



SB 207 Schools of Innovation & Instructional Materials

What the Bill Does

- **Schools of Innovation**
 - **Waiver Request Process:** Districts can request three-year waivers from some state regulations or laws to improve student achievement and/or program operations.
 - **Teacher Certification:** Waivers can allow non-certified teachers to make up 25% of staff if they have formal preparation in the content area.
 - **Schools of Innovation:** Districts can apply for one or more schools to become "schools of innovation," to improve student achievement and to engage with outside education providers.
 - **Renewal or Removal:** Waivers can be renewed if they improve student performance or removed if they cause harm to the school and students.
- **Instructional Materials**
 - **Instructional Materials Selection:** Schools can use state instructional materials funding to purchase
 - Materials and programs on the state-approved list
 - Materials and programs NOT on the state-approved list IF the school district provides evidence that they meet the general and content-specific selection criteria of the task force
 - Other materials if the school meets its obligation to provide high-quality instructional materials in all the core content areas
 - **State Quality Curriculum Task Force:** The 10-member appointed task force will support districts with the evaluation, selection and use of high-quality instructional materials and programs. It will:
 - Establish general and content-specific selection criteria and evaluation forms for districts to use.
 - Select content-specific instructional materials reviewers
 - Select and publish a list of state-approved instructional materials and programs for each content area and grade level or grade span.
 - Publish an instructional materials consumer guide for school districts
 - Reject any books or materials that have subversive content, are not tied to standards, not of high-quality, or not easily accessible.



- **Instructional Materials Depository:** The Kentucky Department of Education will set up a central entity to:
 - Assist school districts with bidding and purchasing of instructional materials and programs,
 - Allow the public to inspect instructional materials,
 - Publish the state-approved instructional materials lists and materials review results
 - Collect and share data on instructional materials used by districts and their student performance data.
- **Standards, Assessments and Instructional Materials Reviews:** Instructional materials for reading, writing, math, science, and social studies will be reviewed the year after the respective standards and assessments are reviewed.

Why It Matters

This bill can empower local school districts to adopt innovative methods that match the needs of their students, helping them learn more effectively. Through mechanisms outlined in this bill, such as providing a stronger, statewide structure for selecting instructional materials, school districts may gain the tools to raise reading and math achievement, especially for students in 3rd and 8th grades—critical transition points measured in Prichard's Community Profiles. Currently, Kentucky's Grade 3 proficiency rates are 45% for reading and 37% for math, while Grade 8 proficiency is 30% for reading and 39% for math. By streamlining the selection of high-quality instructional resources and fostering the use of innovative, evidence-based approaches, this bill has the potential to boost academic performance at key stages.

- **Schools of Innovation**
 - **Provides Flexibility for Districts:** Waivers from some state regulations give schools the flexibility to meet local needs and improve performance.
 - **Ensures Accountability:** High standards will be maintained by monitoring evidence that waivers are working, and by keeping important rules like health and safety and student assessments in place.
 - **Encourages Innovation:** Schools of innovation can try new strategies, including working with outside education providers.
- **Instructional Materials**
 - **Ensures Quality Resources:** The centralized review of instructional materials, state-approved lists and consumer guides will help districts save money and make good decisions to access quality resources.
 - **Balances State Support, Flexibility and Accountability:** Districts will be able to use materials and programs not on the state-approved list. Making student data



tied to specific materials and program public will hold districts accountable for their choices and help other districts make data-based decisions.

- **Transparency:** Task Force meetings are open to the public, and selection criteria are published.

How Do We Make This Bill Work in the Real World

- **Schools of Innovation**

- **Establish Accountability:** Require clear goals for student progress and program success in all waiver requests, with yearly targets that get more challenging, and track the difference between traditional methods and new approaches to see what works best.
- **Transparent Reporting:** Require yearly public reports on performance data in an easy-to-understand format.
- **Clear Guidelines for Waivers:** Set clear rules for removing waivers if a program doesn't meet expectations and define what "positive impact" means for renewing waivers.
- **Teacher Accountability:** Track student progress in classrooms with non-certified teachers to see if the flexibility in staffing helps students.

- **Instructional Materials**

- **Clear Approval Process:** Make sure there is public notice, proper documentation, and input from stakeholders at every step of the instructional materials review process.
- **Adequate Resourcing:** Provide enough funding and staff for a careful, unbiased review process at the state and local levels, with clear resources to prevent quick decisions or outside influences.
- **Local Process for Selecting Alternative Materials:** Suggest a simple and open process for schools to review and select materials not on the approved list, if they meet the state's selection criteria.