
The instructional materials include literature, examples, or situations that accurately reflect the culture, languages, traditions, beliefs, values, and customs of people from diverse backgrounds.					
Any belief systems covered in the instructional materials are presented respectfully, accurately and with appropriate context.					
If belief systems are covered in the instructional materials, multiple belief systems/religions are presented. No one belief system is positioned as superior to others.					
Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed across the breadth of instructional materials – not all Asian families are Chinese, not all Latinx families are Mexican, etc.					

<b>Imagery and Language (ALL Materials)</b>					<b>Criteria guidance</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Part Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited</b>
The instructional material uses imagery that promotes inclusion and belonging in real-life, contemporary contexts.					
The instructional material provides a range of text, examples, scenarios, and applications relevant to students' real-life experiences and cultural backgrounds.					
The materials feature visually diverse characters/people, and any characters of color do not all look alike.					
Visual materials include people with disabilities, with various body types, and/or of advanced age.					
Illustrations depict different groups in roles of power and authority.					
All labels or captions of images use inclusive and gender-neutral, person-first language and avoid stereotypical descriptions.					

If the images/text in instructional material addresses a stereotype or bias, the historical, social or cultural context is relevant to contemporary issues.					
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<b>Family Representation (ALL Materials)</b>					<b>Criteria guidance</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Part Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited</b>
When family depiction is present in instructional material, families exhibit a range of configurations in addition to the traditional nuclear family model - single parents, adopted and foster children, stepparents, same-sex parents, and/or relatives living with the family.					
When family references are present in instructional material, examples are sensitive to diversity in family dynamics and student experience of family and home.					

<b>Teacher Guidance (ALL Materials)</b>					<b>Criteria guidance</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Part Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comments and/or examples where criteria are exhibited</b>
The instructional material provides strategies for teachers to elicit and instructionally respond to their students' prior knowledge, interests, and identities.					
Guidance is provided on opportunities to partner with students' families and caregivers to enhance lessons.					

## Recommendations based on Diversity and Representation

Criteria	Y/N*	Comments
Do you recommend the use of this instructional material from an inclusive and unbiased content perspective?		
If the instructional materials under review failed to meet a preponderance of the criteria for <b>Diversity and Representation</b> , but their use is considered by the team as justified, please explain the justification including the context, instructional considerations, and/or the aggregate of the curriculum and instructional materials as a whole.		

## Part IV: Additional Considerations

Criteria	Y/N	Comments
Peripheral supports, including teacher manuals, software, online access to the text, supplementary and companion materials, staff development materials, and materials to support the learning of special populations (English Language Learners, students with disabilities, gifted students) are available and of good quality.		
Will the publisher of written materials under consideration guarantee to produce NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard) files and send them to NIMAC (National Instructional Materials Access Center) at no additional cost to the district in order to ensure the availability of large print, braille, or e-file versions as needed?		
Is the cost, including the costs of peripheral and supplementary materials and associated professional development, reasonable as compared to other alternatives?		

## Recommendations based on Additional Considerations

Criteria	Y/N*	Comments
Do you recommend the use of this instructional material based on the additional considerations?		

**\*If NO – discontinue consideration of the material(s) under review and do not use.**

# DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION Criteria Discussion and Examples

## Variety of Roles and Character Traits

Look for stereotypes. Some stereotypes can be overt – for example, depicting a male Latino teenager as a gang member. Other stereotypes may not be this obvious; look for variations which may demean or exclude characters because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation.

### Considerations:

- Diverse groups are shown performing similar work in related fields.
- People of different genders and gender identities are depicted in non-traditional as well as traditional roles in the family, at work, and in leisure activities.
- All ethnic groups are portrayed as equally independent/dependent, leaders/subordinates, peaceable/militant, open/secretive, thoughtful/impulsive etc.
- Characters from all ethnic groups are shown in a variety of settings and lifestyles in active, decision-making and leadership roles.
- Persons with disabilities are referred to by their names and roles rather than their disability.
- Characters of color are main characters and not just sidekicks.
- If there is conflict in the storyline, the characters of color are not considered mostly the problem.
- Characters of color are not assumed to have low income or education.
- Gender is not central to the storyline. Female characters are in a variety of roles that could also be filled by a male character and vice versa.

[Back to Screening Tool](#)

## Multiple Perspectives and Contributions

### Considerations:

- Instructional material features the stories, histories, and narratives of people of color, people of varying economic class, LGBTQ+ people, and females. These portrayals go beyond the cover or pictures in the material and are inclusive in the general formatting of the text.
- The curriculum recognizes the validity and integrity of knowledge systems based in communities of color, American Indian/Alaska Native and indigenous cultures, and faith systems inclusive of but not limited to Christian religions.
- Historical figures and “heroes” are presented as complex, multi-dimensional people capable of making significantly positive contributions to society while also having human foibles and faults.

### Content specific example:

#### Social Studies

- Significant representation of diverse historical figures and cultural groups is infused throughout materials. Tokenism can be very prevalent in state and national history textbooks, which tend to mention indigenous people and people of color very sporadically and only in relation to European or Euro-American exploits.

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## Multicultural Representation

Classrooms communities are comprised of people who represent and identify with a vibrant mix of cultures, languages, traditions and experiences. Instructional materials should reflect this diversity.

### Considerations:

- Instructional material should respectfully portray different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions, names and clothing.
- Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed – not all Asian families are Chinese, not all Latinx families are Mexican, etc.

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## Imagery and Language

### Considerations:

- Characters of diverse cultural backgrounds are not represented stereotypically or presented as foreign or exotic.
- Groups which include male and females are referred to in neutral languages such as people, mail carriers, firefighters, or legislators.
- Images of American Indian and Alaskan Native peoples include photos and illustrations in contemporary contexts.
- Illustrations of children show them wearing a variety of clothing, colors, and hairstyles, as well as engaging in a variety of activities and play that go beyond traditional gender expectations and roles.
- Oversimplified generalizations about social classes and groups are avoided in text and illustrations.
- People with disabilities, illnesses, different body types, and/or advanced age are portrayed as capable in various ways, rather than portrayed as completely defined by disabilities, age, and illnesses
- “Person-first” language is used throughout: “a person with diabetes” rather than “a diabetic”; “a child with autism spectrum disorder” rather than “an autistic child”; “a person with an intellectual disability” rather than “a retarded person”.
- Language and imagery in tasks, problems, and case studies includes diverse cultural names and experiences.

### Note

Historical and primary documents – including letters, newspaper articles, treaties, journals, photographs, census reports, cartoons, and government documents – reflect the social, political, historical, and cultural contexts in which they were created, including the biases and prejudices. These documents can be used effectively in the classroom to examine the prevalence of certain biases at particular eras in history and to investigate how such views influenced public policies, institutions, and people’s lives. Understanding the development and impacts of historical prejudices and other biases is a critical part of acquiring a more accurate and comprehensive picture of our history and our present circumstance.

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## Family Representation

### Considerations:

- Extended families are depicted, and emphasis is placed on roles and relationships rather than biological relation.
- A variety of family constellations are portrayed in equally positive light.
- People of all backgrounds and experiences are depicted as capable of loving.
- Family assignments are envisioned and explained in a sensitive manner.
  - A seemingly harmless activity, such as creating a family tree, can marginalize students whose biological relations are distant or unknown. Such assignments can be modified to recognize the key relationships in students' lives.
  - Teachers should take care to remember that children may have different and varied family constellations; not all children will describe their family as including one mother and one father.

### Content specific examples

#### Sexual Health Education

- Representations of effective and healthy relationships include more than the traditional man and woman model.
- Derogatory and shaming language is avoided in reference to sexual activity.
- Students with disabilities are included when discussing romantic relationships and sexual health.

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## Teacher Guidance

For this section, review team members should review the teacher's materials for the instructional material - this might include both a Teacher's Manual as well as any teacher guidance within the individual units or lesson plans.

**Look for** guidance on how to approach, enhance, and customize lessons for their student populations:

- When appropriate, the instructional material provides guidance on how to make connections between academic content and the local neighborhood, culture, environment and resources, including guidance on sources for valid, non-traditional resources (e.g. oral histories) if available.
- Diverse student identities are seen as assets and strengths that can advance individual and group learning, rather than seen as challenges or difficulties to be overcome.

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# APPENDIX

## Teacher's Guide to INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS for approved materials

Even for instructional materials that are approved for use after their careful review in accordance with this protocol, there may be considerations that all teachers using the resource should keep in mind. It is important for the review committee to document those considerations so that all teachers may benefit from the reflections made by the review committee as they discussed the resource.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Name of Resource:**

**Approved for (course/grade/unit of instruction):**

**Course:**

**Grade:**

**Unit of Instruction:**

**Strengths of this resource:**

*What makes this resource an important addition to, or replacement for, previously adopted resources for the same course/grade/unit of instruction? What existing gaps might this resource help to fill?*

**Potential concerns about this resource:**

*Could there be concerns about any of the **language or imagery** included in this resource? If so, how should teachers address those concerns with students PRIOR to the students encountering passages or images that may raise concern?*

*Could there be concerns that any aspect of the resource may be seen as furthering negative **stereotypes**? If so, how will teachers address those concerns with students PRIOR to the students encountering aspects that may raise concern? What other resources or materials are presented to the students in a deliberate effort to challenge those same negative stereotypes or provide a more balanced representation?*



Could there be concerns about the **political leanings** of the resource or materials? If so, how will teachers address those concerns and work to ensure that they are not promoting or endorsing a political agenda in their classroom?

Are there any **other potential concerns** that teachers should be aware of? If so, how should teachers address those concerns?

**Is there a particular time of year that it is recommended this resource be used, and if so why?**

**What supplemental resources or instructional materials could be used alongside this resource in an effort to provide for balance and a deeper understanding of the essential concepts?**

## **REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](#) | Great Lakes Equity Center

Skelton, S.M., Kyser, T.S., and Thorius, K.A. (2017). *Equity Tool: Assessing Bias In Standards And Curricular Materials*. Indianapolis, IN: Great Lakes Equity Center.

[Assessing Learning Materials for Bias](#) | Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (Canada – revised 2013)

[Assessing Visual Materials for Diversity & Inclusivity](#) | Kimberly S. Grotewold (funding from Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity – revised 2020)

[Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](#) | New York University

J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester, & L. Q. Peoples (2019). *Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard*. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

[Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework](#), New York State Education Department (2018)

[Dismantling Racism Works Web Workbook](#) (2021)

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994) *The dreamkeepers: successful teachers of African American Children*. Jossey-Bass Publishers

[Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts](#) | Teaching Tolerance (2016)

[Titlewave.com](#) (create free account to access book reviews and teaching guides)

[Tools and Guidance for Evaluating Bias in Instructional Materials](#) / Comprehensive Center Network

[Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework](#) | Teaching Tolerance (2016)

Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials (2009) Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction