NATIONAL

Patterns in Textbook Selection

	BIOLOGY	HISTORY	SCIENCE	READING	MATH
65-66	28.27%	13.76%	27.77%	14.62%	32.37%
64-65	22.00	22.39	23.08	18.11	25.69
63-64	19.08	20.00	16.71	19.75	17.91
62-63	8.74	17.00	11.97	16.21	9.32
Prior	20.85	26.84	20.48	31.32	14.75

REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT ADOPTING NEW TEXTBOOKS WITHIN THE LAST THREE YEARS

Present text is good	31.69%	21.30%	18.05%	28.08%	19.37%
Present text weak—no new text better	5.97	6.96	6.23	4.60	3.96
Studying a change, study isn't complete	17.94	19.27	27.40	15.45	18.96
Reinforcing present text with supplementary materials	8.08	12.37	7.68	13.12	9.99
Adopt on a regular cycle, and cycle has not come up	31.55	35.56	33.47	31.57	39.34
School board budget too tight	3.16	3.20	5.12	4.94	5.45

day's teachers can choose from a variety of teaching aids, the textbook being one of them. Though it is still an important tool, it is no longer the only one."

The national picture

The national textbook purchasing picture appears quite bright. Almost 33% of all districts bought new math books this year, over 25% purchased science texts, and just under three in 10 bought biology books. In the past two years almost 60% of the nation's districts made a new math purchase, and about half of all districts purchased new general science and biology texts.

But this rosy picture is deceiving. Looking at the other end of the scale, one finds that better than one out of every five districts has not adopted a new textbook in biology or general science as recently as 1962-63. Better than four in 10 districts are using an American history book published before the assassination of President Kennedy. Three out of 10 districts are using reading books that are at least five years old. Even in elementary school mathematics, almost 15% of the districts are saddling their students with old books.

Are old books bad? Not really, though they do have certain intrinsic drawbacks. For example, a book published in 1961 was actually written at least two years earlier. It may have been edited and updated to the time of publication, but basically it is a book reflecting the state of our knowledge in 1959. Especially in the sciences, this is a dangerously long time lag.

But there is a more serious point to be studied