

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
APPROVAL OF AWARD FOR ENGLISH RESOURCES
FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS
INFORMATIONAL REPORT

May 9, 2016

Background Information:

The Office of Curriculum and Instruction is requesting approval to award a contract to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishers, 222 Berkeley Street Boston, MA 02116, in the amount of \$147,058.70 for Eighth Grade English textbooks for five middle schools, plus an estimated amount of \$14,705.87 for shipping, for a total of \$161,764.57.

Discussion:

English textbooks currently in use are approximately fifteen years old. Replacements are no longer available to order, and the current textbooks do not align to the new Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. In order to replace the series with a new technology-rich curriculum, the Reading, English, and Language Arts Office is requesting funds for new materials.

The vision of Digital Harford, a Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) workgroup focused on digital conversion of classrooms, is that students and staff will “learn and lead in a digital world.” The mission of Digital Harford is to “create an active and dynamic learning environment using cutting-edge, on-demand content and seamless access to digital tools that will inspire learners.” To that end, HCPS reviewed materials in order to implement a program that would support students in a blended-learning model of teaching and individualized learning. The text we are recommending, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) *Collections*, is a digital text that affords students this opportunity.

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Collections* series provides digital and hard copy text for students and online resources for teachers. Newly developed to meet the increased rigor of new state standards, *Collections* includes complex texts—including more informational texts and literary nonfiction—which drive instruction in critical analysis.

Collections is a multi-modal program designed to meet the current standards. It includes both print content for instruction and application today, as well as all the tools necessary for a transition to the future of digital learning.

This program was adopted in 2014-2015 for English II in HCPS and in 2015-2016 for eighth grade in four pilot middle schools. This purchase would allow HCPS to have a consistent program in all eighth grade classrooms.

Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, eighth grade language arts teachers will participate in professional development, working to examine models for blended-learning, innovative

instructional strategies, and activities to address the needs of all students, including those with special needs. The new program will be implemented during the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve the award of the contract to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishers for English resources for five middle schools in the amount of \$161,764.57.