

THE FREE TEXTBOOK PROBLEM IN KANSAS

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Development of the Free Textbook Idea	3
Findings	5
Table 1	16
Methods of Selection of Textbooks	17
State Adoption	17
Table 2	18
Table 3	18
District Adoption	23
County Adoption	24
Cost of Free Textbooks	24
The Cost of Free Textbooks in 227 Cities	24
Table 4	25
Table 5	26
The Cost of Textbooks for 1913 and 1928 Compared	27
Expenditures for Textbooks and Other School Supplies From 1930-'31 Compared for Certain Cities	30
Cost of Free Textbooks in Rockford, Illinois	31
Table 6	33
Table 7	34

The Probable Cost of Free Textbooks for Any School District of Kansas	35
Table 8	35
Table 9	36
Table 10	38
Recognized Advantages and Disadvantages of Free Textbooks	38
Advantages	38
Disadvantages	42
Care of Textbooks	43
Summary	46
Acknowledgment	49
Bibliography	50
Appendix	52

INTRODUCTION

The problem of providing textbooks and other necessary school supplies for the school children has cost the parents of Kansas large sums of money every year.

On account of the cost of textbooks and the frequent changes that are necessary to keep our school books up-to-date, it was thought advisable to make a study of the selection and adoption of Kansas school books and to state the benefits derived from a system of free textbooks.

During a depression such as we have now with so many out of employment and forced to economize in every way, this study becomes very interesting and is surely justified.

The textbooks for Kansas schools are now selected by a commission of seven, the majority of which are not school people, and textbook business is a commercial enterprise handled by the local book dealers. Parents who have not the means to provide textbooks for their children are required, by the Kansas school law, to make an affidavit that they are too poor to furnish the necessary school

supplies for their children before aid from the state can be obtained.

It is hoped to place the facts which we have found in our study of this problem before those interested in the schools of our state and to suggest methods that will be more economical, insure up-to-date textbooks for Kansas schools and help to establish a system of free textbooks in all grades.

Our materials were obtained by a study of the works of many writers on the subject by interviewing schoolmen who have had experience in the field and by use of a questionnaire sent to every state superintendent of public instruction in the United States and to the head of the schools of the District of Columbia.

The questionnaire used to gather the data for this study is shown in the appendix.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FREE TEXTBOOK IDEA

The free textbook idea is not a new one. According to Keesecker (8, p. 1) the movement for free textbooks for public school children began more than a century ago. Philadelphia furnished textbooks to the pupils of its

schools as early as 1818. Other eastern cities made similar provisions during the next fifty years.

The first state-wide free textbooks law was passed in Massachusetts in 1884. Maine in 1889 was the next state to pass a similar law. About one state a year enacted the same law until the end of the century. By 1900 twelve states had mandatory laws for free textbooks. In 1915 fifteen states had mandatory laws for free textbooks and seventeen other states had laws which authorized the establishment of systems for providing free textbooks. By 1934 twenty-five states and the District of Columbia had laws requiring free textbooks and in twenty other states it was permissive by law for local school corporations to establish free textbook systems. Furthermore, states which do not require or authorize by law free textbooks have laws which authorize the use of public funds to provide textbooks free for dependent or neglected children.

Sheffer (13, p. 9) states that at the present time over 12,000,000 school children of the nation live in states which furnish textbooks at public expense.

In a statistical summary of education by Foster (3, p. 5) for 1933-34, the latest year for which figures

are available, he gives the total enrollment for both elementary and high schools in the United States to be 29,358,859.

Therefore, there were about 17,358,859 school children living in states that did not furnish textbooks at public expense at the time this report was made.

FINDINGS

We tabulated the returns of our questionnaire and are presenting our findings in a brief form below.

Number of questionnaires that were mailed	. 49
Number of states returning questionnaires	. 31
Number of states answering by letter instead of filling out the questionnaire 11
Not answering 7

The following data were taken from the forty-two reports:

Number 1*. Number of states and District of Columbia reporting required free textbooks in elementary and

*The figures at the left refer to the numbers of our questionnaire.

high schools	20
Requiring free textbooks in elementary schools only	6
Requiring free textbooks in first six grades	2
Requiring free textbooks in first three grades	1
Authorizing free textbooks	8
Not answering	5

Free textbooks for both elementary and high school are required in: California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming. This makes twenty in all, that require free textbooks in twelve grades.

Free textbooks are required for the elementary schools only in: Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon and Utah.

Free textbooks are required in the first six grades in Georgia and Kentucky.

Alabama adopted a system of free textbooks in 1935 to be introduced gradually over a period of three years for the first three grades.

The following data were taken from the thirty-one questionnaires. The information from the letters is tabulated on page 15.

Number 2. The first state to establish a system of required free textbooks was Massachusetts in 1884 and the most recent was Arkansas, whose law goes into effect on July 1, 1937, requiring free textbooks in the elementary schools only.

Number 3. Reporting that free textbooks enhance teaching efficiency	17
Reporting no data	8
Not answering	6

Number 4. Reporting that free textbooks prolong the school life of the child	11
Reporting that free textbooks shorten the school life of the child	1
Reporting no data	6
Not answering	13

Number 5. Reporting that free textbooks do not take away pride of ownership	14
Reporting no data	12
Not answering	5

Number 6. Reporting that free textbooks do not discourage building private libraries	2
--	---

Reporting no data 5

Not answering 10

Number 7. Reporting that pupils show dislike
for used books 2

Reporting that pupils do not show dislike for
used books 5

Reporting no data 9

Not answering 15

Number 8. Reporting that no child, to his knowl-
edge, contracted a contagious disease from used books 21

Reporting no data 10

Not answering 0

Number 9. Reporting that books were destroyed
that were returned from homes where contagious dis-
eases had been 15

Reporting that books were fumigated 5

Not answering 11

Number 10. Reporting that free textbooks are
as well cared for as books owned by pupils 12

Reporting that free textbooks are better
cared for 2

Not answering 13

Reporting no data 4

Number 11. Reporting that there are not so many

failures under a system of free textbooks	4
Reporting no difference	2
Reporting no data	12
Not answering	13

Number 12. Reporting on the average cost per pupil for free textbooks in the year 1935-'36	8
Reporting that figures are not available at this time	10
Not answering	13

The highest average cost per pupil for free textbooks in the elementary grades, where all grades were supplied with free textbooks, was ninety-five cents in Massachusetts.

The lowest average cost per pupil for free textbooks in the elementary grades was sixty-five cents in the District of Columbia.

The highest average cost per pupil for free textbooks in the junior high school was one dollar and forty cents in Connecticut.

The lowest average cost per pupil for free textbooks in the junior high was ninety-five cents in the District of Columbia.

The highest average cost per pupil for free textbooks in the high school was two dollars and seventy cents in Louisiana.

The lowest average cost per pupil in the high school was one dollar and seventy cents in the District of Columbia.

Number 13. Reporting that state pays the cost . . . 9

Reporting that district pays the cost . . . 14

Not answering 8

Number 14. Reporting that state purchases books and supplies 5

Reporting that districts purchases books and supplies 14

Not answering 12

Number 15. Reporting that a system of free textbooks is not burdensome 19

Not answering 12

Number 16. Reporting number of pupils in the elementary school for the year 1935-'36 . . . 16

Reporting number of pupils in junior high for 1935-'36 12

Reporting number of pupils in senior high for 1935-'36 15

Reporting figures not available 15

Number 17. Reporting total teachers' salaries . 17

Reporting figures not available 5

Not answering 9

The highest figures given for teachers' salaries for the year 1935-'36 was \$91,093,360, by the state of

Pennsylvania.

The lowest figures given for teachers' salaries for the year 1935-'36 was \$1,392,938.37, by the state of Nevada.

Number 18. Reporting total cost of schools for the year 1935-'36 16

Reporting figures not available 6

Not answering 9

Number 19. Reporting that the life of a free textbook is five years 2

Reporting that the life of a free textbook is from four to five years 3

Reporting that the life of a free textbook is four years 2

Reporting that the life of a free textbook is from three to five years 4

Reporting that the life of a free textbook is from three to four years 2

Reporting that the life of a free textbook is three years 6

Not answering 12

Number 20. Reporting that the textbook commission selects textbooks for adoption 9

Reporting that the state board of education selects textbooks for adoption 8

Reporting that the district (city or town)

board of education selects textbooks for adoption	11
Reporting that county textbook commission selects textbooks for adoption . . .	1
Reporting that county board of education selects textbooks for adoption . . .	1
Reporting that state curriculum commission selects textbooks for adoption . . .	1
Number 21. Reporting that they have multiple adoption	14
Reporting that multiple adoption is permissible	2
Reporting that there is multiple adoption in some districts	2
Reporting that they have single adoption	4
Not answering	9
Number 22. Reporting that textbooks are adopted for eight years	1
Reporting that textbooks are adopted for six years	5
Reporting that textbooks are adopted for five years	14
Reporting that textbooks are adopted for four years	4
Reporting that textbooks are adopted for three years	1
Reporting that textbooks are adopted from one to six years	1

Reporting that textbooks are adopted without
time limit 5

Number 23. Reporting that free textbooks pro-
duce a tendency to use wornout or out-of-date books 3

Reporting that free textbooks do not produce
a tendency to use wornout or out-of-date
books 14

Not answering 14

Number 24. Reporting that there is no desire
on the part of their states to return to individual
ownership 19

Not answering 12

Number 25. Reporting that teachers favor free
textbooks 20

Not answering 11

Number 26. Reporting that free textbooks do
not deny an opportunity to study during vacation 16

Reporting no data 1

Not answering 14

Reporting that books could be borrowed from
school during vacation 6

Number 27. Reporting that free textbooks do not
represent undesirable paternalism 15

Reporting no data 2

Not answering 14

Number 28. Reporting that regular attendance	
was encouraged by free textbooks	6
Reporting that it was doubtful that free textbooks encouraged regular attendance .	2
Reporting that regular attendance somewhat encouraged by free textbooks	1
Reporting no data	7
Not answering	15

Number 29. Reporting that free textbooks furnish an opportunity to teach respect for public property	
	18
Reporting no data	1
Not answering	12

Number 30. Reporting that free textbooks tend toward equalization of educational opportunities .	
	3
Reporting that free textbooks save money .	3
Reporting that the free textbooks question was covered by the above questions . .	3
Reporting that free textbooks make a uniform course of study easy to operate	1
Not answering	21

Number 31. Reporting that there are no arguments against free textbooks	
	4
Reporting that books sometimes are dirty and unattractive	1
Not answering	26

The eleven letters received from state superintendents did not contain much data. One state has a rental system which is very satisfactory. The books are bought by the boards of education of the different districts and rented to the pupils. One state had free textbooks for fifty years and knew no other procedure. Books are paid for in the same way as teachers' salaries, fuel, etc. In two states free textbooks have been used many years and are very satisfactory. In one state the system had not been in operation long enough to state benefits or faults from it. In three states free textbooks were very satisfactory in the elementary school and they were expecting the system to be extended into the high schools. In three states where free textbooks are not required, the districts may vote to establish a system of free textbooks whenever they see fit.

Table 1 is a summary of the data on the status of free textbooks in the United States as given on the preceding pages and completed from work compiled by Keesecker (7, p. 69).

We thought such a diagram of materials collected and condensed would help to make clear our findings.

Table 1. Present Status of Free Textbooks in the United States, 1937.

			Free textbooks:			Who pays :cost?	Who selects :for adoption?	Period : years	Adopts	
			Required or: :authorized	Elem. :school	High :school				Elem. :school	High :school
Alabama	:	R	:1,2,3 x ¹	:	-	:State	: S. T. C.	: 6	: x	: -- ²
Arizona	:	R	: x	:	-	:State	: S. B. E.	: 5	: x	: -- ²
Arkansas	:	R 1936	: x	:	-	:State	: S. T. C.	: 6	: x	: ---
California	:	R	: x	:	x	:State ³	: -- ⁴	: 4	: x	: x ⁵
Colorado	:	A	: x	:	-	:District	: D. B. E.	: 4	: x	: x
Connecticut	:	R	: x	:	x	:Town or :city	: D. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x
Delaware	:	R	: x	:	x	:State	: S. B. E.	: 4	: x	: x ⁵
District of Columbia	:	R	: x	:	x	:Federal :district	: D. B. E.	:No date	: x	: x
Florida	:	R	: x	:	x	:State	: S. T. C.	: 8	: x	: x
Georgia	:	R	: x ⁶	:	-	:County or :district	: S. B. E.	: 5	: x	: -- ²
Idaho	:	A	: x	:	-	:District	: S. B. E. ⁷	: -- ⁸	: x	: x ⁵
Illinois	:	A	: x	:	-	:District	: D. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x
Indiana	:	A	:Rental system	:	-	:S. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x	:
Iowa	:	A	: x	:	-	:District	: D. B. E. ⁹	: 5	: x	: x ⁵
Kansas	:	A	: x	:	x	:District ¹⁰	: S. T. C.	: 5	: x	: x
Kentucky	:	R	: x ⁶	:	-	:State	: S. T. C.	: 5	: x	: x ⁵
Louisiana	:	R	: x	:	x	:State	: S. B. E.	:No date	: x	: x
Maine	:	R	: x	:	x	:Town or :city	: D. B. E.	: 3 ¹¹	: x	: x
Maryland	:	R	: x	:	x	:State	: -- ¹²	: 3	: x	: -- ¹²
Massachusetts	:	R	: x	:	x	:Town or :city	: D. B. E.	: -	: x	: x
Michigan	:	A	: x	:	x	:District	: D. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x
Minnesota	:	A	: x	:	x	:District	: D. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x
Mississippi	:	A	: x	:	-	:District :or county	: S. T. C.	: 5	: x	: x
Missouri	:	A	: x	:	x	:District ¹³	: -- ¹⁴	: 5	: x	: x
Montana	:	R	: x	:	x	:District	: S. T. C.	: 6	: x	: x
Nebraska	:	R	: x	:	x	:District	: D. B. E.	:No date	: x	: x
Nevada	:	R	: x	:	-	:District	: S. T. C.	: 4	: x	: -
New Hampshire	:	R	: x	:	x	:District	: D. B. E.	: -	: x	: x
New Jersey	:	R	: x	:	x	:Town or :city	: D. B. E. :District :decides		: x	: x
New Mexico	:	R	: x	:	-	:State	: S. B. E.	: 6	: x	: x
New York	:	A	: x	:	x	:State	: -- ¹⁵	: -	: x	: x
N. Carolina	:	R	: x	:	-	:District	: S. B. E.	: 1-5	: x	: x ⁵
N. Dakota	:	A	: x	:	-	:County or :district	: D. B. E.	: 3	: x	: x
Ohio	:	R	: x	:	x	:County or :district	: D. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x
Oklahoma	:	R	: x	:	x	:County or :district	: S. T. C.	: 5	: x	: x
Oregon	:	R	: x	:	-	:County or :district	: S. T. C.	: 6	: x	: x
Pennsylvania	:	R	: x	:	x	:County or :district	: D. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x ⁵
Rhode Island	:	R	: x	:	x	:Town or :city	: D. B. E.	:No date	: x	: x
S. Carolina	:	-	: -	:	-	:S. B. E.	: -- ³	: x	: x ⁵	:
S. Dakota	:	R	: x	:	x	:County ¹⁶	: -- ¹⁴	: 5	: x ¹⁶	: x ¹⁶
Tennessee	:	-	: -	:	-	:S. T. C.	: 5	: x	: x ⁵	:
Texas	:	R	: x	:	x	:State	: S. B. E.	: 1-6	: x	: x ⁵
Utah	:	R	: x	:	-	:County	: S. T. C.	: 6	: x	: x ⁵
Vermont	:	A	: x	:	-- ¹⁷	:Town or :city	: D. B. E.	: -	: x	: x
Virginia	:	A	: x	:	x	:County or :city	: S. B. E.	: 5	: x	: x ⁵
Washington	:	R	: x	:	x	:District	: -- ¹⁸	: 5	: x	: x ⁵
West Va.	:	A	: x	:	x	:District	: S. B. E.	: 5	: x	: ---
Wisconsin	:	A	: x	:	x	:District	: -- ¹⁸	: -	: x	: x
Wyoming	:	R	: x	:	x	:District	: D. B. E.	:No date	: x	: x

¹Free textbooks for grades 1 to 6 inclusive required in counties having between 105,000 and 300,000 population.

²May adopt for high school.

³Elementary textbooks printed by State Printing Office.

⁴State Board of Education appoints a curriculum commission which in practice selects books.

⁵Adopts a multiple list of 2 or more books and permits districts to select.

⁶Grades 1 to 6 inclusive.

⁷Independent Class A districts may adopt subject to state regulation.

⁸State Board of Education determines.

⁹County adoption is permissible upon majority vote of any county.

¹⁰Printed by state; sold at cost to local districts.

¹¹Unless by vote of people.

¹²County School Commission adopts for elementary grades; may adopt for high school.

¹³State subsidy.

¹⁴County Textbook Commission.

¹⁵Local school authorities.

¹⁶Independent districts maintaining 4-year high school may adopt and purchase textbooks.

¹⁷May furnish for high school.

¹⁸County Board of Education.

Key

R = Required
A = Authorized
x = Affirmative

S. T. C. = State Textbook Commission
S. B. E. = State Board of Education
D. B. E. = District (city or town) Board of Education

METHODS OF SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS

State Adoption

We find from a study of Keesecker (8, p. 8-13) and from our questionnaire that the following nineteen states and the District of Columbia have required state selection and uniformity of textbooks for both the high school and elementary schools:

California	New Mexico
Delaware	North Carolina
Florida	Oklahoma
Idaho	Oregon
Indiana	South Carolina
Kansas	Tennessee
Kentucky	Texas
Louisiana	Utah
Mississippi	Virginia
Montana	

In three states, Alabama, Arizona and Georgia, state selection and uniformity is permissive for high school but required for the elementary schools. In three states, Arkansas, Nevada and West Virginia, state selection and uniformity is neither required nor permissive by law for the high school but required for the elementary schools.

Tables 2 and 3 were used in pamphlet number 59 by Keesecker (8, p. 10) and contain valuable data.

Table 2. The District of Columbia and the States Which Furnish Free Textbooks and Have State Selection and Uniformity of Textbooks, the Title of Their Boards Making the Selection and the Period for Which Books Are Selected.

States	: Title of Agency which : selects textbooks	: Period of : selection	: Elementary : grades	: High school : grades	:
Alabama	: Textbook Commission	: 6	: x	: --1	:
Arizona	: Board of Education	: 5	: x	: --1	:
Arkansas	: Textbook Commission	: 6	: x	: ---	:
California	: Board of Education ²	: 4	: x	: x	:
Delaware	: Board of Education	: 4	: x	: x	:
District of Columbia	: Board of Education	: -	: x	: x	:
Florida	: Textbook Commission	: 8	: x	: x	:
Georgia	: Board of Education	: 5	: x	: x	:
Kentucky	: Textbook Commission	: 5	: x	: x	:
Louisiana	: Board of Education	: -	: x	: x	:
Montana	: Textbook Commission	: 6	: x	: x	:
Nevada	: Textbook Commission	: 4	: x	: ---	:
New Mexico	: Board of Education	: 6	: x	: x	:
North Carolina	: Board of Education ³	: 1-5	: x	: x	:
Oklahoma	: Textbook Commission	: 5	: x	: x	:
Oregon	: Textbook Commission	: 6	: x	: x	:
Texas	: Board of Education	: 1-6	: x	: x	:
Utah	: Textbook Commission	: 6	: x	: x	:

¹May select for high school.

²The State Board of Education is directed to appoint a curriculum commission which in practice selects books and has them printed and published by the State Printing Office. The books are distributed on requisition of the teachers.

³The State Board of Education is assisted by an elementary textbook commission and a high-school textbook commission.

Table 3. The States Which Do Not Furnish Free Textbooks But Have State Adoption and Uniformity of Textbooks, the Titles of Their Boards Making the Selection and the Period for Which Books Are Selected.

States	: Title of Agency which : selects textbooks	: Period of : selection	: Elementary : grades	: High school : grades	:
Idaho	: Board of Education ¹	: --2	: x	: x	:
Indiana	: Board of Education	: 5	: x	: x	:
Kansas	: Schoolbook Commission	: 5	: x	: x	:
Mississippi	: Textbook Commission	: 5	: x	: x	:
South Carolina	: Board of Commission	: --2	: x	: x	:
Tennessee	: Textbook Commission	: 5	: x	: x	:
Virginia	: Board of Education	: 5	: x	: x	:
West Virginia	: Board of Education	: 5	: x	: -	:

¹Independent Class A districts may select (subject to state regulation).

²State Board of Education determines.

Different agencies in the different states act as selecting boards for school books. The State Board of Education is the selecting agency in the following states: Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Texas and Virginia. The Board of Education is the selecting agency for the District of Columbia.

In nineteen states, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia, the state superintendent is an ex-officio member of the textbook commission.

In one state Florida the textbook commission is composed entirely of ex-officio members and is the same as the board of commissioners of state institutions.

In nine states, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee the governor is an ex-officio member of the selecting commission. In one state, North Carolina, the governor, lieutenant governor, auditor, secretary of state, treasurer, state superintendent and attorney general

are members of the State Board of Education and help to select the textbooks for the schools.

California has a state curriculum commission composed of the state superintendent ex-officio and 10 other members appointed by the state superintendent with approval of the State Board of Education, which selects textbooks for the public schools.

Kansas is the only state that has the state printer on its textbook commission. Arkansas requires one of the members of its textbook commission to be a lawyer. Oklahoma requires one of the members of its textbook commission to be a woman. Fifteen states require the majority of the textbook commission to be educators. Kentucky requires that the members of its textbook commission be college graduates.

In Arizona the president of the state university and principals of two state normal schools are ex-officio members. In Indiana the president of the state university, president of Purdue University and presidents of the normal schools are ex-officio members. In Nevada, the president of the university is an ex-officio member. In Utah, the president of the university, president of the agricultural college and dean of the state normal school are ex-officio members.

In four states, one county superintendent is appointed on the selecting board. In three states, one city superintendent is appointed on the selecting board. In one state, Indiana, three city superintendents are appointed on the selecting board.

One state, Oregon, requires that the five members appointed on the selecting commission shall have been continuously engaged in school work in the state for five years preceding appointment. Tennessee requires that four out of the five members appointed on the selecting commission shall have been engaged in school work in the state for five years next preceding appointment.

Texas requires that none of the nine members appointed shall be engaged as professional educators. Mississippi requires one primary teacher, the high school supervisor, one elementary teacher, three members from consolidated school districts and one from the agricultural high school be included in its commission.

Two states, Mississippi and North Carolina, have two textbook commissions; one for the elementary schools and one for the high schools. In twenty-one states the governor is authorized to appoint members of the textbook

commission not otherwise provided by law. In three states, the State Board of Education appoints members of the textbook commission not otherwise provided by law. In Louisiana, the eight members of the textbook commission are elected from the eight congressional districts.

The following states do not have state adoption but provide for the listing of books by publishers with the state department of education: Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. The state constitutions of Colorado and Wyoming prohibit state adoption of textbooks. The states which do not have state adoption have either district or county adoption.

Local district adoption of textbooks is used in Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wyoming.

The following states have county adoption of textbooks: Maryland, Missouri, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin. States which have district or county adoption have different selecting agencies in the different states.

District Adoption

The district board of directors is the selecting agency in Colorado. The city or town school committee is the selecting agency in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The board of school directors is the selecting agency in Illinois and Iowa. The district school board is the selecting agency in Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Dakota. The city or township board of education is the selecting agency in New Jersey.

The city, village or township board is the selecting agency in Ohio. The selection is made from a list filed by publishers with the state director of education. The city or town school board is the selecting agency in New Hampshire and Vermont. The city or district school directors are the selecting agencies in Wyoming. The local school authorities are the selecting agencies in New York. The city or township school board is the selecting agency in Pennsylvania.

County Adoption

The county school commission is the selecting agency in Maryland. The county textbook commission is the selecting agency in Missouri. The county board of education is the selecting agency in Washington and Wisconsin. A specially appointed county textbook commission is the selecting agency in South Dakota.

COST OF FREE TEXTBOOKS

A great deal of research work has been done on the cost of free textbooks in different sections of the United States in both large and small schools. The comparison of the cost of free textbooks, with other expenses and with the total current outlay of entire school systems, has been worked out by research workers and all agree that the outlay for textbooks is the smallest of all school items. We will present several illustrations of this fact.

The Cost of Free Textbooks in 227 Cities

The Federal Office of Education (4, p. 54) gives the

following statistics on the cost of free textbooks for 227 cities within fourteen states and the District of Columbia for the year 1929 to 1930. The total cost for textbooks was \$4,000,000 or \$1.58 per pupil. The cities ranged from 10,000 to 100,000 or over in population and were divided into three groups.

First group 100,000 or more
 Second group 30,000 to 100,000
 Third group 10,000 to 30,000

The following tables were used by the Federal Office of Education to show the findings of the above study. The group of the largest cities shows the smallest cost per capita.

Table 4. Cost of Free Textbooks Per Pupil in 227 Cities With Population of 10,000 and More for 1929 to 1930.

Population	:Cities: Cost per pupil enrolled					:Total average:	
	: No. :	Elem. school:	Junior H. S.:	Senior H. S.:		cost per pupil:	
100,000 or more	: 29 :	\$1.17	: \$1.92	: \$2.63	: \$1.52	:	
30,000 to 100,000	: 70 :	\$2.21	: \$2.03	: \$2.87	: \$1.59	:	
10,000 to 30,000	: 128 :	\$1.34	: \$2.06	: \$2.87	: \$1.73	:	

Total average:
 cost in each :
 level of ed- :
 ucation : \$1.20 : \$1.97 : \$2.75 :

Total average:
 of combined :
 educational :
 levels for :
 all groups : \$1.58 :

Table 5. Percent of Free Textbook Cost is of Instructional Expenditure and of Total Current Expense in 227 Cities of 10,000 Population and More for 1929-1930.

Cities		Percent textbook cost of instructional cost					Percent textbook cost of combined levels of education	
Population	No.	Elem. school	Junior H. S.	Senior H. S.	Total			
100,000 or more	29	1.90	2.00	1.80	1.90		1.10	
30,000 to 100,000	70	1.70	2.00	2.40	2.00		1.50	
10,000 to 30,000	128	2.10	2.40	2.70	2.30		1.90	
<hr/>								
Total average: percent combined in each level of education, all groups		1.90	2.10	2.20	2.00			
Total average: for all groups							1.50	

In this table, we have the cost of textbooks compared, over a large area, with other school expenses and find it a small percent of the total current cost of education.

The Cost of Textbooks for 1913 and 1928 Compared

By a comparison of the cost of textbooks for 1913 and 1928 with other school expenses in the same years, we again see that the textbook cost is a very small percent of the other school expenditures.

Monahan (9, p. 66-7) shows that the National Bureau of Education obtained data from forty-three textbook publishers in 1913 relative to their total sales of textbooks. These forty-three publishers handle about ninety-nine percent of the textbook business in the United States.

Their reports show that the sales of textbooks for both elementary and high school for 1913 amounted to \$14,261,768.25.

Reimold (11, p. 262-64) states that in 1928 sixty publishers reported to the commissioner of education the total sales of textbooks for that year to be \$49,000,000. Of this amount \$10,000,000 were spent for college books, \$35,500,000 for public school books and \$3,500,000 for books used in private schools.

The \$35,500,000 spent for public school books was divided into two classes as follows: \$22,500,000 were spent

by school boards in districts which furnish free textbooks. Parents spent \$13,000,000 for textbooks. But twenty-five percent must be added to the \$13,000,000 to cover the dealer's profit which makes a total of over \$16,000,000 paid by parents for textbooks in 1928. This is a fair margin in view of the fact that dealer's profit varies from ten percent in states where books are adopted for uniform use, to twenty-five or thirty percent in districts which make their independent adoption.

The amount spent for high school textbooks for the public schools in 1928 was nearly \$15,000,000 or about forty-two percent of the total net cost of textbooks while the high school enrollment was only sixteen percent of all the public schools. This is due to an increase of two-hundred-twenty-five percent in the high school enrollment from 1913 to 1928.

The total expenditures in 1913 for public school education was over \$522,409,093. In 1928 the total expenditure for public education was about \$2,184,847,200. Therefore the cost of textbooks in 1913 was two and seventy-three hundredths per cent of the total school expenditures, while in 1928 the cost of textbooks was only one and sixty-three hundredths per cent of the total school

expenditures but at the same time the cost of textbooks themselves increased one-hundred-forty-nine percent during the period 1913 to 1928. All other school expenses, in 1913 were thirty-six times the textbook expense while in 1928 all other school expenses were over sixty-one times the textbook expense.

Thus, during these fifteen years of educational advancement the cost of textbooks fell short forty percent in sharing the same proportion of the total expenditures as it did in 1913; that is the proportion of each public school dollar spent for textbooks was forty percent less in 1928 than it was in 1913.

The difference in the prices of textbooks from 1913 to 1928 and in the relative total expenditures for the same period is due to the following facts: In 1928 there were seventy-five percent more textbooks bought than in 1913. Also the enrollment had been multiplied by one and one-third, the amount expended for free textbooks by two, the net sales of public school textbooks by two and one-half and the total expenditures of the public schools by four.

Another fact that must be considered here is that textbooks did not advance in price as other commodities

did during the war and post-war periods. Newspapers, magazines, novels, etc. advanced in price but textbook publishers were powerless to adjust themselves to the drop in money value. Many publishers had unexpired contracts based upon pre-war prices and often the receipts were less than the cost. In comparing current prices with pre-war prices it must be taken into account that the new books are better, more useful, more attractive and better suited to the needs. They are illustrated in color by artists of skill and reputation. Before the war, there was little color used in any of the textbooks except in the very lower grades, now arithmetics, language books, readers and other textbooks in the elementary schools and also many high school textbooks have colored illustrations. The new textbooks have numerous devices for guidance in study, suggestions for review and summarizing etc. All these things must be counted when comparing prices.

Expenditures for Textbooks and Other School Supplies
from 1930-'31 Compared for Certain Cities

Here again we find textbooks costing a small fraction of the school budget. Keesecker (8, p. 7) states that in the year 1930-'31 a comparison of the textbook expend-

itures and other school supplies with the current school expense for thirty-nine cities show that textbooks cost one and two tenths percent and other supplies one and seven tenths percent of the total current school budget. By 1932-'33 these percents had dropped to nine tenths percent for textbooks and one and two tenths percent for other school supplies--a total of two and one tenth cents out of the school dollar.

Another report by Keesecker (8, p. 7), for seven-hundred-twenty-eight cities of different sizes, gives that these cities were spending thirty-three and six tenths percent less for textbooks and thirty and three tenths percent less for school supplies in 1933-'34 than they did in 1930-'31 and the total expenditure for textbooks and school supplies for these seven-hundred-twenty-eight cities had fallen off three-million-nine-hundred-thousand dollars while one-hundred-fifty-thousand pupils had been added to their schools.

Cost of Free Textbooks in Rockford, Illinois

The cost of free textbooks in Rockford, Illinois is another proof that the textbook cost is the smallest item

of all school expenditures. Jensen (6, p. 31-33) tells how in 1921 the school district of Rockford, Illinois decided to take advantage of the permissive law in Illinois on adopting free textbooks for all the public schools in the district. The project was sponsored by the local labor union with the cooperation of the local school officials.

Before this plan was adopted in Rockford many pupils were without books because the supply at the book store was exhausted or the pupils neglected to get them; now every child is supplied with up-to-date textbooks through the entire twelve years.

The plan saves money for two reasons:

First: The books are used until they are worn out.

Second: The school can buy books at a twenty-five percent discount.

On the basis of the average number belonging it cost \$49,096.16 or five and eight tenths percent of the school budget to introduce the plan into the twelve grades or on an average of five dollars and fourteen cents per pupil.

The following prices show how much is saved each pupil by this plan in Rockford, Illinois.

Junior high school books cost per pupil:

Literature	\$1.20
English75
Mathematics60
Geography	1.52
Art36
Manual Art24
Music66
List price	<u>\$5.33</u>

When this list of books is bought by the board of education at a twenty-five percent discount it would cost four dollars.

Table 6. Initial Cost of Introduction of Free Textbooks in Rockford, Illinois.

	<u>:Elem. school:High school:School system:</u>		
Actual expenditure:	\$34,163.57	: \$14,932.59	: \$49,096.16 :
Cost per pupil :	4.44 :	8.01:	5.14 :
Number belonging :	7,648 :	1,863 :	9,541 :

Table 7. Percent of Budget Used for Textbooks in Rockford, Illinois.

	: : Cost of : operation	: Cost of : textbooks	: Percent for : textbooks	:
1924-'25	: \$1,000,658.39	: \$14,246.10	: 1.40	:
1925-'26	: 1,019,827.17	: 11,045.41	: 1.00	:
1926-'27	: 1,033,170.83	: 9,177.21	: .80	:
1927-'28	: 1,166,154.29	: 16,319.94	: 1.40	:
1928-'29	: 1,017,304.24	: 12,472.81	: 1.10	:
1929-'30	: 1,253,937.94	: 15,682.58	: 1.20	:
1930-'31	: 1,324,884.58	: 14,188.28	: 1.10	:
1931-'32	: 1,204,239.20	: 7,457.67	: .60	:
1932-'33	: 1,013,167.61	: 9,717.19	: .90	:
1933-'34	: 1,018,959.39	: 11,836.43	: 1.10	:

From table 7 we can see that free textbooks cost Rockford, Illinois a little over one percent, on an average, of the total school expenditures from 1924-1934.

The Probable Cost of Free Textbooks for
any School District of Kansas

Table 8. The probable Cost Per Pupil for Free Textbooks for any District in Kansas if Free Textbooks Were to be Introduced During One or Over a Term of One, Three, Four or Five Years.

Grade	One year	Three years	Four years	Five years
1	\$0.94	\$0.31	\$0.24	\$0.19
2	1.33	.44	.33	.27
3	1.91	.64	.48	.38
4	3.06	1.02	.77	.61
5	3.92	1.31	.98	.78
6	4.11	1.37	1.03	.82
7	4.70	1.57	1.18	.94
8	4.63	1.54	1.16	.93
9	4.38	1.46	1.10	.88
10	4.78	1.59	1.20	.96
11	5.58	1.86	1.40	1.12
12	4.80	1.60	1.20	.96
Total	44.14	14.71	11.07	8.84
Average per pupil	3.68	1.23	.92	.78

These data were secured from the 1936 price list of adopted textbooks.

The cost of replacement per pupil would be the same as the cost for the fifth year per pupil. The only way this could change would be by the number of textbooks changing or by the price of the textbooks changing.

We secured the data for table 9 from the state school enrollment taken from a report of the State Department of Education, Topeka, Kansas and from the 1936 price list of adopted books.

Table 9. The Probable Cost of Free Textbooks to All Pupils Enrolled in Grades One to Twelve Inclusive in the Public Schools of Kansas if the Cost of Textbooks Were Introduced Over a Period of One, Three, Four or Five Years.

:Number of:					
Grades:	pupils :	One year :	Three years :	Four years:	Five years:
1	: 39,384	:\$ 37,158.80:	\$ 12,386.27	:\$ 9,289.70:	\$ 7,431.76:
2	: 36,206	: 48,316.91:	16,105.64	: 12,079.23:	9,665.38:
3	: 37,871	: 72,428.29:	24,132.76	: 18,107.07:	14,485.65:
4	: 39,052	: 119,499.12:	39,833.04	: 29,874.78:	23,899.82:
5	: 38,300	: 155,178.55:	51,726.18	: 38,794.64:	31,035.71:
6	: 37,745	: 155,282.93:	51,760.98	: 38,820.73:	31,056.58:
7	: 38,885	: 182,769.59:	60,923.19	: 45,692.39:	36,553.92:
8	: 36,379	: 169,453.38:	56,484.46	: 42,362.84:	33,890.67:
Total	:303,822	: 940,087.57:	313,352.52	: 235,021.38:	188,019.49:
9	: 31,453	: 136,685.51:	45,561.84	: 34,171.38:	2,733.10:
10	: 27,163	: 129,757.65:	43,252.55	: 32,439.41:	25,951.53:
11	: 23,061	: 127,784.15:	42,594.72	: 31,946.04:	25,556.83:
12	: 20,734	: 99,583.53:	33,194.51	: 24,895.88:	19,916.70:
Total	:102,411	: 493,810.84:	164,603.62	: 123,452.71:	74,158.16:
Grand					
total	:406,233	:1,433,898.41:	477,956.14	: 358,474.09:	262,177.65:

The current annual cost of replacement after the period of introduction would be about \$262,177.65. We are figuring this on the basis that if all the textbooks used in the state of Kansas had been bought new in 1936, they would have cost about \$1,433,898.41. But we are spreading the cost over a period of five years, counting the life of a free textbook from four to five years and working on the assumption that not more than one-fifth of the textbooks will need to be replaced at one time. Therefore, the replacement would be about the same as the cost at the end of the fifth year. This is as near as we can estimate the replacement fund.

These figures show that a system of free textbooks would save the parents of Kansas over one million dollars annually.

The data for table 10 were obtained from our questionnaire. The information covers a wide range of territory and gives further proof that textbooks cost a very small percent of other school expenditures.

Table 10. Cost of Free Textbooks Compared with Teachers' Salaries and Current School Expense in District of Columbia and Eleven States During 1935-36.

States	:Percent of teachers':	Percent of total:
	: <u>salaries</u>	: <u>current cost</u>
Connecticut :	2.30	: 1.20 :
Delaware :	5.00	: 2.30 :
District of Columbia :	1.20	: .70 :
Florida :	7.30	: 5.00 :
Louisiana :	4.50	: 2.70 :
Nebraska :	4.30	: 2.20 :
New Jersey :	2.40	: 1.30 :
New Mexico :	2.20	: 1.00 :
Pennsylvania:	3.00	: 2.10 :
Texas :	4.80	: 3.60 :
Washington :	3.10	: 1.30 :
Wyoming :	4.50	: 2.70 :

RECOGNIZED ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FREE TEXTBOOKS

Advantages

Sheffer (13, p. 9-10) says those who favor textbooks furnished free to public school children maintain that

free textbooks are an essential element of a free public school. They point out that free textbooks are the result of the development of the free school idea. At one time parents paid the full cost of tuition, later they paid only part of the tuition and later still they paid no tuition but furnished lodging and board to teachers. At another time, they furnished fuel for the school and they practically always furnished school books for their children. They no longer furnish lodging, board or fuel but in many states parents are still buying school books. Attendance being compulsory, it seems only logical that the necessary materials for successful attendance should be furnished free. A school is not free if parents must furnish instruments as essential as textbooks before pupils can profit from their attendance.

A bulletin of the National Education Association (1, p. 143-144) states the following advantages of free textbooks:

a. Free textbooks encourage efficient teaching and a prompt beginning of each term's work. There is no need to wait for pay day or until the children can get to the book store or until a shipment of new books arrive. The books can be distributed on the opening day and school

work can be started at once.

b. Supplementary books are more easily secured where books are furnished at public expense. The best work cannot be done where only the basic text is available and it is almost impossible to get the parents to provide more than one book for each subject. If all books are furnished at public expense, the entire difficulty would be removed.

c. It is easier to change free textbooks than those supplied by the parents. Some parents say, "The old books are good enough until the children know everything that is in them". But antiquated textbooks cannot be used with the enriched and broadened curriculum and the continuous development in teaching methods.

d. The problem of dealing with indigent children is avoided when textbooks are furnished free. It is not fair to stigmatize a child as a "charity pupil", but unless textbooks are supplied to all the pupils the unpleasant distinction will be made. The practice of furnishing textbooks free only to children whose parents claim indigence is a relic of the old charity school concept of colonial days.

e. Free textbooks are easier to keep clean than

individually owned books. Soiled covers should be replaced by clean ones when necessary. They are kept in better condition than most second-hand books because they are inspected often by the teacher and fear of fine or punishment causes pupils to take better care of the books.

f. Free textbooks encourage regular attendance and regular preparation. They also furnish a splendid opportunity to teach respect for public property.

g. A system of free textbooks would be cheaper than our present system because books bought in large quantities do not cost so much as those bought in small quantities.

Sheffer (13, p. 10) also says it is often the case where a family has several children entering school in the fall that it must deny itself the necessities of life in order to supply textbooks for their children. The rearing of children should be made attractive rather than burdensome. The birth rate of Kansas has decreased during recent years. The census of 1930 shows that there were 128,000 fewer children five years of age and younger than in the five to ten class. The birth rate of 1933 was fifty percent lower than in 1915. There are not enough children being born in Kansas towns with a population of 2500 or more to maintain a stationary population.

Jensen (6, p. 31-33) shows since term adoption is not necessary with a free system, it is possible to keep the textbooks up-to-date.

Keesecker (8, p. 4) says most of the objections to a free textbook system are due to improper administration of the system rather than to the system itself.

Disadvantages

Keesecker (8, p. 4) says publicly owned textbooks are used with less care than individually owned books. Children should not be required to use books soiled by other children as they are objectionable to the majority of children and parents both from esthetic and sanitary reasons.

Keesecker (8, p. 4) also says free textbooks increase school taxes, impose unpleasant administrative and custodial duties upon teachers, interfere with instruction, discourage home libraries and deny the pupils an opportunity to study during vacation.

Myers (10, p. 167-169) points out that free textbooks are the property of the state in which one has no vested right. "Shades of Soviet Russia!" Books are passed

on to the next child and become to mean no more to him than the pavement or school bus. If the books were in the homes the parents would read them and be stimulated to a thirst for knowledge. Especially is this true of immigrants.

Monahan (9, p. 7) states that parents and pupils should be made to realize that they cannot become wholly dependent on the state, but must continue to assume some of the responsibility of education.

CARE OF FREE TEXTBOOKS

We realize that free textbooks without proper administration would be a failure and we find that every state has some rules governing the care of the books.

Schultz (12, p. 280) makes the following suggestions on the care of free textbooks: The only books that should be distributed among the pupils are those which have an appearance worthy of respect. Every book that a child is given should show that it has been cared for properly. The proper care of books may be taught in many ways.

The interest the teacher takes toward books influences the pupils. Careful instruction as to opening new books

should be given. Corners of pages should not be turned down to mark places in the book. There should be a periodic examination of the inside front, back cover and fly leaves by the teacher. Books should be covered and the covers changed often to keep them presentable.

A system of fines and penalties may be set up for misuse of books but these are hard to collect without stirring up illwill in the community.

When a book contains two years' work, as for example a geography may contain fourth grade work and also fifth grade work, it should follow the pupil to the next grade to be used by him. This makes use of all the book instead of one part being used twice. When pupils are promoted they should take with them the books that they will use in the grade to which they are promoted. This calls for almost a personal consideration of each pupil's books and each teacher should have room for books under her jurisdiction. The teacher who is to have these pupils will have care of the books. Each pupil's books should be identified by number or name slip. When a pupil is through with a book it should be made presentable. All marks should be erased and mending tissue used where necessary.

All books should be classified at the end of the

school year as unfit, poor, fair or good. The unfit and poor books should be replaced. The fair and good books should be given to other pupils.

A book inventory accounting for the books in question will involve the following items:

1. The annual inventory of books on hand.
2. Requisitioning or ordering additional books from the central warehouse or the publishers.
3. Receiving, recording, stamping and labeling the books ordered.
4. Supervising the distribution of new books to teachers; including the charging the books to teachers to whom distributed.
5. Planning the program of moving books along with children at promotion time.
6. Planning for books to be sent back to the beginning of a new use-cycle.
7. Supervision of the assembling of the books listed under No. 6, their conditioning, sorting, and re-allocation, also disposal of the poor and unfit books.
8. Changing the inventory records as occasioned by items 3, 4 and 7.
9. Making requests for replacements and additional new books from the central warehouse, or ordering directly from publishers.

A record of the books should contain:

1. A teacher's record card of all books charged to her.
 - (a) Books on hand at the beginning of the term or year.

- (b) Books received during the term or year.
- (c) Books transferred during the term or year.
- (d) Books released during the term or year.
- (e) Books lost during the term or year.
- (f) Books on hand at the end of the term or year.

2. A title card for each book showing the distribution of the books throughout the various rooms. These title cards should be on file in the office.

3. Request blanks for use within a school--by which teachers can indicate needs.

Some systems have a central textbook store room but compared to the above plan is only a waste of energy.

SUMMARY

1. Since education is a function of the state, the state should furnish the textbooks and other necessary supplies by which education is made possible. Only up-to-date textbooks should be used in our schools.

2. Every state has laws affecting selection and adoption of textbooks.

3. The free textbook movement began in Massachusetts in 1818.

4. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia furnish free textbooks in both elementary and high school grades.

5. Six states furnish free textbooks in the elementary grades.

6. Two states furnish free textbooks in the first six grades.

7. One state furnishes free textbooks in the first three grades.

8. Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have state selection and uniformity of textbooks.

9. The item of free textbooks purchased by the boards of education is the smallest item making up the public school outlay.

10. The larger the enrollment unit, the smaller will be the cost per capita for free textbooks.

11. The new books are better, more useful, more attractive, and many are illustrated in color. These things must be considered when figuring the cost.

12. In communities where there is a diversity of social customs and interest, a multiple list of textbooks should be adopted for each subject.

13. The arguments in favor of free textbooks out-

weigh the arguments against them.

14. If free textbooks were introduced into Kansas over a period of five years it would cost about \$262,177.65 annually to replace the books. This would save the parents of the state over \$1,000,000.00 annually.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire Used to Gather Data

1. Does your state furnish free textbooks to the pupils of the public schools?

2. When did your state adopt the system of free textbooks?

3. Do free textbooks enhance the efficiency of the teaching in the public schools? If so, how?

4. Do free textbooks prolong the school life of the child?

5. To what extent, if any, do free textbooks take away the pride of personal ownership, which might come through having privately bought the books?

6. Do you find that the system of free textbooks discourages the building of private libraries in the homes of the pupils?

7. In what way, if any, do pupils show their dislike for used books?

8. To your knowledge, has any child contracted a disease by using books that were used by other children?

9. What do you do with books which were returned to school from homes where there were contagious diseases?
10. Are the books as well cared for as books owned by the pupils?
11. Do as many fail in a system of free textbooks as do where the pupils own their books?
12. What was the average cost per pupil of your state for textbooks for the year 1935-1936 in:
- a. Elementary school?
 - b. Junior high school?
 - c. High school?
13. Who pays the cost:
- a. The state?
 - b. The school district?
14. Does the state purchase the books and supply them to the school districts?
15. Is the free textbook system noticeably burdensome financially?
16. Please state the number of pupils in school for the year 1935-1936 in:
- a. Elementary school
 - b. Junior high school
 - c. High school
17. State total teachers' salary for the 1935-1936:
- a. Elementary school
 - b. Junior high school
 - c. High school
18. State total cost of schools for year 1935-1936.

19. What is the life of a free textbook?

20. Who selects the bextbooks for adoption?

21. Do you have single or multiple adoption?

22. For how long are the textbooks adopted?

23. Does the system of free textbooks in your schools seem to produce a tendency to use worn out or out-of-date books?

24. Is there any desire on the part of your state to return to individual ownership of textbooks?

25. Do the teachers of your schools favor free textbooks?

26. Do you think a system of free textbooks denies pupils an opportunity to study during vacation?

27. Do free textbooks represent undesirable state paternalism?

28. Is regular attendance encouraged by the use of free textbooks?

29. Does the system of free textbooks furnish opportunity to teach respect for public property?

30. Please state other benefits that you know to come from free textbooks.

31. Please state any other arguments you can against free textbooks.