

# **De-Escalating the Curriculum Wars: A Proposal for Academic Transparency in K-12 Education**



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# Executive Summary

*"How can we change mathematics from individualistic to collectivist thinking?"*

—Seattle Public Schools 2019 proposed mathematics framework<sup>1</sup>

In K-12 schools across the country, politically charged content is spreading at an extraordinary pace, in some cases even eclipsing more academically rigorous instruction. While parents and partisans of all stripes have expressed alarm over such polarizing materials in the classroom, parents often lack meaningful awareness of the content awaiting their children at local schools. To address this problem and ensure that parents—rather than politicians or political activists—are given the tools to navigate their children’s education, this paper proposes a solution: establishing an environment of academic transparency. In particular, policymakers should begin promoting the online disclosure of the instructional materials used in K-12 schools. Such a proposal would not only transcend the partisan battles over what should be taught, but it would bring the same level of online transparency that already exists all throughout K-12 education and beyond.

In the subsequent pages, this report highlights in more detail the following key themes:

- **Politically motivated content is displacing academically based instructional materials within many K-12 schools.** For example, the nation’s third-largest school district recently implemented resources at every one of its high schools that suggest that most Americans believe “1776 is the year of our nation’s birth... [but] this fact, which is taught in our schools and unanimously celebrated every Fourth of July, is wrong.”<sup>2</sup>
- **Several states’ laws explicitly grant parents the right to review the content used in their children’s classroom.** In Arizona, for example, A.R.S. 15-113 guarantees, “A parent of a student in a public educational institution has the right to review learning materials and activities in advance.”<sup>3</sup>
- **Despite such statutory promises, however, parents often have no practical way of exercising these rights, especially in advance of committing to a school.** Outdated protocols frequently require parents to physically travel to district facilities during specified hours (often when they need to be at work), prevent parents from reviewing a full list of materials (outside basic textbooks and the like), and/or allow for a review of materials only after a student has already been enrolled in a particular school.
- **Legislators and education officials have recognized the value of online reporting throughout K-12.** Already, parents can easily access student performance data, graduation and dropout rates, enrollment procedures, and in the case of more innovative schools and universities, highly detailed online lists of instructional materials—all long before a student is required to enroll in a particular institution.
- **Policymakers should support this kind of 21st century access by promoting the disclosure of the learning materials used at each school**—specifically, the posting on each school’s website of a list of the materials used for each subject and grade.

# Introduction

*State and local report cards should be a rich source of information for parents to understand exactly how their child's school is performing, how much is being spent on their child, and how it compares to other schools in their community."*

– Betsy DeVos, U.S. Secretary of Education<sup>4</sup>

*"We always try to do our best to provide very clear guidance and try and strike that balance between absolutely maintaining privacy, but also as much as we can, absolute transparency."*

– Arne Duncan, Former U.S. Secretary of Education under President Obama<sup>5</sup>

Bridging one presidential administration to the next, bipartisan calls for transparency in education have echoed from parents and policymakers alike. As a result, the last two decades have witnessed unprecedented increases in educational transparency—from detailed report cards on student achievement to financial dashboards of school spending.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, increasingly partisan visions about the nature and purpose of public education—coupled with the explosion of curriculum materials available to educators and institutions—have left parents to navigate an ever more diverse and politically polarized landscape of materials their children may encounter in the classroom.

But unlike the robust disclosure of other educational metrics, visibility into instructional content often remains startlingly opaque, leaving parents unable to establish whether the materials at their local schools meet their expectations or reflect what they consider to be appropriate content.

In the face of increasingly heated debates over K-12 curricula, this report eschews any attempt to settle the question of what content *should* be taught. Instead, it explores a more modest proposal: ensuring that parents are at least informed of what is being taught. Equipped with this information, families rather than politicians or special interest groups can begin to more meaningfully participate in the education of their children.

## Classrooms and the Clash of Content

*"Where conservatives have grown wary and suspicious of meddling in curricula, activists on the Left have demonstrated far less reticence about imposing their views, moving further from the unifying impulse undergirding the entire purpose of public education."*

–Robert Pondiscio, Senior Advisor to Democracy Prep Public Schools & Vice President of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute<sup>7</sup>

*"Critics argue ... public school students are being exposed to what equates to right-wing, free-market propaganda sponsored by an organization of wealthy business owners whose ultimate goal is to indoctrinate children."*

–Hank Stephenson, *Arizona Daily Star*<sup>8</sup>

As with American society in general, the state of our public education system appears ever more fractured along fault lines of ideology, with partisans of all stripes observing the creep of politics into virtually every aspect of civic life. Perhaps it is no surprise then that polling has found that nearly one out of every two voters expresses concern about politics in K-12 classrooms.<sup>9</sup>

Charges of political indoctrination may lie in the eye of the beholder. But whether for good or ill, the proliferation of politically infused content has indisputably risen to the forefront of education—in some cases even eclipsing the emphasis placed on academic achievement.

This was evident at the 2019 Representative Assembly of the National Education Association (NEA), which holds the trademark for the Red for Ed movement.<sup>10</sup> Delegates of the nation’s largest teachers union voted *down* a resolution that the NEA “will re-dedicate itself to the pursuit of increased student learning in every public school in America by putting a renewed emphasis on quality education. NEA will make student learning the priority of the Association.”<sup>11</sup> But at the same gathering, NEA delegates did adopt 72 resolutions calling for the curricular infusion or support of political positions on topics that included U.S. foreign policy, abortion, racial reparations, and ethnic studies (see Figure 1).<sup>12</sup>

Notably, these directives go beyond merely the governing committee of an inherently political labor organization; in fact, their inclusion in K-12 schools and curricula appears increasingly common.

### **Figure 1: Adopted Resolutions of the National Education Association Representative Assembly, 2019**

“NEA will incorporate the concept of ‘White Fragility’ into NEA trainings/staff development, literature, and other existing communications ... ” [ADOPTED](#) (Teaching “white fragility” has been approvingly described as calling attention to “white people’s paper-thin skin” and their “refus[al] to acknowledge their own participation in racist systems.”)<sup>13</sup>

“The NEA will call on the U.S. government to accept responsibility for the destabilization of Central American countries.” [ADOPTED](#)

“NEA will collaborate and partner with organizations and individuals who are doing the work to push reparations ... and to involve educators, students, and communities in the discussions around support for reparations.” [ADOPTED](#)

“The NEA vigorously opposes all attacks on the right to choose and stands on the fundamental right to abortion under Roe v. Wade.” [ADOPTED](#)

“Mandat[e] that Ethnic Studies be taught in preK-12 schools in age-appropriate ways.” [ADOPTED](#)

For example, in September 2019, the leadership of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)—the nation’s third-largest school district—announced the introduction of the *New York Times Magazine’s* recent 1619 Project into the materials of every CPS high school.<sup>14</sup>

While lauded by CPS as “invaluable tools” for providing a “historically-accurate, culturally-relevant, and engaging education” on American history,<sup>15</sup> the entries of the 1619 Project earned widespread criticism from historical and legal scholars for—among other claims—declaring that slavery is the source of “nearly everything that has truly made America exceptional,” that slavery “is the country’s very origin,” and that while the “Fourth of July in 1776 is regarded by most Americans as the country’s birthday,” “the country’s true birth date ... was in late August 1619” with the arrival of a slave ship.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, as the Goldwater Institute’s own vice president for litigation, Timothy Sandefur, noted of 1619 Project content, “The *Times* steps beyond history and into political polemic—one based on a falsehood and that in an essential way, repudiates the work of countless people of all races.”<sup>17</sup> Even critics as far left as the International Committee of the Fourth International (the self-identified “leadership of the worldwide socialist movement”) condemned the 1619 Project as “a politically motivated falsification of history.”<sup>18</sup>

In spite of such concerns, however, Chicago Public Schools’ decision to integrate the 1619 Project into every one of its high schools mirrors other efforts throughout the country. For example, Seattle Public Schools recently distinguished itself for introducing a new “K-12 Math Ethnic Studies Framework,” whose core themes include asking “How can we change mathematics from individualistic to collectivist thinking?” and “Where does Power and Oppression show up in our math experiences? Who gets to say if an answer is right?”<sup>19</sup> As noted in the journal *Education Week*, “If schools offer ethnic studies at all, it’s usually in a stand-alone course in high school. But increasingly, schools and districts are starting to sprinkle ethnic studies across the K-12 spectrum.” In keeping with this trend, Seattle’s proposed framework would be “included in existing math as part of the district’s broader effort to infuse ethnic studies into all subjects across the K-12 spectrum.”<sup>20</sup>

Looking further south to Arizona, it is clear that concerns about the politicization of content are bipartisan. For example, when a course in the Tucson Unified School District featured an entrepreneurship textbook that had not gone through the governing board’s review process in 2017, David Gibbs—professor at the University of Arizona and member of the liberal organization “Kochs Off Campus”—helped lead an opposition campaign, declaring, “It’s basically an effort to indoctrinate students and give the impression that the economics profession is dedicated entirely to kind of a pure, free-market paradigm, with a very heavy emphasis on deregulation, low taxes and the like.”<sup>21</sup>

In the same year, the Zinn Education Project raised similar concerns among those on the right when it helped arrange a donation of “packets of people’s history books and lessons to principals at 13 high schools in the Mesa, Gilbert, and Apache Junction school districts in Arizona” that featured the works of author Howard Zinn, a self-described democratic socialist who “believe[s] in the wiping out of national boundaries.”<sup>22</sup> When announcing the donation, the Zinn Education Project boasted its “website [is] already used by more than 70,000 educators from across the United States.”<sup>23</sup>

# The Curriculum Debates: A Double-Edged Sword

The spread of politically charged materials presents a challenge to policymakers and parents regardless of political affiliation. For parents, it is often nearly impossible to know whether the instruction awaiting their children at school will reflect a scholarly and politically neutral rigor, or whether it will insist on ideological immersion at the expense of historical truth. For policymakers, there seems only an unhappy choice between passive indifference or heavy-handed curricular intervention.

Yet like the temptation to seek policy solutions from Washington, D.C., concentrating power among politicians merely *inflames* the issues that divide us—leading to one-size-fits-all decrees that are likely to be reversed as soon as the pendulum of power swings, rather than creating space for diverse policies able to meet individual community needs.

Another solution, therefore, appears to be empowering families to decide for themselves whether they want their children attending schools that teach 1776 or 1619 as the birth year of the United States, or whether they attend schools that believe the proper focus of mathematics should be on arithmetic fundamentals or—as proposed in Seattle—on “how math has been and continues to be used to oppress and marginalize people and communities of color.”<sup>24</sup>

But parents must have more than simply options from which to choose. They must also have the *information* necessary to make those choices.

## The State of Academic Transparency

State legislatures across the country have made it clear that parents ought to have full knowledge of the academic content presented to their children. In Arizona, for example, state law declares unequivocally that a “parent of a student in a public educational institution has the right to review learning materials and activities in advance” and requires that schools must make available at least one copy of instructional materials being “used by or considered for use by [a] school district.”<sup>25</sup>

Tennessee code likewise declares that a “parent or legal guardian is entitled to review all teaching materials, instructional materials, and other teaching aids used in the classroom of the parent or legal guardian’s child,” while Texas similarly assures that a “parent is entitled to review all teaching materials, instructional materials, and other teaching aids used in the classroom of the parent’s child.”<sup>26</sup>

Yet even in the face of such unambiguous statutory guarantees, parents often have no practical way of exercising these rights or easily accessing these materials for review—at least not in any meaningful detail or until they have already enrolled their child in a given school and instruction is underway. Parents face at least four obstacles in particular:

1. **Even where curriculum transparency measures exist, state laws frequently place the onus on parents to travel to each school or district facility to review materials.**

In Arizona, for example, where parents may travel to a school district facility—and even borrow textbooks and certain other supplementary materials for up to 48 hours—“parents or guardians may review all other materials”—whether digital textbooks, online resources, or multimedia—“only on the school district premises.”<sup>27</sup>

2. **Parents are often restricted to reviewing classroom materials at district facilities only during specified hours of operation, placing a huge burden on working families who cannot afford to take time away from work to pore over file cabinets of instructional content.**

In Texas, for example, where each school district is directed to “make teaching materials and tests readily available for review by parents,” parents remain beholden to the state provision that the “district may specify reasonable hours for review.”<sup>28</sup> Though a well-meaning and defensible policy, this caveat ensures that parents are caught between their concerns for their children’s education on one hand and competing daytime/workplace demands on the other.

3. **Parents often lack the authority to review instructional materials until they have already committed their children to a particular school, leaving them few remedies for politicized content besides pulling a student out of school midyear.**

Parent-teacher meetings, parent portals, and even the homework assignments brought home by students offer at least some degree of academic transparency, yet virtually all these measures do so only *after* a student is already enrolled and presented with course content. And while school tours and open houses can offer parents at least some indication of content before enrolling their student, even these provide only general information and still require the parent to travel to a school site.

4. **Existing protocols for the public review of instructional materials are often restricted to textbooks or a limited array of supplementary materials, meaning public input and awareness fall far short of comprehensive transparency.**

Arizona state law requires an open public meeting of school district governing boards and a 60-day review period before the selection of course textbooks. Yet these requirements apply only to the “basic textbook” of each course, or if no such textbook exists, to “supplemental books.” Under the law, governing boards may but are not required to approve other materials like “instructional computer software.”<sup>29</sup> Such materials thus do not require even the slightest public input or awareness. Moreover, as evident from the complaints of liberal critics over the economics textbook used in Tucson without board approval, even the procedural safeguards on textbooks are far from unailing.

These challenges pose significant barriers to families who wish to make an informed decision about their children’s educational upbringing. Fortunately, there is a solution.

# A Proposal for Real Academic Transparency

The era of the internet has launched an information revolution—one filled with online textbooks, web-based student portals, and in some cases, virtual reality learning platforms.<sup>30</sup> Yet incredibly, state laws continue to treat the issue of academic transparency as if none of this innovation had taken place. Indeed, despite the digital age in which their children are being educated, parents interested in knowing what is being taught lack basic 21st-century access to those materials.

In a world where parents can go online and retrieve a trove of student proficiency data by subject, grade, and subgroup for virtually every public school long before their child ever sets foot on a K-12 campus, the absence of similarly robust transparency regarding content is extraordinary.

For that reason, policymakers ought to begin considering a new approach: soliciting the disclosure of the learning materials used at each school—specifically, the posting on each school’s website of a list of materials used for each subject and grade.

Similar proposals for academic transparency have already begun to crop up, such as the 2019 Arizona Senate Bill 1459—sponsored by the state’s Senate Education Committee chairwoman—which proposed that “at the beginning of each school year, each school ... shall provide a curriculum information form to the parent of each pupil who is enrolled at the school” that would contain “a complete list of mandatory and optional pupil reading materials,” including “a complete list of the digital learning materials, including websites and other online applications, that will be made available to pupils.”<sup>31</sup>

Such a proposal, adapted to inform parents of these same materials *online*, would achieve the goal of academic transparency without requiring parents to first commit to a school and without requiring schools to consume additional resources by printing new packets.

## Online Disclosure: A Natural Next Step

State legislatures have increasingly realized the value of online reporting mechanisms throughout K-12 education. In Arizona, as in other states, such online reporting includes not only qualitative information, but a host of quantitative data—including assessment scores, graduation and dropout rates, disciplinary actions, and ratios of credentialing types held by teachers.<sup>32</sup> For example, Arizona statute requires each school district to ensure “a copy of the district policies for open enrollment shall be posted on the district’s website and shall be available to the public on request.”<sup>33</sup> Likewise, state law mandates that “the department of education shall identify and prominently post on [its] website ... the best practices for the implementation and assessment of principal and teacher evaluation systems,”<sup>34</sup> while the state’s Medicaid system is statutorily required to “post on the administration’s website a list of approved materials that schools may use to provide [suicide prevention] training.”<sup>35</sup>



Extending this online approach to K-12 instructional materials is a natural next step. In fact, many schools have *already* begun to recognize the value and importance of displaying instructional materials online.

Great Hearts Academies, a network of tuition-free public charter schools in Texas and Arizona, for example, posts materials by grade that include not only core reading lists, but detailed lists of the short stories, poetry, and historical works used in a “curriculum built upon a classical liberal arts tradition”(see Figure 2).<sup>36</sup>

## Figure 2: Great Hearts Charter School Network Reading List, Posted Online

### Great Hearts 6th–8th Grade Poetry List

Sonnets 15, 18, 30, 29, 60, 73, 143 by William Shakespeare | Kipling, “If” | Longfellow, “The Village Blacksmith” | Millay, “First Fig” | Frost, “Nothing Gold Can Stay” | Wordsworth, “My heart leaps up” | Blake, “The Tyger” | Dickinson, “‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers” | Dickinson, “There is no frigate like a book” | Browning, E., Sonnet 43 “How Do I Love Thee” | Milton, Sonnet 23 “On His Blindness” | Housman, “Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now” | Housman, “When I Was One and Twenty” | Hopkins, “Spring and Fall” | Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” | Longfellow, “The Arrow and the Song” | Emerson, “Concord Hymn” | Burns, “A Red, Red Rose” | Tennyson, “The Charge of the Light Brigade” | Donne, “Death Be Not Proud” Herbert, “Virtue” | Hopkins, “Pied Beauty” | Byron, “She Walks in Beauty” | Keats, “To Autumn” | Whitman, “O Captain, My Captain” Yeats, “When You Are Old”

### 9th–12th Grade Core Reading List

My Antonia | Red Badge of Courage | Autobiography of an American Slave | The Great Gatsby | Old Man and the Sea | Billy Budd | Walden | “Civil Disobedience” | Democracy in America | The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn | Othello | The Tempest | Utopia | Second Treatise of Government | Pride and Prejudice | Discourse on Inequality | Tale of Two Cities | Communist Manifesto | One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich | Crime and Punishment | Henry V | Iliad | Odyssey | History of the Peloponnesian War | Theban Plays | Five Dialogues of Plato | Republic | Nichomachean Ethics | The Books of Genesis, Exodus, and Job | Hamlet | Aeneid | Confessions | Gospels of Mark and John, Acts of the Apostles, and Epistle to the Romans | “Treatise on Law” | The Divine Comedy | The Prince | Essays | Meditations on First Philosophy | The “1844 Manuscripts” | Reason in History | Brothers Karamazov | King Lear | The Scarlet Letter | Frankenstein | Herodotus’ Histories | Paradise Lost

### 9th–12th Grade Historical Works

The Declaration of Independence | The Constitution of the United States | Federalist Papers | Marbury v. Madison | The Monroe Doctrine | Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions | Dred Scott v. Sanford | The Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln | The Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln | Plessy v. Ferguson | Fourteen Points Speech, Woodrow Wilson | First Inaugural Address, Franklin D. Roosevelt | Brown v. Board of Education | “Birmingham City Jail Letter”, M. L. King | “I Have a Dream” speech, M. L. King

Source: <https://www.greatheartsamerica.org/great-hearts-life/great-hearts-curriculum/curriculum-overview/>.

Other schools, like the Country Gardens Charter School, a smaller single-site charter in Laveen, Arizona, go so far as to list materials separated by grade and *teacher* (see Figure 3).

## Figure 3: Country Gardens Charter School Reading Lists by Teacher, Posted Online

**2019-2020**

### **Country Gardens Charter School**

#### **Required Reading Book Lists**

**Please click on grade and teachers name below for lists**

The following lists are for 3rd – 12<sup>th</sup> grades. They are separated for each grade and teacher. The school will have some copies of these books available for purchase. Students can also check out books from their local library. Some books can be found in Thrift Stores or at “Bookmans”, A second hand bookstore located in Phoenix at 8034 North 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Their phone number is (602) 433-0255. At these places the books will cost much less than purchasing them new. Country Gardens will also purchase used books back from students.

**3rd Grade Mrs. Cadamagnani**

**3rd Grade Mr. Vanlieu**

**4th Grade Mrs. Ewing**

**4th Grade Mr. Seymore**

**5th Grade Ms. Nicole**

**5th Grade Mrs. Saggio**

**6th Grade Mrs. Gordon**

**6th Grade Ms. LoCicero**

**7th Grade Ms. Campbell/Ms. Jessica**

**8th Grade Ms. Bedolla**

**9th Grade Ms. Bedolla**

**10th Grade Ms. Bedolla**

**11th Grade Ms. Bedolla**

**12th Grade Ms. Bedolla**

Source: [cgcsaz.com/information/required-reading-lists/](http://cgcsaz.com/information/required-reading-lists/).

Likewise, even traditional school districts such as Chandler Unified—Arizona’s third-largest district—have taken steps to post materials by subject and grade (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Chandler Unified School District English  
Language Arts Reading List**

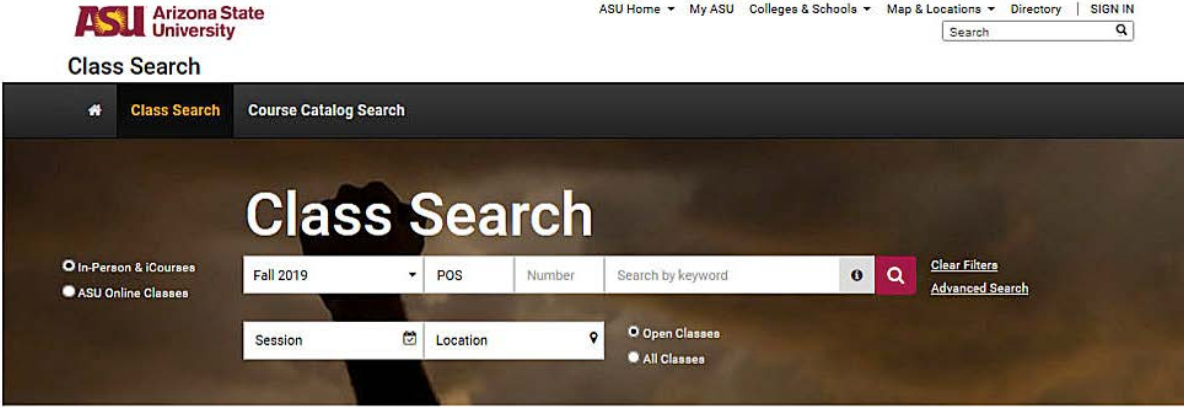
11th Grade		
<p><b><u>English 11 Required</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Great Gatsby (Lit)+</li> <li>2. The Crucible (Lit)</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Into the Wild</a> OR Fast Food Nation (Info)</li> <li>4. "Society and Solitude" (Info)+</li> </ol> <p>*Plus choose <u>one</u> text from the reserved list.</p>	<p><b><u>Reserved Extended Text</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Great Gatsby+</li> <li>- The Crucible</li> <li>- The Bean Trees</li> <li>- "Society and Solitude"+</li> <li>- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</li> <li>- The Scarlet Letter+</li> <li>- My Antonia</li> <li>- Raisin in the Sun+</li> <li>- Inherit the Wind</li> <li>- Uncle Tom's Cabin</li> <li>- Cry The Beloved Country</li> <li>- Fast Food Nation</li> <li>- Into the Wild</li> <li>- Our Town +(10)</li> <li>- A Street Car Named Desire (12)</li> <li>- "A Modest Proposal" (12)</li> <li>- "Politics and the English Language"+</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Companion Short Text for Required</u></b></p> <p>TBA</p> <p>Poetry, short stories, nonfiction, informational texts (essays, current events, speeches, etc.), media, etc</p> <p>Teacher's note: These texts should come from the adopted textbooks and resources for CUSD.</p>
<p><b><u>Honors/AP 11 Required</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Great Gatsby (Lit)+</li> <li>2. The Crucible (Lit)</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Into the Wild</a> OR Fast Food Nation (Info)</li> <li>4. "Society and Solitude" (Info)+</li> </ol> <p>*Plus choose <u>two</u> texts from the reserved list.</p>		

Source: <https://www.cusd80.com/Page/45313#10th>.

However, as clear from the Chandler example, parents of prospective students still have zero insight into all other “companion” texts—which the district notes include other “short stories, nonfiction, informational texts (essays, current events, speeches, etc.), media, etc.” Some might suggest it would be too cumbersome to make this larger body of resources visible to parents, but it is striking that the district itself declares that “these texts should come from the adopted textbooks and resources for CUSD.” In other words, district officials indicate they are already vetting the auxiliary materials used by their teachers, so any additional effort needed to list them online should primarily consist of school officials simply making public the information they already have. Moreover, with teachers already documenting the materials they use when submitting lesson plans to their administrators, the burden of making these materials public should be extraordinarily modest.

This proposal for academic transparency in K-12 also finds strong precedent within higher education, where detailed course syllabi are frequently posted online publicly. Any prospective student or parent of Arizona State University, for example, will find innumerable syllabi immediately available without any expectation that they first travel to the university campus or register and enroll at the school (see Figure 5). As shown in the excerpt of one such syllabus in Figure 6, providing detailed listings of all instructional materials is by no means an unworkable practice.

**Figure 5: Arizona State University Course Syllabi, Posted Online**



Showing 1 to 95 of 95

Course	Title	Class#	Instructor	Days	Start	End	Location	Dates	Units	Seats Open	GS
POS 110	American Government & Politics	82880	Watson				iCourse	10/16 - 12/06(B)	3	1 of 100	Syllabus SB
POS 110	American Government & Politics	71681	Woodall	T Th	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Tempe - CDN60	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	4 of 170	Syllabus SB
POS 110	American Government & Politics	73240	Colbern	Th	4:30 PM	7:15 PM	West - CLCC254	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	36 of 60	SB
POS 150	Comparative Government	82574	Atcha				iCourse	08/22 - 10/11(A)	3	1 of 30	Syllabus SB & G
POS 150	Comparative Government	82807	Hinojosa	T Th	1:30 PM	2:45 PM	Tempe - CDN60	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	13 of 180	Syllabus SB & G
POS 150	Comparative Government	92126	James-Eluyode	T	4:30 PM	7:15 PM	West - CLCC210	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	23 of 40	Syllabus SB & G
POS 160	Global Politics	82828	Ripley				iCourse	10/16 - 12/06(B)	3	2 of 150	Syllabus SB & G
POS 160	Global Politics	82576	Ripley	T Th	12:00 PM	1:15 PM	Tempe - EDC117	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	14 of 200	Syllabus SB & G
POS 160	Global Politics	78977	Comstock	T Th	1:30 PM	2:45 PM	West - SANDS105	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	12 of 40	Syllabus SB & G
POS 160	Global Politics	92944	Hollinger	M W F	9:40 AM	10:30 AM	Poly - SANCA359	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	16 of 30	SB & G
POS 210	Political Ideologies	80194	Ron	T Th	12:00 PM	1:15 PM	West - SANDS202	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	7 of 40	Syllabus SB
POS 216	State and Local Government	93080	Strickland	T Th	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Tempe - SS236	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	16 of 40	Syllabus SB
POS 230	Curr Issues/Natl Politics	87567	Simpson	M W	10:45 AM	11:35 AM	Poly - SANTN331 Internet - Hybrid	08/22 - 12/06 08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	16 of 40	Syllabus L or SB
POS 247	Intro to Latin Amer Politics	86935	Funk				iCourse	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	44 of 60	SB & G
POS 260	Curr Issues in Intl Politics	93857	Koehler				iCourse	10/16 - 12/06(B)	3	53 of 100	Syllabus (L or SB) & G
POS 260	Curr Issues in Intl Politics	92915	Hollinger	T Th	10:30 AM	11:45 AM	Poly - SANCA359	08/22 - 12/06(C)	3	10 of 30	Syllabus (L or SB) & G
POS 270	American Legal System	90264	Lohse				iCourse	10/16 - 12/06(B)	3	56 of 100	Syllabus SB
POS 300	Contemp Global Controversies	81401	Schatzman				iCourse	08/22 - 10/11(A)	3	29 of 100	Syllabus SB & G

Source: <https://webapp4.asu.edu/catalog/>.



## Figure 6: Sample University Syllabus with Detailed List of Instructional Materials

### Week 9: October 14 – 18 (Fall Break: no class on October 15)

Textbook, chapter 9: Courts and Criminal Justice

News article: “Attorney General Brnovich offers to help Arizona secure drug to resume executions.” *Tucson.com*, July 26, 2019 ([link here](#)).

News article: “Special legislative panel looking at ways to reduce state’s prison population.” *Tucson.com*, August 6, 2019 ([link here](#)).

### Week 10: October 21 – 25 \*\*\*Proposals due Oct. 22\*\*\*

Textbook, chapter 10: Fiscal Policy

News article: “Property tax relief is next 'think big' idea for Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Illinois lawmakers to face.” *Chicago Tribune*, June 10, 2019 ([link here](#)).

Source: <https://webapp4.asu.edu/bookstore/viewsyllabus/2197/93080>.

While college syllabi are released at the start of university courses, states could vary the expectations around the online posting of K-12 materials to better reflect the needs of teachers to adapt and update materials throughout the year. Setting disclosure deadlines shortly after the end of the academic year, for example, would ensure that parents have sufficient time to review a school’s materials as a guide for the upcoming year, and that teachers are not inhibited from incorporating new materials as the school year progresses.

## Conclusion

It is clear from these and countless other examples that the online reporting of instructional materials in K-12 would not only offer tremendous value to parents and families, but represents a natural next step in the age of information.

States like Florida have already begun taking first steps in this direction, with legislation signed by then-Gov. Rick Scott in 2017 requiring school districts to “notify parents of their ability to access their children’s instructional materials through the district’s local instructional improvement system,” with notification “displayed prominently on the school district’s website.”<sup>37</sup> And in December 2019, Nebraska debuted a new interactive online map of the instructional materials used in each of its school districts.<sup>38</sup> State legislators should build upon these efforts to ensure that current and prospective parents have the same level of visibility regarding their school’s instructional materials—whether printed textbooks or newer digital resources—as they do countless other measures in K-12.

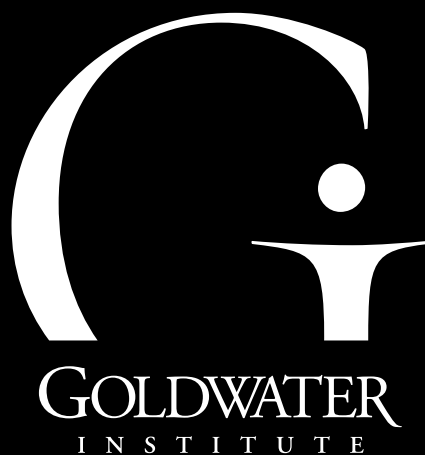
For those who support educational freedom and a robust landscape of K-12 choice in particular, academic transparency is essential for parents to be able to differentiate the content of instruction available to their children. Before merely defaulting to their nearest district campus, parents must have the opportunity to meaningfully explore its academic offerings. As stated by Robert Pondiscio of Democracy Prep Public Schools, “School choice must be pursued in conjunction with reforms to improve content and curricula in public schools across the country.”<sup>39</sup> When it comes to directing their children toward that content, surely parents—not union bosses or political activists—should be equipped to play a more meaningful role.

# ENDNOTES

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