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**Textbook/Instructional Materials Waiver Request:  
Blount County Schools (CommonLit 360: English Language Arts I, II, III, and IV)**

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**The Background:**

T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(9) states that it is the duty of the State Board, and the Board has the power to, “prescribe the use of textbooks and other instructional materials, based on recommendations of the state textbook and instructional materials quality commission, for the various subjects taught or used in conjunction with the public schools.” In addition, T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 provides the State Board with the authority to approve or deny waiver requests from local education agencies (LEAs) that wish to use textbooks or instructional materials that are not on the state-approved adoption list due to the unique or unusual needs of the LEA. The State Board’s Textbook and Instructional Materials Waivers Rule 0520-01-18 governs the procedures for LEAs requesting textbook waivers from the State Board.

Blount County Schools was granted an instructional materials waiver by the Department for use of the Commonlit 360 materials in English language arts (ELA) I, II, III and IV in 2018. This waiver is expiring ahead of the new ELA adoption cycle due to the statutorily-authorized one (1) year delay of the ELA standards review cycle.<sup>1</sup> In order to allow Blount County Schools to submit an emergency instructional materials waiver request to continue use of the CommonLit 360 materials, the Department of Education waived portions of the State Board’s instructional materials waiver Rule 0520-01-18 since reasons for the request fall outside of reasons listed in rule.

In accordance with the requirements of State Board Rules 0520-01-18, Blount County Schools then submitted an emergency waiver request to the State Board for use of CommonLit 360 for ELA I, II, III, and IV.

State Board staff requested subject-matter experts at the Department of Education provide feedback on the proposed waiver materials’ alignment to Tennessee Academic Standards. Based on that feedback, the other criteria listed in the Rule, and requirements of several state laws, the State Board staff developed the final recommendations.

**The Recommendation:**

Based on the subject matter review conducted by Department staff and the additional criteria described in the Rule, the State Board staff recommends approval of this item on first and final reading until the next ELA textbook adoption cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> The one year delay was necessary to ensure ELA and Math standards were not being reviewed in the same year.