SIMRA

State Instructional Materials Review Association

Utah State Report 2014

I. **Subject Areas of Last Year's Adoption:** All subject areas are reviewed annually in Utah. There is continued interest in Utah (Common) Core materials, as well as digital resources and Open Education Resources.

II. **Subject Areas of Current/Next Year's Adoption:** All subject areas will again be reviewed.

III. **Allocation/Funding for Instructional Materials:** Funding decisions are made at the district level. Utah is a recommendation state, rather than an adoption state. Each district or school may make purchases as they choose, even though most use the state produced, online recommended list published on line at http://delleat.schools.utah.gov/rims/index.html .

IV. **Challenges/Issues Faced This Year:**
Finding resources for the Utah Core continues to be an issue. While there were a few more coming from publishers, there are still only a small number of exceptional materials available. The state office of education has coordinated efforts to produce Open Education Resources that can be used and modified at the local level to meet core standards.

The proliferation of tablets, laptops, and mobile devices has caused some concern as teachers attempt to find applications that are universally accessible. Some schools have piloted use of a single brand of device while others are trying to prepare and develop “Bring Your Own Device” policies. As we move toward the goal of one device per student, we continue to search for digital curriculum that is accessible to all students.

Utah has contracted with the American Institute for Research (AIR) to develop computer adaptive testing in mathematics and language arts. Testing with this system has now begun. This test focuses on standards and objectives in the Utah Core. More emphasis is being placed on finding high quality core materials that will best prepare students to pass these exams and be college and career ready.

V. **Format (print/digital) initiatives in your state?**

Revision of the Utah Technology Core emphasizes the need for every student to possess a digital device for learning.

a. If yes, how is that impacting the state process? We are encouraging publishers to send us digital materials as well as hard copies of curriculum for evaluation. More and more digital samples are being sent to us for review. Login procedures allowing adequate access to online programs has been problematic. There are still multiple technical issues to be overcome to make materials easily accessible in digital format.

b. If yes, describe case study/pilots and highlight the number and types of digital titles

   About a third of the titles reviewed were in digital format. There were full courseware titles as well as numerous supplemental titles reviewed. Supplemental titles must correlate well with a significant number of standards in order to be considered through the review process.

c. If yes, reference challenges mentioned by district and state

   One of the big challenges is to find common formats so that any electronic device can be used. Some publishers, and schools as well, have allied themselves to particular brands of technology which lock in resources that work only on that particular brand.

   Of course, it is a big challenge to acquire the hardware to be used to access digital curriculum. Some schools and districts are providing the resources to students through grand funding, while others are initiating "bring your own device" procedures. It is not yet clear which is the better way to go.

   Another issue that relates to digital courseware is the huge number of resources available, much of which has not been organized into courses of study. We have felt a need to provide reviews of these materials, but have had to limit our evaluation to materials that apply to a significant portion of the core objectives for a course. We have begun efforts to provide links on our website to known resources that evaluate materials, such as apps, that are widely used by schools, even though we do not review them in our normal process.

   The online database (RIMS) that displays recommended titles is currently under rewrite and new collaborative processes for review are being considered. It is anticipated that links to Utah reviews will soon be available in the Learning Registry and that links to other state recommended lists will be established.

VI. Significant Legislative or Policy Changes/Issues Affecting Instructional

Materials:
Materials submitted for review in Utah have to provide alignments to the core for through an independent reviewer.

Legislation in the state requires attention to variety of issues. Utahns continue to be sensitive to curriculum that is not in line with the fundamental values of the majority of citizens in the state. There has been vigilance on the part of the legislature and political interest groups to see that these values are supported and that children receive appropriate instruction at appropriate age levels. Materials submitted by publishers are scrutinized carefully so as to insure compliance with state and community standards.

Efforts are being made to better coordinate content with pedagogy and assessment. Movements toward the evaluation of teachers and the performance of students have put added emphasis on the content and quality of instructional materials.

VII. Future Subject Areas of Adoption/Changes to Cycle, if any:

There is continued interest in materials that closely align to the Utah core standards. Language arts, mathematics, and science materials that correlate well with the core standards are needed. Instructors in all subject areas continue to look for well-aligned materials as they held increasingly accountable for student learning.

Utah is rapidly moving toward the use of technology in instruction.
There is an increasing movement toward the use of Open Education Resources. Review of all educational materials will continue to have a high priority in providing the very best educational experience for students in Utah. There is particular interest in materials that that can be adapted to fit into individual teaching and learning styles. We will continue to examine instructional materials annually, with academic titles being reviewed in the fall of each year and career and technical education resources reviewed in the spring.