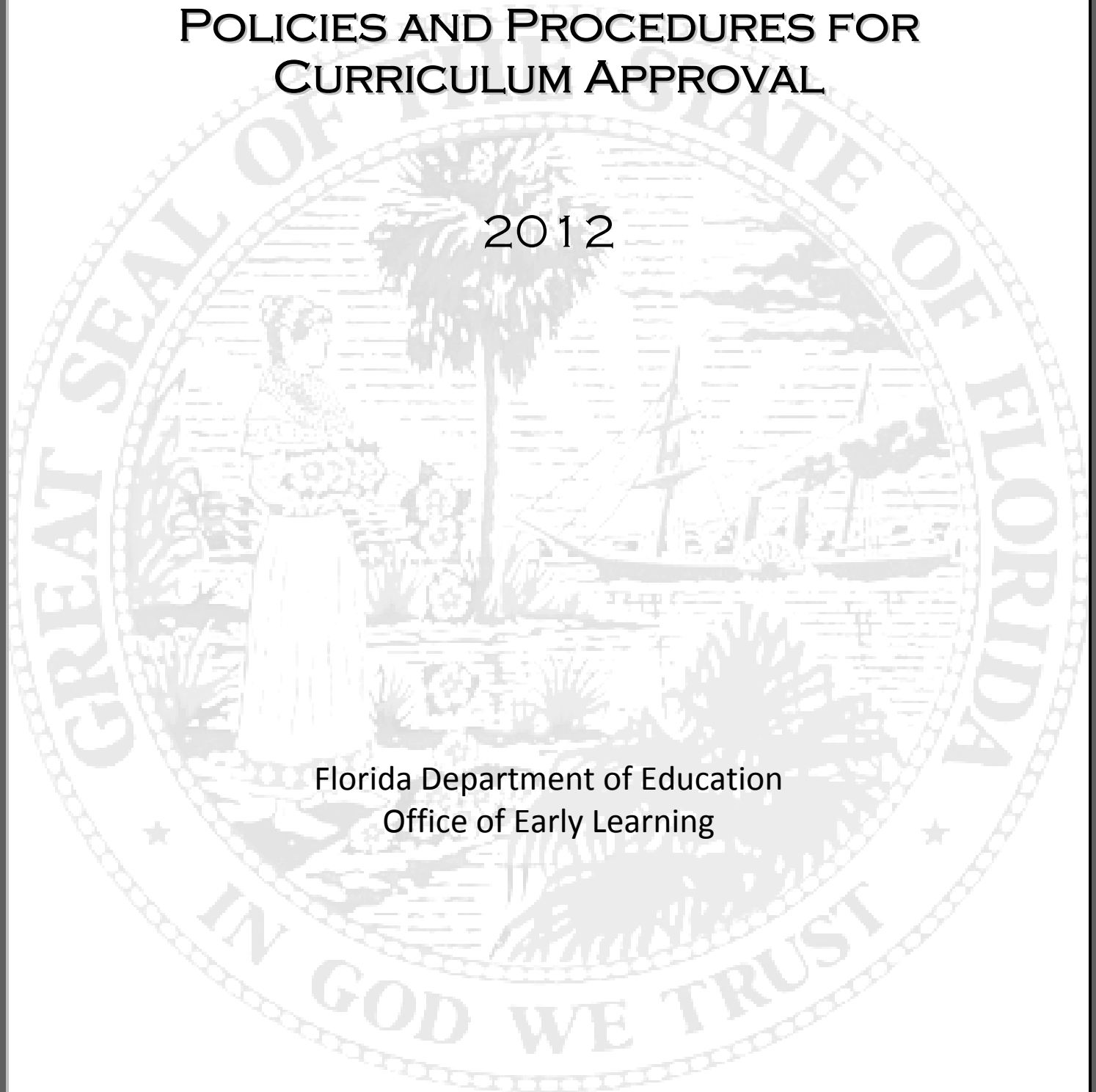


**FLORIDA VOLUNTARY
PREKINDERGARTEN (VPK) EDUCATION
PROGRAM:**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
CURRICULUM APPROVAL**

2012

Florida Department of Education
Office of Early Learning



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I. Introduction

The following policies and procedures have been approved pursuant to section 1002.67(2), Florida Statutes (F.S.), for use by the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program Curriculum Approval Committee (VPK Curriculum Approval Committee or Committee).

The legislation implementing the VPK Education Program requires the Department of Education (DOE) to approve curricula for use by private prekindergarten providers and public schools that are placed on probation as a result of their kindergarten readiness rates falling below the minimum rate adopted by the State Board of Education. The DOE maintains a list of such approved curricula.

The Department of Education (DOE) has developed curriculum specifications that align with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011) (also known as Standards for Four-Year-Olds). These specifications outline the criteria that the comprehensive curricula being solicited are expected to meet. The VPK Curriculum Specifications document incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-1.099825, FAC., may be found at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-01632>, and the Standards for Four-Year-Olds as incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-1.099823, FAC., may be found at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-00589>.

For the purposes of this approval process, curricula is defined as a set of written materials that

- is replicable
- addresses the use of materials, scheduling, arranging the environment, and interaction between children and adults either separately or in combination
- includes more than activity suggestions and more than theory and pedagogy
- is aligned with the standards approved for use in VPK classrooms (Standards for Four-Year-Olds)
- is aligned with scientifically-based research.

Only comprehensive curricula will be considered. In order to be considered comprehensive, the materials submitted must “stand alone” and cover the Standards for Four-Year-Olds in all five domains. If ancillary or supplemental materials are required in order for a given curriculum to be considered comprehensive, those additional materials must be submitted with the basic curriculum as a packaged set (i.e., “curriculum package”) and must be made available to providers as a complete curriculum.

This document contains information relative to the duties and responsibilities of each member of the Committee and each publisher submitting curricula for approval.

II. Relationship between Publishers and VPK Curriculum Approval Committee Members

A. Committee Member Agreement

Each member of the Committee must agree to the following terms and sign an agreement, (Committee Member Agreement, Form VPK-Curr1, Effective November 2012, incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-1.099825, FAC.), to be filed with the Department of Education, that:

1. The member will faithfully discharge the duties imposed upon him or her as a member of the Committee.
2. The member has no interest, and while a member of the Committee he or she will assume no interest, in any publishing or manufacturing organization which produces or sells instructional materials.
3. The member is in no way connected with, and while a member of the Committee he or she will assume no connection with, the distribution of the instructional materials.
4. The member is not pecuniary interested, and while a member of the Committee he or she will assume no pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in the business or profits of any person engaged in manufacturing, publishing, or selling instructional materials designed for use in the public schools.
5. The member will not accept any emolument or promise of future reward of any kind from any publisher or manufacturer of instructional materials or his or her agent or anyone interested in, or intending to bias his or her judgment in any way in, the selection of any materials to be adopted.
6. The member will not discuss matters relating to instructional materials submitted for adoption with any agent of a publisher or manufacturer of instructional materials, either directly or indirectly, except during the period when the Committee has been called into session for the purpose of evaluating curricular materials submitted for adoption. Such discussions shall be limited to official meetings of the Committee and in accordance with procedures prescribed by the commissioner for that purpose.

III. VPK Curriculum Approval Committee

A. Membership

Committee members are appointed by the Department and include, at a minimum, the following:

- Executive directors of early learning coalitions or their designee(s)
- Directors of VPK education programs
- Instructors of VPK education programs
- Representatives of a public school district
- Representatives of an institute of higher education
- Representative(s) from Florida's Office of Early Learning
- Other interested stakeholders meeting relevant, equivalent criteria

The DOE may also identify alternate committee members to ensure a sufficient number of reviewers.

1. *Credential Requirements*

Each member of the Committee must complete the DOE-approved Standards for Four-Year-Olds training and the Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors online course. Each member shall be currently employed in their representative capacity. In addition, the minimum requirements for each of the Committee membership positions are as follows:

- The executive directors of early learning coalitions or their designee(s) must hold a bachelor's or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Educational Leadership, or a related field, and must have held the position of executive director for at least two years. Five years of pertinent employment may substitute for the educational credential requirement.
- The directors of VPK education programs must hold a bachelor's or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Educational Leadership, or a related field, and must have held the position of director for a prekindergarten education program for at least two years. Five years of pertinent employment may substitute for the educational credential requirement.
- The instructors of VPK programs must hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, associates or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or a related field and have at least three years of experience as a teacher in a prekindergarten education program (public or private).
- The representatives of a public school district must hold a bachelor's or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Educational Leadership, or a related field, and have at least three years of experience in early childhood education, curriculum and instruction, or a related area.
- The representatives of an institute of higher education must hold a master's or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Educational Leadership, or a related field (doctoral degree preferred).
- The representative from Florida's Office of Early Learning must hold a bachelor's or higher degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Educational Leadership, or a related field.
- Any other interested stakeholders chosen must meet relevant, equivalent criteria to other committee members.

2. Removal and Replacement of Members

It is the responsibility of the DOE to ensure that all members of the Committee take an active role in the approval process. If a member is unable to fulfill the obligations of Committee membership, a replacement will be designated.

3. Reimbursement

Though no face-to-face meetings are anticipated, committee members will be reimbursed by the Department of Education at the state rate that includes mileage and/or airfare to and from the meetings, meals, and lodging, if such meetings are required and if funds are available. Travel and expense forms would be completed at each meeting for reimbursement of expenses paid by participant's sponsoring agencies.

B. Committee Training

The training may be conducted by webinar. All committee members must have a reliable landline phone and computer with internet access to participate. Virtual attendance and participation during one of these training sessions is mandatory for committee members. Committee members will receive login and conference call-in information. Only committee members may participate in the training, though it is open to the public for viewing/listening purposes. Interested public should contact the Department of Education staff via email (earlylearning@fldoe.org) to receive login information.

No additional training is planned at this time, but additional sessions may be scheduled by the DOE as needed.

C. Evaluation Process

To complete the evaluation process, Committee members will receive the following materials:

1. Evaluation Forms

The evaluation forms are based on the VPK Curriculum Approval Specifications document. The DOE will furnish an electronic copy of the evaluation form to each Committee member.

2. Curriculum Materials

Committee members are required to evaluate all materials and documents submitted as part of a comprehensive curriculum. Committee members are obligated to return curriculum materials if requested by publishers in a manner prescribed in this document (see Instructions to Publishers section).

3. Assessment Materials

The curriculum must include assessment(s) that teachers can use to guide instruction as required in the VPK Curriculum Specification (In Specifications document, see C.5.). As outlined above, assessment materials are submitted to committee members and the DOE.

4. Publisher's Written Correlation

The Written Correlation, showing alignment of the submission to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), prepared by the publisher, may be submitted on the form developed by the DOE for this purpose or may be submitted in a format determined by the publisher. The correlation assists the Committee members in determining the degree to which submitted materials align with the

Standards for Four-Year-Olds and/or intended outcomes of the VPK Education Program as required in the VPK Curriculum Specifications (In Specifications document, see A.1.).

5. *Scope and Sequence*

The publisher will submit their own scope and sequence document for each of the relevant items in the VPK Curriculum Specifications (In Specifications document, see A.2.a., A.2.c., A.2.e., A.2.g.).

6. *Skills Trace*

The publisher will submit three skills trace documents (one each for beginning, middle, and end of year) for each of the relevant items in the VPK Curriculum Specifications (In Specifications document, see A.2.b., A.2.d., A.2.f., A.2.h.). DOE has provided a sample skills trace template for publisher use, available on the DOE website: <http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/curric.asp>.

7. *Professional Development Plan*

The publisher will submit their Professional Development Plan, including any materials needed to evaluate the quality and completeness of said plan.

8. *Publisher's Presentation (optional)*

The publisher has the option of providing a recorded presentation for the committee member's review. If the publisher chooses this option, the committee member will receive the link for the recorded presentation. There is no penalty if the publisher does not opt to provide a presentation.

IV. Instructions to Publishers

A. General Information

Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program: Curriculum Approval Specifications (2012) includes information about the kinds of materials that are desired, the age-level and domains for which the materials should be designed, and research findings regarding effective and developmentally appropriate instructional materials.

Publishers should examine the *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program: Curriculum Approval Specifications (2012)* to determine whether they have products that cover the Standards for Four-Year-Olds and that represent a comprehensive curriculum or curriculum package as referenced in the introduction to this document.

The DOE will approve only comprehensive curricula that address the Standards for Four-Year-Olds in their entirety. Again, a comprehensive curriculum may include a single item or may include a number of items bundled together, which, when combined, meet the required standards. Submissions that comprise two or more independent, stand-alone programs are not acceptable for approval consideration.

B. Procedures for Submitting Curricula for Approval

Only comprehensive curricula or curricula packages will be considered. In order to be considered comprehensive, the materials submitted must stand alone and cover all five domains of the Standards for Four-Year-Olds, with particular attention to emergent reading and mathematical thinking (See the Specifications document, under A. Content for information regarding this). If ancillary or supplemental materials are required in order for a given curriculum to be considered comprehensive those additional materials must be submitted with the basic curriculum as a curricula package set and must be made available to providers as a complete curriculum.

Questions regarding these requirements should be directed to the Office of Early Learning, Suite 514, Turlington Building, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 or via email at earlylearning@fldoe.org.

Hard copies of all forms and documents required in this process should be mailed to the Office of Early Learning, Suite 514, Turlington Building, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399. Electronic copies should be submitted to earlylearning@fldoe.org.

The deadline(s) for receipt of necessary forms and submissions must be set by the Department and posted on the Office of Early Learning's website (www.fldoe.org/earlylearning).

The timeline must allow a minimum of 30 calendar days notice for receipt of the following: Intent to Submit, Publisher's Registration, and Publisher's Agreement.

The timeline must allow a minimum of 60 calendar days notice for receipt of the following: Publisher's Written Correlation, Scope and Sequence, Skills Trace, Publisher's Professional Development Plan, Publisher's Overview Document, and Publisher's Presentation (optional). A full set of curriculum materials will also be due at this time.

The Department will publicly notify the beginning of the curriculum approval process, using Florida Administrative Weekly and its website (www.fldoe.org/earlylearning). A publisher can request that they be notified of published deadlines by sending contact information to the Department via email to: earlylearning@fldoe.org.

1. Intent to Submit

Intent to Submit forms must be received in the DOE no later than the published deadline. The intent must be submitted on the *Publisher's Intent to Submit Form* (Publisher's Intent to Submit Form, Form VPK-Curr2, Effective November 2012, incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-1.099825, FAC.).

2. Publisher Registration

The DOE requires publishers submitting curricula for approval to register the names and addresses of representatives, agents, or other persons retained for legal or other services to which there will be paid any salary, commission, or royalty for representing the publisher in the State of Florida during the period of approval. The *Publisher Registration* form (Publisher Registration Form, Form VPK-Curr3, Effective November 2012, incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-1.099825, FAC.) must be received by the DOE no later than the published deadline.

3. Publisher Agreement

Publishers and their representatives shall submit to the DOE a signed agreement acknowledging and agreeing to adhere to Florida's Statutes as a standard code of ethics. The *Publisher Agreement* (Publisher Agreement, Form VPK-Curr4, Effective November 2012, incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-1.099825, FAC.) must be received by the DOE no later than the published deadline.

4. Publisher's Written Correlation

Publishers are required to provide written correlation to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds. There is no required format for the correlation document; however the entirety of the Standards for Four-Year-Olds must be encompassed in the correlation. The correlation assists the Committee members in determining the degree to which submitted materials align with the Standards for Four-Year-Olds and/or intended outcomes of the VPK Education Program as required in the VPK Curriculum Specifications (In Specifications document, see A.1.).

Publishers are required to send one copy of the correlation to the DOE. The correlation must be received by the DOE no later than the published deadline. In addition, publishers are required to send a printed copy of the *Written Correlation* to **each Committee member specified by the DOE** no later than the published deadline.

5. Scope and Sequence

The publisher will submit their own scope and sequence document for each of the relevant items in the VPK Curriculum Specifications (In Specifications document, see A.2.a., A.2.c., A.2.e., A.2.g.), no later than the published deadline.

6. Skills Trace

The publisher will submit three skills trace documents (one each for beginning, middle, and end of program year) for each of the relevant items in the VPK Curriculum Specifications (In Specifications document, see A.2.b., A.2.d., A.2.f., A.2.h.), no later than the published deadline. DOE will post a sample skills trace template for publisher use, available on the DOE website:

<http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/curric.asp>.

7. Publisher's Professional Development Plan

Publishers must submit a professional development plan that outlines initial and ongoing professional development that would be most beneficial for a VPK provider on probation that needs to use a curriculum with fidelity. The VPK provider may need to choose a curriculum for a summer program (300 hours) or a school year program (540 hours), so the plan may have variation for these two types of programs, if the publisher deems necessary.

Information about evaluative criteria for the plan can be found in the Specifications document. There is no required format for the professional development plan, but must include written narrative about the plan as well as any materials that are a part of the professional development plan.

The professional development plan and associated materials must be received by the DOE no later than the published deadline. In addition, publishers are required to send a printed copy of the plan and associated materials to **each Committee member specified by the DOE** no later than the published deadline. These materials should be bound together and packaged separately from the curriculum materials. Please clearly mark the package as *Professional Development Plan*.

8. Publisher's Overview Document

The overview document will be formatted and placed on the DOE's Curriculum Web page for all approved curricula, outlining approved curricula for low-performing providers. The Publisher's Overview Document must be received by the DOE no later than the published deadline.

The document should be no more than five pages. It must include only the following:

- Title of Curriculum Submission
- Logo for Curriculum Submission
- Contact information for those interested in purchasing the curriculum
- Cost for the curriculum package submitted (curriculum materials + professional development), **including how long the stated cost is expected to remain effective.**
- A detailed list of all materials that have been submitted for review (teacher's guide, manipulatives, books, assessment, etc.). EACH book/manual should include the ISBN number and publication date.
- A detailed list of all professional development that has been submitted for review, including format options (e.g., instructor led, webinar, etc.), if applicable (overview what professional development the provider would receive if this curriculum is chosen).
- The overview document must be received **electronically**, in Microsoft Word format, in the office of the DOE no later than the published deadline.
- The overview document may also indicate if there are materials that would not be needed for a summer program (300 hours). Exclusion of any materials may not substantively change the content, scope and sequence (items rated as outlined in the Specifications document). For example, if there are monthly book sets included, perhaps not all are needed, since the summer program is only two to three months versus a traditional nine-month calendar.

9. *Publisher's Presentation (optional)*

The publisher has the option of providing a recorded presentation for the committee member's review. If the publisher chooses this option, the committee member will receive the link for the recorded presentation. There is no penalty if the publisher does not opt to provide a presentation.

Each publisher or the publisher's representative will be allowed to present, via web-based recording. Presentations are not required and a publisher's decision to decline the opportunity shall not disqualify or penalize submitted materials from consideration. Publishers who would like to take part in the publisher presentations must do so by following the following rules:

- No longer than 30 minutes.
- Developed and posted electronically by the publisher or publisher's representative.
- Available online no later than the published deadline and available until the curriculum approval process is finalized.
- Open to the public, and DOE must have all necessary contact and login information for each scheduled Webinar.
- Recorded and electronically available to DOE, committee members, and the general public.

DOE will post links to the web-based recordings on the DOE website. The DOE reserves the right to ask questions of the publisher after each presentation. Publishers are reminded that paid promotional endorsements of their products by Florida teachers or other persons connected with the government of or direction of programs receiving public funds.

C. Procedures for Providing Evaluation Materials

Publishers and manufacturers of instructional materials, or their representatives, must deliver a full specimen copy of all instructional materials submissions to each member of the Committee specified by the DOE, as well as a copy to the DOE. Contact information for each Committee member will be provided by the DOE to publishers who have complied with all requirements noted above related to the intent to submit, publisher registration, and publisher agreement.

Publishers and manufacturers shall comply with the following instructions for packaging and delivering evaluation curriculum materials and related materials to Committee members.

1. *Curriculum Materials*

Publishers must submit for review all components of the comprehensive curriculum or curriculum package under consideration, including teacher editions. These materials must be in final form. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in rejection of the bid.

2. *Classroom Kits or Libraries*

If your submission includes a classroom kit or library with multiple copies of the same materials, please create a sampler that would include only **one** copy of each of the items. The Overview Document will specify the number of each item that would be included with purchase.

3. *Deadline for Receipt of Curriculum Materials*

All designated Committee members, as well as the DOE, must receive a complete set of curriculum materials by no later than the published deadline. The DOE reserves the right to disqualify any materials not received by the Committee members by the published deadline.

4. Checklist

The publisher shall prepare a **separate checklist for each member** of the Committee. The checklist **must** include the following information:

- publisher information (must be listed on Master List and separate lists in each carton)
- name and address of the Committee member
- master list of the exact titles with ISBN's for each item in the shipment. If a curriculum package or kit has been put together and has an ISBN different from the one listed on the bid form, **please indicate this**
- identification of all items to be returned, if any
- instructions for returning the materials, if required
- number of cartons in the shipment.

A copy of the checklist must be placed in the package with the *Written Correlation*.

A packing list in each separate carton of only those items in that carton, with exact titles and ISBN's, also are required of publishers. Acknowledgment of receipt of the materials should not be expected.

5. Packaging

The publisher shall

- package each submission separately; for example, if a publisher submits two or more curricula titles that will be sent to a Committee member, each submission is to be in a separate package (two or more packages may be placed in a large carton for shipping)
- clearly identify each item in the package with its ISBN and identifying title (i.e., make it easy for the Committee member to check items off the checklist)
- label each returnable item "to be returned"
- enclose at least one copy of the checklist; enclose a checklist in each carton of a multi-carton shipment.

6. Shipping Cartons

The publisher shall

- pack materials in durable, reusable carton; if materials are to be returned, mark the outside shipping carton "to be returned" and include a self-addressed label
- enclose a packing slip in each carton of a multi-carton shipment of only those items in that carton
- number the cartons; indicate total number of cartons in the shipment (e.g., 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3).

7. Delivery

The materials must be shipped by common carrier (UPS, US Postal Service, etc.). Use a service that allows tracking of delivery. Ship all curricular materials related to a submission at the same time. If an item must be shipped separately, a notice to that effect must be in the carton with the first shipment. However, the published deadline is for receipt of all instructional materials.

8. Return of Materials

Committee members are obligated to return curriculum materials **if the publisher has so indicated**.

Publishers who wish to have their materials returned must comply with the following:

- The publisher or manufacturer shall label each returnable piece of material. The label shall be affixed to the item and shall clearly indicate that the item is to be returned. **In the absence of the labeling of each returnable piece, Committee members will assume that the materials are not to be returned.**

- The publisher shall arrange for pickup of materials from the delivery site at the publisher's expense. Materials to be returned shall be shipped in durable, reusable containers with self-addressed labels and detailed instructions for return shipment to the publisher or manufacturer. The outside container shall be clearly marked "to be returned." **In the event the publisher or manufacturer fails to provide means for returning the evaluation materials, Committee members shall not be liable for return or payment.**

V. Finalization of List of Approved Curricula for Low Performing Providers

A. General Procedures

Unsolicited correspondence directly related to the approval process or materials submitted for evaluation received by any Committee member shall be forwarded to the DOE. It is inappropriate for publishers or other parties to contact Committee members regarding the approval process.

B. Curriculum Approval

1. State Approval of Materials

The results of the committee members' reviews will be compiled. The Commissioner of Education will identify curricula for approval from the list of suitable, usable, and desirable comprehensive curriculum titles reviewed by the Committee. The State reserves the right to reject any or submissions. It also may call for new submissions.

2. Disqualification of Submissions

The DOE may waive minor formalities or irregularities in proposals received where such is merely a matter of form and not substance, and the correction or waiver of which is not substantially prejudicial to other publishers. Minor irregularities are defined as those that do not have an adverse affect on the Department's interest and do not give a publisher an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other publishers.

C. Maintenance of List: Approved Curricula for VPK Providers on Probation

1. List of Approved Curricula

The DOE will maintain a list of approved curricula for VPK providers on probation on the DOE website. Listed titles will be linked to a document that includes information about the approved submission (all materials and professional development required), including ISBN numbers and publication dates for books.

2. Length of Approval

Curricula approved remain on the list of approved curricula until the Department finalizes a superseding list in a subsequent approval cycle. Curricula are approved for a minimum of three calendar years. If a vendor cannot support the approved curricula package (all materials and professional development required), the approved curriculum title will be removed from the list, even if within the minimum three calendar years of approval.

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**Pam Stewart,
Commissioner of Education**