
Textbook and Instructional Materials Waiver Request:
Bristol City Schools (ELA Grades K-5)
Knox County Schools (ELA Grades 9-12)

The Background:

T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(9) charges the State Board to “prescribe the use of textbooks and other instructional materials, based on recommendations of the state textbook and instructional materials quality commission” by approving statewide, subject-based textbook adoption lists for districts to choose from. However, T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 authorizes the State Board 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 referenced above if the LEA demonstrates unique or unusual needs. The State Board’s Textbook and Instructional Materials Waivers Rules 0520-01-18 govern the process and procedures for LEAs requesting textbook and instructional materials waivers from the State Board.

Bristol City Schools submitted a waiver application to use Great Minds Arts & Letters: Language Arts with Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement (TNFSCS) and Handwriting Without Tears as supplemental materials for grades K-5 ELA textbooks and instructional materials.

Knox County Schools submitted a waiver application to use McGraw Hill: SOAR! for grades 9-12 ELA textbooks and instructional materials.

These requests are related to an emergency circumstance connected to standards review cycles shifting from six- to eight-year review cycles, which impacted textbook & instructional materials contract durations.

Subject-matter experts at the Department of Education analyzed the proposed materials’ alignment with Tennessee Academic Standards. Based on their findings, other rule criteria, and multiple state law requirements, the State Board staff developed the final recommendation below.

Connection to the Master Plan:

This item supports the State Board’s strategic focus on Literacy and College, Career, and Military Readiness outlined in the Master Plan by providing approved materials to support strong ELA students who will be prepared for postsecondary and career.

The Recommendation:

Based on the process and criteria above, the State Board staff recommends the following actions on first and final reading:

District	Subject & Grade(s) and/or Course(s)	Recommendation
Bristol City Schools	ELA K-5	Approve until the start of the 2029-2030 school year, which is the next new ELA textbook adoption cycle.
Knox County Schools	ELA 9-12	Approve until the start of the 2029-2030 school year, which is the next new ELA textbook adoption cycle.