



# LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

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**TITLE:** Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials

**NUMBER:** BUL-5209.2

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Division of Instruction

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Integrated Library and Textbook Support Services

## **ROUTING**

Local District Superintendents  
Administrators of Instruction  
Directors  
Principals  
Library Media Personnel  
Teachers

**DATE:** August 2, 2019

**PURPOSE:** To target priority instructional initiatives, the District has required the use of specific instructional materials. Where required materials have not been designated, it is the policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District that the selection of instructional materials be delegated to each school.

**MAJOR CHANGES:** This revision replaces BUL-5209.1, dated August 22, 2016, *Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials*. The content has been revised to reflect the current District organizational structure and policy and to update information about the evaluation resources that are available and the materials compliance evaluation form.

**BACKGROUND:** Although many instructional materials, including audiovisual materials, library books, technology resources, and textbooks, are selected from State- and District-approved lists, school site decision-making and local school budget authority have increased the responsibility of schools for their own local evaluation. Instructional materials used with all students must support the curriculum, the California frameworks and California Standards, and instructional strategies; comply with *California Education Code* requirements regarding the evaluation of materials; and be appropriate for the grade, ability, language proficiency, and maturity level of students being taught.

This bulletin identifies the procedures for selecting instructional materials. It provides school personnel with the evaluation criteria for selecting instructional materials of high quality for use in the classroom and the school library media center. These criteria include the *California Education Code* compliance guidelines and specific evaluation criteria. This bulletin also identifies State and District lists of evaluated instructional materials and District websites that can be used as resources.



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**GUIDELINES:** The following guidelines are in effect:

## **I. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. The school selection of instructional materials should involve purposeful consideration by the school committee and follow these procedures:
1. Form a school site evaluation and selection committee which includes parents, and possibly, students.
  2. Establish a school policy on the evaluation and selection of instructional materials for the classroom.
  3. Develop an instructional materials evaluation form (see Attachment A).
  4. Review District and state lists of evaluated resources in order to save time and money. Resources on these lists have been evaluated by teachers, teacher librarians, and administrators who have received special training in materials evaluation. See Section C in this bulletin.
  5. Utilize additional central office assistance with the evaluation of instructional materials. For example, Integrated Library and Textbook Support Services and KLCS-TV.
  6. Review unevaluated materials, e.g., those listed in publishers' catalogs sent to schools, donations of materials received by schools, or items from conferences. Reviewers should check with the appropriate District office to see if the materials have been evaluated (see Section C). If not, they should read reviews published in professional journals such as *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *School Library Connection*, *VOYA*, or request free copies of materials to preview.
  7. Determine budgets, prioritize selections, and order materials.

## **II. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL**

- A. The criteria listed below should be considered when evaluating and selecting materials in order to best meet the instructional needs of all students.

### **1. State Legal Compliance Guidelines**

Material must comply with standards relating to various compliance issues as set forth by the *California Education Code* in Sections 60040 through 60044, 60048, and 60200; the California State Board of Education; and the Los Angeles Board of Education. These legal compliance guidelines are contained in the "Standards for Evaluation of Instructional Materials with Respect to social content" included in Attachment B.



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## 2. Curricular Relevancy and Organization

- a. Content, scope, and sequence should align with the State frameworks and content standards for Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Science/History, Health, Foreign Languages, and Visual/Performing Arts.
- b. Content must be accurate and current.
- c. Content should be organized for effective learning.
- d. Level of difficulty should be appropriate for diverse student learners. Access to the subject matter content for students with disabilities (SWD), gifted and talented education (GATE), English Learners (ELs), Standard English Learners (SELs), and intervention students should be considered.
- e. Instructional materials should help students reach stated objectives.
- f. When possible, all sides of a controversial issue should be presented.
- g. When selecting fictional materials, schools should consider effectiveness of literary style, plot, theme, and characterization.
- h. Factual materials should come with instructional aids, e.g., bibliographies, appendices, indices, glossaries, and study aids (e.g., self-tests, summaries, reviews, and suggested activities) helpful to students and staff.

## 3. Technical Considerations

- a. Format, type size, color and quality of paper, and binding should be appropriate.
- b. Pacing should be regulated enough to convey content to the intended audience.
- c. Narration and dialogue should be clear, precise, and appropriate to the content.
- d. Audio levels should be consistent and in synchronization with visuals.
- e. Color, graphics, music, and other sound effects should be used in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from the content.
- f. Visuals should be appropriate, accurate, sharp, properly exposed, and creatively enhance the presentation.
- g. Labels or captions should appear as needed and must be clear and accurate.
- h. Program design of technology-based instruction must be effective and appropriate.
- i. Interactive materials should provide appropriate and effective feedback to users.
- j. When appropriate, the materials should meet the District's technology requirements.
- k. Packaging should be attractive, durable, and appropriate.



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### 4. Criteria for Evaluating Primary Language Materials

In addition to the above criteria, the following criteria should be used for materials in languages other than English:

- a. Translation should be accurate and fluid in style.
- b. Materials should be relevant to the curriculum; however, expecting materials published in other countries to match the California frameworks or Standards is not realistic. Schools should determine the degree of acceptable match.
- c. Point of view should be considered, especially if materials are produced in another country.
- d. Illustrations and content should address diversity, but materials produced in other countries might lack acceptable portrayals of diverse ethnic groups. The presence of diversity should be determined and evaluated at school sites.
- e. Language style, e.g., dialect (social or regional), should be appropriate for effective learning.
- f. Cultural orientation of the content, e.g., political, social, and religious viewpoints, should be acceptable in school settings.
- g. Pedagogy and methodology should be compatible with instructional strategies used by staff with students.

### 5. Selection Criteria for a Nonfiction Book for Content-Based English Learner Instruction

- a. Text, written in English, should have high readability, e.g., simplicity of sentences, appropriateness of vocabulary, amount and use of white space, and the size of the print.
- b. Illustrations should be integral to the text, e.g., enhanced meaning, one-to-one relationship between the illustrations and the text, clear and attractive.
- c. Text should support the same curriculum that all students are receiving.
- d. Vocabulary should be highlighted, e.g., appear in bold or color print and include a pronunciation guide, a glossary, or an explanation.
- e. Text should be engaging to the reader, e.g. connect to the background of the student, personalize the meaning, and encourage interaction of the student with the text.

## **III. LIST OF DISTRICT- AND STATE-EVALUATED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. State and District guidelines and compliance issues have been used to screen materials in District-approved lists and in the provision of online instructional resources.



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1. Integrated Library and Textbook Support Services (ILTSS).
  - a. *Digital Library* (<https://achieve.lausd.net/iltss>) provides access to online subscription resources such as encyclopedias, periodicals, subject-specific reference information, bilingual dictionaries, and maps.
  - b. *Destiny*, the integrated library and textbook system, allows users to create various bibliographies including hi-low books. See the ILTSS website for tutorials (<https://achieve.lausd.net/iltss>).
  - c. Textbook Services posts the latest *Instructional Materials Surveys* and price list/order forms on its webpage: <https://achieve.lausd.net/iltss>

### RELATED RESOURCES:

The following bulletins related to instructional media can be accessed via the District's e-Library:

- BUL-5208.1, *Procedures for Reviewing Challenged Materials*, Division of Instruction, August 29, 2016.
- BUL-5210.1, *Guidelines for the Use of Audiovisual Materials Not Owned, Broadcast, or Recommended by the District*, Division of Instruction, August 22, 2016.
- BUL-714, *Compliance with the 1976 United States Copyright Law*, Information Technology Division, January 8, 2004.
- REF-2111.1, *Field Trip Handbook*, December 14, 2015.

### ASSISTANCE:

For assistance or further information. Please contact:

- For information about library, textbook, and e-resources evaluation, contact Integrated Library and Textbook Support Services, (213) 241-2733.
- For information about elementary and secondary school programs, contact (213) 241-5333.
- For information about District technology requirements, contact ITD, (213) 241-5200.
- For information about compatability with schoology program, contact Personalized Learning Management System, (213) 241-3004.



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ATTACHMENT A

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GENERIC EVALUATION FORM**

Recommend \_\_\_\_\_ Reject \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Author(s) (last name): \_\_\_\_\_

Title (as shown on title page): \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_ ISBN: \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the materials by circling the appropriate number/level for each category.

1. Alignment to State standards	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2. Alignment to framework	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
3. Content/Alignment with curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Culturally relevant curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. Content level	Easy	Average	Advanced	Honors		
6. Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7. Organization of materials for effective learning	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. Measurable outcomes and goals	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. Tables of contents, indexes, glossaries, content summaries, references, and assessment guides	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10. Assessments (formative, summative, cumulative)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. Universal access for Students with Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. Universal access for English Learners	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. Universal access for below grade level	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
14. Universal access for above grade level	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15. Instructional planning	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16. Teacher's edition, guides, teaching strategies	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17. Instructional support	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18. Pacing plan	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19. Electronic resources using appropriate strategies	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20. Electronic resources user-friendly	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21. Electronic resources technically sound	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Comments (see attachments)

Chairperson

Date

Evaluator(s)

Date

**(Evaluation for Legal Compliance required. See Attachment B)**



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## ATTACHMENT B

### Standards for Evaluation of Instructional Materials with Respect to Social Content (2013 Edition)

Citations can be issued using the following standards (please cite the letter and number (e.g. A-1) on the Citation Form):

#### A. Male and Female Roles—E.C. 50501, 60040(a), 60044(a)

1. **Adverse reflection.** Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize males or females because of their sex must not appear.
2. **Equal portrayal.** Instructional materials containing references to, or illustrations of, people must refer to or illustrate both sexes approximately evenly, in both number and degree of importance, except as limited by accuracy or special purpose.
3. **Occupations.** If professional or executive occupations, parenting, trades, or other gainful employment is portrayed, men and women should be represented equally.
4. **Achievements.** Whenever instructional material presents developments in history or current events or achievements in art, science, or any other field, the contributions of women and men should be represented in approximately equal numbers.
5. **Mental and physical activities.** An approximately equal number of male and female characters should be depicted in roles in which they are being mentally and physically active, being creative, solving problems, and experiencing success and failure in those roles.
6. **Traditional and nontraditional activities.** The number of traditional and nontraditional activities engaged in by characters of both sexes should be approximately even.
7. **Emotions.** A range of emotions (e.g., fear, anger, tenderness) should be depicted as being experienced by male and female characters.
8. **Gender-neutral language.** Such general terms as *people, men and women, pioneers,* and *they* should be used to avoid the apparent exclusion of females or males.
9. **Parenting activities.** Both sexes should be portrayed in nurturing roles with their families. The responsibility of parenting should be emphasized.

#### B. Ethnic and Cultural Groups—E.C. 50501, 60040(b), 60044(a)

1. **Adverse reflection.** Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize minority groups are prohibited.
2. **Proportion of portrayals.** Instructional materials containing references to, or illustrations of, people must portray accurately, to the extent possible, the roles and contributions of a fair proportion of diverse ethnic groups, especially those groups referenced in the statute (Section 60040 [b]).
3. **Customs and lifestyles.** When ethnic or cultural groups are portrayed, portrayals must not depict differences in customs or lifestyles as undesirable and must not reflect adversely on such differences.
4. **Occupations.** If professional or executive roles, trade jobs, or other gainful occupations are portrayed, majority and minority groups should be presented therein in fair proportion.
5. **Socioeconomic settings.** Minority persons should be depicted in the same range of socioeconomic settings as are persons of the majority group.
6. **Achievements.** Whenever developments in history or current events, or achievements in art, science, or other fields, are presented, the contributions of minority persons, particularly prominent minority persons, should be included and discussed when it is historically accurate to do so.
7. **Mental and physical activities.** Majority and minority group characters should be depicted in fair proportion in roles in which they are being mentally and physically active, being creative, solving problems, and experiencing success and failure in those roles.
8. **Traditional and nontraditional activities.** The portrayal of minority characters engaged in activities that have traditionally been viewed as typical of their culture should be balanced by portrayal of such characters engaged in other less traditionally recognized activities.
9. **Root culture.** Depiction of diverse ethnic and cultural groups should not be limited to the groups' root cultures (traditional activities associated with ancestral culture) but, rather, must include such groups in the mainstream of U.S. life and identify them as Americans.



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### **C. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity– E.C. 50501, 60040(b), and 60044(a)**

1. **Adverse reflection.** Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity must not appear.
2. **Achievements.** Whenever developments in history or current events, or achievements in art, science, or other fields, are presented, the contributions of persons of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, or transgender persons, particularly prominent persons, should be included and discussed when it is historically accurate to do so.
3. **Proportion of portrayals.** Instructional materials containing references to, or illustrations of, people must portray accurately, to the extent possible, the roles and contributions of a fair proportion of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
4. **Roles.** The presentation of persons of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, or transgender identity, in instructional materials should not be significantly different from the portrayal of people of other sexual orientations and gender identities.
5. **Emotions.** Materials should not convey the impression that persons of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, or transgender identity, are any different from other people in their emotions or their ability to love and be loved.
6. **Socioeconomic settings.** Persons of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, or transgender identity, should be depicted in the same range of socio-economic settings as are people of other sexual orientations and gender identities.

### **D. Older Persons and the Aging Process–State Board of Education Policy, July 12, 1979**

1. **Adverse reflection.** Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize older persons are prohibited.
2. **Proportion of portrayals.** Instructional materials containing references to, or illustrations of, usual human activities must include older persons except as limited by accuracy or special purpose.
3. **Roles.** The presentation of older persons in instructional materials should not be significantly different from the portrayal of people of other age groups except as is necessary to identify them as older persons.
4. **Aging process.** When appropriate, the aging process should be pictured as a continuous process spanning an entire lifetime.

### **E. People with Disabilities– E.C. 50501, 60040(b), 60044(a)**

1. **Adverse reflection.** Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize disabled persons are prohibited.
2. **Proportion of portrayals.** Instructional materials that depict a broad range of human activities must include some representations of people with disabilities except as limited by special purpose or the need for accuracy.
3. **Roles.** The presentation of people with disabilities in instructional materials should not be significantly different from the portrayal of nondisabled persons except as is necessary to identify them as people with disabilities.
4. **Emotions.** Materials should not convey the impression that people with disabilities are any different from other people in their emotions or their ability to love and be loved.
5. **Achievements.** When developments in history or current events or achievements in art, science, or any other field are presented, the contributions of people with disabilities must be included when it is appropriate and historically accurate to do so.

### **F. Entrepreneur and Labor–E.C. 60040(c), 60044(a)**

1. **Adverse reflection.** References or labels that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize any persons engaged in any particular occupation or vocation, whether essentially entrepreneur, management, or labor, are prohibited.
2. **Roles.** Accurate reference should be made to the role and contribution of the entrepreneur and labor in the total development of California and the United States.



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## **G. Religion—E.C. 50501, 60044(a) and Subsection (b)**

1. **Adverse reflection.** No religious belief or practice may be held up to ridicule and no religious group may be portrayed as inferior.
2. **Indoctrination.** Any explanation or description of a religious belief or practice should be presented in a manner that does not encourage or discourage belief or indoctrinate the student in any particular religious belief.
3. **Diversity.** When religion is discussed or depicted, portrayals of contemporary American society should reflect religious diversity.

## **H. Ecology and the Environment—E.C. 60041(a)**

1. **Ecology.** The interdependence of people and their environment should be represented.
2. **Environmental protection.** People's responsibilities for creating and protecting a healthy environment should be emphasized.
3. **Resource use.** Wise use of natural resources should be encouraged. Instructional materials should never depict, encourage, or condone waste of resources except as necessary to illustrate a point.

## **I. Dangerous Substances—E.C. 60041(b)**

1. **Discouragement of use.** The use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, or restricted dangerous drugs, except as prescribed by a physician, must not be glamorized or encouraged by illustrations or text.
2. **Hazards of use.** When references to, or illustrations of, the use of substances are included in other than an incidental manner, such as a passing reference to a character taking cough medicine or a classic short story referring to "father's pipe," the hazards of such use should be depicted or pointed out.

## **J. Thrift, Fire Prevention, and Humane Treatment of Animals and People—E.C. 60042**

1. **Waste.** Waste must not be encouraged or glamorized.
2. **Fire hazards.** Unsafe practices and situations that constitute fire hazards must not be depicted (except for clarifying a point), condoned, or encouraged.
3. **Inhumane treatment.** Physical abuse of adults or children or violence against, or other inhumane or depraved treatment of, animals or people must not be depicted (except for clarifying a point), condoned, or encouraged.
4. **Thrift.** The practice of thrift should be encouraged through illustrations or text or both.
5. **Fire prevention.** Methods of fire prevention and fire safety rules in general should be explained and the use of such methods and rules encouraged through illustrations or text or both.
6. **Humane treatment.** Humane treatment of people and animals should be encouraged through illustrations and text. However, inhumane treatment that occurred in history (such as historical references to slavery or the Holocaust) should not be omitted or glossed over but should be depicted when it is appropriate to do so.

## **K. Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States—E.C. 60043**

The standards apply only to instructional materials for social science, history, or civics classes.

1. **The Declaration of Independence should be presented.**
2. **The United States Constitution should be included.**



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### **L. Brand Names and Corporate Logos—E.C. 60048 and 60200, State Board of Education “Guidelines,” January 13, 2000**

1. **Use of any such depictions.** Instructional materials shall not contain illustrations of any identifiable commercial brand names, products, or corporate or company logos unless such illustrations are necessary to the educational purpose of the instructional material and that purpose cannot be achieved without using such illustrations, or unless such illustrations are incidental to a scene of a general nature (example: Times Square, New York City).
2. **Prominent use of any one depiction.** These exceptions aside, if a brand name, representation, or company logo is illustrated, prominence shall not be given to any one brand or company unless, in turn, such illustration is necessary to the educational purpose of the instructional material and that purpose cannot be achieved without using such illustration (example: a Coca Cola sign in a foreign country, demonstrating the social influence of American corporations abroad).

### **M. Nutrition and Physical Activity—State Board of Education Policy, May 8, 2013**

1. **Variety of opportunities.** A variety of opportunities should be available for students to learn about good nutrition and exercise so that they attain optimal physical and mental development.
2. **Reinforcement through illustrations and content.** Instructional materials should appropriately reinforce through illustrations and content the benefits of consuming nutritious foods and exercising regularly. Illustrations of foods should emphasize the selection of a variety of nutritious foods that are low in fat, salt, and sugar and high in fiber. Depictions of foods that are of low nutritional value should be minimized.