

FAMILY ISSUE FACT SHEET

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Curriculum Transparency

SB 1357 schools; access; instructional materials; review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SB 1357 ensures parents have reasonable access to review instructional materials used in their child's school, including textbooks (print or digital), reading materials, websites, films, online applications, and online databases used for student instruction.

Arizona law currently allows parents to review instructional materials (A.R.S. §15-730), but onerous restrictions by school districts have made it difficult for many parents to access these materials. SB 1357 makes several changes to §15-730 to increase curriculum transparency. For example, it requires school districts and charter schools to create and enforce better policies regarding parental access to instructional materials and also clarifies that this includes digital and online materials.

WHAT DOES THE BILL DO?

SB 1357 ensures parents with children in district or charter schools have access to review the instructional materials currently used or being considered for use in their child's school. More specifically, upon written request and approval, a district or charter must make at least one copy of the instructional material available for review. Printed materials may be taken from the school premises for review for no more than forty-eight hours. All instructional materials must be accessible for review throughout the entire school year.

In addition, the bill requires school districts and charter schools to create and enforce policies that allow parents to review the instructional materials. The policies must designate:

1. A school employee or employees to be responsible for maintaining the instructional materials that are used in the school for the current school year.
2. The location at the school where the instructional materials are accessible to parents.
3. The process by which parents can submit a written request to access the instructional materials.
4. The method in which printed materials may be taken from school property for review.
5. The method in which electronic access is granted to review digital instructional materials.

The policies created must be included in the student handbook of each school, and made available in print or electronically to each parent annually at the time the parent enrolls the child at the school.

The school district and charter school must also create and enforce policies that require each teacher to submit a listing of their current year instructional materials to be used in their class to the school principal for review and approval.

The bill also provides a detailed definition of “instructional materials”. It includes “any of the following that are written and published primarily for use in school instruction and that are required by a state educational agency or local education agency for use by pupils in the classroom, including materials that require the availability of electronic equipment in order to be used as a learning resource:

- a. Textbooks, including digital textbooks or content.
- b. Mandatory and optional reading materials, whether digital or in print, including all lists from which students are required to select one or more reading materials.
- c. Websites.
- d. Films.
- e. Online applications used for student instruction.
- f. Online databases.”

TALKING POINTS

1. **Since parents are fundamentally responsible for the upbringing of their children, it makes sense they have access to materials being taught at their children’s school.** It should be reasonably easy to access the information.
2. **Current law providing for parental review of material is meaningless if parents can’t readily access the material.** SB 1357 breaks down onerous restrictions and allows more transparency. Everyone wants transparency.

CONCLUSION

SB 1357 ensures parents have reasonable access to review instructional materials used in their child’s district or charter school, including textbooks (print or digital), reading materials, websites, films, online applications, and online databases used for student instruction.