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## **Board of Education Withdraws Approval of Two Textbooks** ***Board also Approves New Textbook Review Process***

The Board of Education today withdrew its approval of the first editions of two elementary history textbooks published by Five Ponds Press. The books, “Our Virginia: Past and Present,” a grade-4 Virginia studies text, and “Our America to 1865,” a grade-5 United States history book, were found by a panel of historians last fall to include significant factual errors.

The board also approved a revised textbook review and adoption process that requires publishers to provide documentation that their textbooks have been reviewed by qualified experts for factual accuracy before they are submitted to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for review and the board for inclusion on the list of state-approved textbooks.

The revised process, which was proposed last month by Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright, requires publishers to submit with every book a list of authors and their qualifications and provide proof that at least three experts in the subject matter vouch for the text’s accuracy.

The new process also requires publishers to submit a corrective action plan to VDOE within 30 days if errors in a book are found. Once the corrective action plan is approved by the superintendent of public instruction – or by the board in cases of significant errors – publishers would implement the plan at their own expense.

The Board of Education also directed, in the event that Five Ponds Press submits corrected second editions of “Our Virginia: Past and Present” and “Our America to 1865” for review and approval, that the revised books be considered under the new state approval process.

The two Five Ponds books – along with grades K-3 history and social science textbooks from the Connecticut-based publisher – were originally approved by the board in March 2010. A review of the publisher’s K-3 books requested by the board in January also identified errors.

“The errors in these books do not rise to the level of those found in the fourth-grade and fifth-grade textbooks,” said Wright. “I am confident that the process approved by the board today will ensure that the inaccuracies are addressed promptly by the publisher and that students in schools using these books continue to receive accurate instruction.”

Regarding the K-3 books, the board accepted a recommendation from Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright that Five Ponds Press be required to submit a corrective action plan to address the errors.

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