

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

DECISION ON AWARD FOR CONTENT TEXTS  
FOR THIRTY THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

AUGUST 6, 2007

Background Information:

On behalf of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, the Purchasing Department is requesting approval to award a contract to Harcourt Publishers, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL, 32887 in the amount of \$400,000.00, plus shipping, for Social Studies and Science Supplemental Content texts for thirty-three elementary schools.

Discussion:

Research shows that 80% of what adults read is informational text. 50% of the MSA reading test focuses on the ability to read for information. Currently, other than selective textbooks, the opportunity for students to engage in reading informational text at the elementary level is minimal. The Offices of Integrated Language Arts and Reading, Science, Social Studies, and Early Childhood Education have been actively working to provide greater student access to informational text along with increased teacher training in the strategies of content literacy.

As a part of the focus for this initiative, materials of instruction have been identified and their use was piloted at Joppatowne Elementary School during the 2006-07 school year. Subsequently, based on feedback from teachers and students at Joppatowne Elementary School, texts have been identified to support instruction in Science and Social Studies for Grades K-5.

The books selected are balanced for readability, alignment to national, state, and local standards, historical accuracy, support of diversity of viewpoints, and support for all learners.

Harcourt has worked cooperatively to ensure that Direct Instruction and Classroom Library materials will be available in needed quantities. Pricing is established by the publisher and materials are sold to all schools at the same cost per book. In this case, Harcourt has offered the entire Classroom Library package for free, and will be supplying class sets of identified books to each teacher. Harcourt will also be supporting HCPS in the professional development needed to implement this program.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve the award of the contract in the amount of \$400,000.00, plus shipping, to Harcourt Publishers for Grades K-5 content texts for all elementary schools.