

OPEN

Patterns in Textbook Selection

	BIOLOGY	HISTORY	SCIENCE	READING	MATH
65-66	20.42%	17.20%	24.21%	12.67%	21.15%
64-65	25.26	22.37	26.70	19.69	30.56
63-64	23.58	26.67	22.62	21.44	23.72
62-63	13.05	15.27	15.38	24.17	13.25
Prior	17.69	18.49	11.09	22.03	11.32

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

Present text is good	42.66%	33.97%	26.39%	35.57%	33.96%
Present text weak—no new text better	9.09	8.33	6.25	6.71	7.55
Studying a change, study isn't complete	18.88	26.93	31.95	21.48	31.13
Reinforcing present text with supplementary materials	6.29	13.46	9.72	14.76	6.60
Adopt on a regular cycle, and cycle has not come up	21.68	16.03	22.22	17.45	18.87
School board budget too tight	1.40	1.28	3.47	4.03	1.89

here. *Why* didn't districts adopt new texts more recently. The answer to this question polarizes districts into three distinct groupings—those that are satisfied that their present texts are good; those that are presently studying a change but haven't come to a decision; and those that have not even considered new books because their cycle hasn't come up. The latter group must be the cause of real concern to educators throughout the nation.

For every subject, seven to 10% of the districts responding to SM's survey indicated that they had not considered new texts because cycling did not allow them to. In some cases this cycling was self-imposed—local board policies that say "once a book is purchased it had better remain up-to-date for five, six or 10 years because it's not going

to be replaced sooner." But in the great majority of districts it was due to state control of buying.

This control can take many forms but its general outline is the same: The state approves a single textbook or a few textbooks and the districts must purchase from this approved list. In some states, when a book, or group of books, is approved, districts must adopt—and purchase—an approved book that year. In others, once the approved list is published, it stays in effect for a given number of years and districts wishing to purchase new texts during that period must consult the approved list. In either case, state approvals are made on a cycled basis, restricting textbook purchasing by the local districts.

To see how this works, take this not-so-hypo-