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California School Districts Aren't Waiting for a State List to Adopt Math Materials



By Emma Kate Fittes — April 18, 2024 3 min read



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San Diego

Districts in California aren't waiting for the state to put together its new math materials list before making purchasing decisions.

Instead, some are starting to adopt new curriculum and materials now, according to a new report from the [Center For Education Market Dynamics](#).

California, which has more than 5 million K-12 students, is gearing up for a math adoption year in 2025. The process started with the controversial new mathematics framework the state's education department released last year. Next, state education leaders will compile a list of approved education companies.

Approved vendor lists are typically an effort by states to streamline decision making for school districts, signaling that a provider's materials are aligned with state standards. Securing a spot on that list can put a vendor ahead when bidding for a contract with a district.

However, CEMD's report suggests math providers shouldn't wait for the selection to be finalized.

By tracking the purchasing practices of more than 340 California districts serving 64 percent of the state's K-5 students, the organization found that while the majority of those districts have K-5 math curriculums copyrighted in 2015 or before, some have selections with a copyright year of 2020 or later. Those newer copyright years indicate that those materials have been purchased recently, and point to an interest among districts in new or updated offerings.

"Those are districts who have made decisions in recent years choosing to skip ahead of the state schedule and get high quality materials in their classrooms today," said CEMD Executive Director Lora Kaiser, while rolling out the report during a panel she moderated at the ASU+GSV Summit in San Diego.

Thirteen districts moved to new instructional materials last year, she said.

"If [vendors are] waiting, you're waiting for the political cover of a list. Why?" asked Eric Hirsch, one of the panelists and executive director of [EdReports](#), a nonprofit that reviews and ranks the quality of instructional materials.

He challenged education vendors to rethink that decision, both because it could put a company behind the demand, and because the list may not actually differentiate a product from its competitors in the market. In previous adoption cycles, California lawmakers approved the vast majority of materials the state considered for the vendor list, Hirsch pointed out. If most options make the cut, he argued that means the list is not a signal of quality.

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