

Frequently Asked Questions about OSPI Recommended Science Instructional Materials

Question:

I learned today that the LASER Alliance my school belongs to is using materials that are NOT one of the three recommendations issued by OSPI. We have been using STC/MS for a couple of years now and it is not on the recommended list for Grades 6-8. What should we do?

Answer:

This is an important question. While OSPI was required by the legislature to make recommendations of "...no more than three curricula at the elementary and middle school grade spans, and no more than three for each of the major courses taught at the high school level...", school districts are not required to use the recommended materials. The final report that can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/pubdocs/PublishersNotices/K-12ScienceCoreIMRFinalReportFINAL.pdf>, includes the alignment results for all of the programs reviewed, including the STC/MS middle school program. It is not the role of OSPI to direct which curricula a school district may or should select, nor is it a state requirement for any district to specifically use the recommended curricula. *No one set of instructional materials matches the new standards completely; each one will need some augmentation, even those that are recommended.*

The full report is meant to serve as a tool that will support your district as you move through the process of fully aligning your materials to the newly revised Science Learning Standards. Please use the report in it's entirety when evaluating instructional materials. The report contains not only the content alignment but a review of the conceptual development of materials and reviewer's comments; all of which will be very informative and supportive to your process. This report may be seen as one resource to be used along with the other district documents, alignments and processes you have already developed to do instructional materials selections. Washington State science educational leadership has a great deal of expertise and knowledge in the area of reviewing instructional materials for their alignment with the Science Learning Standards and other important criteria, and is available to support districts undertaking this challenge.

Assuming that your district/alliance has completed a comprehensive review of the materials that you are considering, using objective criteria and that considers clear alignment with the new Science Learning Standards (using the resources mentioned above), it may make the most sense for your district to continue using STC/MS middle school materials.

Question:

My school district would like to purchase instructional materials that OSPI recommended that are not on the Washington State LASER list? Will Washington State LASER support these materials?

Answer: Washington State LASER is in the process of setting up a review of the three materials (*Science Explorer* by Pearson-Prentice Hall, McDougal Littell: *Science Modules* by Holt McDougal and *Foundations of Physical Science* by CPO Science) that are on the OSPI recommended list and not on the Washington State LASER list. After the review has been done, a detailed answer will be provided in response to this question.

Prior to this review, we would suggest that you take a deep look at the current instructional materials you are using in light of the OSPI K-12 Science Instructional Materials Review. If you find clear alignment with the new standards and the criteria you used to complete your review, it may be appropriate to continue using your current instructional materials. OSPI and LASER will continue to work in partnership to provide tools and resources for districts that will best support those materials on the recommended list as well as those currently in wide use throughout the state.

Question:

Will Washington State LASER continue to support instructional materials that are not on the OSPI recommended list?

Answer:

Yes. Washington State LASER will continue to support materials that are not on the recommended list at this time, assuming they are included within the LASER Instructional Materials Showcase. Remember the OSPI recommendations are just that – recommendations. In no way do these recommendations represent the entirety of curricular materials that can and should be used in our classrooms. A case in point, some materials that met the composite score of 0.7 were not included on the list because the law stated we were to recommend only three in each designated area. (*Lab Aids: Issues Series* and the *It's About Time: Earth/Life/Physical Series* are two examples.) Additionally, some materials found on the LASER list have been reviewed as a part of the Supplemental Materials Review. Alignment information for K-12 supplemental materials can be found on the K-12 Science Instructional Materials Review web page at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/pubdocs/PublishersNotices/ScienceSupplementalReviewReport9-10-09FINAL.pdf>. OSPI intends to continue supporting districts to implement the science program that they are currently using, whether or not they are on the recommendation list.