

Seguin Gazette-Enterprise  
Seguin, TX  
Circ 5261

DEC 13 2002

# State reviews social studies books

By **JAMIE MOBLEY**  
Gazette-Enterprise

SEGUIN — Following a lengthy review process and community input from more than 200 people and organizations, the next generation of social studies textbooks will see changes ranging from miniscule to mountainous.

"There have been all sizes of changes," said Debbie Ratcliffe, of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). "The books currently in the classrooms could be as old as eight years old. This will give the students more updated information to work with."

“We had a team of experts from Texas Tech review the books. We also had three public hearings.”

**Debbie Ratcliffe,**  
TEA representative

In 2000, the Texas State Board of Education issued a proclamation soliciting bids for new social studies books. Since then, the state has received a wealth of data from its evaluations of potential texts.

"We had a team of experts from Texas Tech review the books," Ratcliffe said. "We also had three public hearings. The books have been scrutinized and, as with any other educational process, the more eyes you can have for reviewing, the better."

Various independent groups, from both conservative and liberal schools of thought, enlisted their own studies as well. One group, the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), cites 533 factual errors in the 26 books analyzed by the foundation's 16 reviewers.

■ books, page 2A

## books

■ Continued from page 1A

The group commissioned a \$100,000 study of the textbooks and is one of several who demanded changes before this next publication of books is adopted.

"We urged the inclusion of more facts, such as the representation of Hispanic culture," said Michael Quinn Sullivan, media and government relations director for TPPF. "Essentially, what we found was that they tended to take complex periods of time, such as civil rights, and turn them into lots of flashy pictures and pie graphs that were light on facts. The complexity of history sometimes takes more than a pie graph to explain."

Following months of such debate, the state recently released its list of conforming textbooks, or those which meet the state's standards for educational use.

These books will now be evaluated by officials from school districts across Texas, who must choose books for their district by April 2003.

Because Texas is the second-largest textbook market in the country, publishers whose books are chosen will get a cut of the \$345 million Texas spends on social studies textbooks alone.

Locally, officials at Seguin Independent School District hope the new books will better reflect the skills the state intends to convey to its students.

The books currently in use were written prior to the implementation of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills [TEKS].

"They have lived with books that didn't really match their curriculum since 1998," said Barbara Gettig, SISD superintendent for curriculum and instruction. "We are, however, trying to move the teaching of history from a regurgitation of facts to a broader understanding of human behavior."