

Textbook and Instructional Materials Waiver Request
7.31.26 Bristol City Schools
Great Minds Arts & Letters: Language Arts
with Sounds First Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum
Supplement (TNFSCS) and Handwriting Without Tears
ELA Grades K-5

Local Education Agency

Criteria	LEA Submission
The LEA's explanation of the unique or unusual needs that necessitate the use of the requested textbook(s) and/or instructional materials in the waiver application	“Our district is requesting approval to use Arts & Letters: Language Arts because it is a revised and improved version of our current curriculum, Wit & Wisdom. This allows us to maintain continuity in instructional approach while benefiting from meaningful enhancements based on teacher feedback. Our educators believe the improvements in clarity, scaffolding, and usability make Arts & Letters: Language Arts a stronger and more effective resource, ultimately better supporting student learning outcomes. Because our teachers are already experienced with Wit & Wisdom, transitioning to Arts & Letters: Language Arts will minimize disruption, reduce the need for extensive retraining, and allow us to focus on deepening instructional practices rather than implementing an entirely new program. The resource also maintains a knowledge-building, text-based approach aligned with our district's instructional priorities. In grades K–2, we currently supplement Wit & Wisdom with the Sounds First Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement (TNFSCS) to ensure strong

	foundational literacy instruction, and we will continue this practice if the waiver is granted. This combined approach allows us to fully meet the developmental needs of early learners. Additionally, we will supplement Arts & Letters: Language Arts with Handwriting Without Tears to provide explicit instruction in handwriting. This program will support handwriting development in grades K-5 alongside foundational skills instruction and will specifically address Tennessee cursive writing standards in grades 2-5. Arts & Letters: Language Arts also provides meaningful opportunities for students to practice both manuscript and cursive writing within authentic reading and writing tasks, reinforcing legibility in context. As students progress beyond the primary grades, this combined approach will continue to reinforce and improve manuscript and cursive legibility, ensuring that students can write clearly, fluently, and efficiently across content areas. This sustained focus on legibility supports written expression, note-taking, and assessment performance in upper grades, while also specifically addressing Tennessee cursive writing standards. Overall, Arts & Letters: Language Arts represents a strategic upgrade that preserves existing strengths while addressing teacher-identified needs, making it the most appropriate choice for our district. The pairing of Arts & Letters: Language Arts with our existing TNFSCS program and Handwriting Without Tears
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	will allow our educators to pair the best-in-class core with high-quality, evidence-based foundational skills materials while ensuring that all Tennessee ELA standards are fully addressed through a cohesive and intentional instructional framework.” - Bristol City Schools Application
Optional: Evidence of improved student outcomes or materials’ quality	N/A; The district did not submit data.

TN Department of Education

Criteria	Staff Review
The extent of the textbook(s) and/or instructional materials’ alignment to Tennessee Academic Standards and, if necessary, the extent to which the LEA’s plan would remediate any areas of misalignment	The content is aligned to teach standards for grades K-5 ELA based on initial and follow-up materials submitted.
How the LEA will address deficiencies identified by the Textbook & Instructional Materials Quality Commission, if applicable	N/A; The Textbook & Instructional Materials Quality Commission did not review the proposed materials.

State Board of Education

Criteria	Staff Review
The availability of state-approved textbooks and/or instructional materials for the requested subject(s) and course(s) and/or grade(s)	There are other approved K-5 ELA textbooks and instructional materials available for the duration of the extended ELA adoption cycle.
Compliance with applicable state laws (e.g., T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 related to Common Core and T.C.A. § 49-6-1019 related to Prohibited Concepts).	Yes, the materials were found to be in compliance.