



Recent Trends in the National Curriculum and Textbook System of Korea

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I. National Curriculum

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II. Textbook System

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I. National Curriculum

1. Curriculum Development Methods and Agents

- Overall revision every 7 to 10 years, from the 1st curriculum (1945) to the 7th (1997)
- Introduced a nonscheduled·partial revision system (Oct. 2013)
 - Enhance content on a rolling basis to reflect social change
 - Respond flexibly to demands for system revision
 - Greater user satisfaction by delivering education policies that are highly applicable and relevant to on-site
- 2009 Revised Curriculum was continuously amended·supplemented, a total of 7 partial revisions were made.
- Currently, the Ministry of Education(MOE) is working on revising the national curriculum.
- The MOE is responsible for announcing the system; MOE has been working with dedicated curriculum research institutions in the revision process since early 1980s
- Open system-based
 - Diversified development agents per subject/class
 - Increased participation of in-service teachers in the developing process

2. Direction and Composition of Current 2009 Revised Curriculum

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- Focused on creativity and character development and the balance of the two
- Composed of Common Curriculum(1st to 9th grade) and Elective Curriculum(10th to 12th grade)
- Grade-clusters
 - Add flexibility to the composition/application of curriculum via mutual connectivity and cooperation among grades
- Reclassification of subject-clusters in Common Curriculum
 - Consider alignment to education purpose, relevancy to lifestyles etc.
- Expansion of intensive course program
 - Reduce the number of courses per semester for middle & high schools
 - Ensure appropriate learning pressure and deploy meaningful educational activities
- Introduced creative experiential activities

**Finalized·announced
2009 Revised
Curriculum (Dec. '09)**



**Follow-up support studies
and teacher training to
prepare implementation
(‘10~)**



**Application (phased-in
across 4 years)**

- '13: 1st, 2nd, 7th grades
- '14: 3rd, 4th, 8th, 10th grades
- '15: 5th, 6th, 9th, 11th grades
- '16: 12th grade

3. Direction of Recent National Curriculum Revision (2015 Curriculum)

- Minister of Education proposed the direction for the 2015 Revised Curriculum in Sept. 2014
 - Cultivate basic understanding of humanities, social studies, science and technology → Humanistic imagination

- Desirable human character
 - Based on the human character(independent, creative, cultured, cosmopolitan) pursued by the current curriculum (2009 revised curriculum)
 - Envisions creative convergent talents equipped with core competencies necessary in the knowledge-information society
 - Address issues raised from the field during the implementation of the current curriculum

- Direction of revision
 - o Cultivate basic understanding of humanities, social studies, science and technology
 - High school: Introduce common courses and newly establish 'integrated social studies' and 'integrated science' courses
 - o Curriculum that support students' vocational studies and aptitude
 - Establish a variety of electives and increase schools' autonomy in curriculum
 - Prepare grounds for middle schools to implement 'free learning semester'
 - o Develop curriculum that nurtures capabilities to prepare students for the future
 - Reduce the amount of content to focus on core principles
 - Lessen learning pressure to increase the joy of learning
 - o Improve education policy to be better connected with overall curriculum
 - Simultaneously promote improvement of relevant systems such as textbooks, teachers, college entrance examination etc.

- The direction of revision should reflect national·societal demands
 - o Reduce amount of content to focus on core concepts and concentrate on strengthening the 'competence' of students by increasing connectivity among subjects
 - o Reduce learning contents and enhance instruction methodology and evaluation
 - o Nurture humanities/social literacy and strengthen character education
 - Invigorate arts and physical education: encourage acting and other extra-curricular clubs
 - Nurture social literacy: Introduce 'integrated social studies' course
 - o Nurture science and technology literacy
 - Introduce 'integrated science' course in high schools
 - Reinforce software education
 - o Strengthen safety education
 - Introduce safety course for 1st and 2nd grades; add units on safety in relevant courses
 - Administer experiential safety education with creative, 'learning by doing' activities

- Focus of revision per school grade
 - o Primary school
 - Increase connection with early pre-school curriculum
 - Increase weekly instructional hours for 1st and 2nd grades by an hour to implement a course on safety
 - o Middle school
 - Prepare grounds to set a semester as a 'free learning semester'
 - o High school
 - Design 'common courses' to enhance basic skill-set
 - Introduce 'elective courses (general/vocational)' based on aptitude and vocational interests
- Finalize/announce the new curriculum in the 2H 2015; phased-in annually from 2018
- Follow-up measures such as reorganization of teacher education institutions, teacher training, and adjustment of college entrance system in line with the curriculum are required

II. Textbook System

- Textbook development cycle and curriculum revision cycle are aligned: basic plan for textbook development is on the works the moment curriculum revision is announced
- Textbook development reflects nonscheduled·partial revision
- As per 2010 Textbook Reform Policy, teacher-made learning materials and general books may undergo approval process and be approved to be used as textbooks
- Relevant legislation (Article 29, Primary and Secondary Education Act)
 - Schools are to use course textbooks authorized/approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology or those which copyrights are held by the state.
- Definition of textbook: 'Textbook' refers to both textbooks(publications, musical recordings, videos, commissioned works etc.) and teachers' manuals

2. Classification of Textbooks: Designated, Authorized and Approved

■ Classification of designated·authorized·approved textbooks

Type	Designated	Authorized	Approved
Definition	· Copyrights are held by the Ministry of Education (To ensure consistency in basic school life and learning habits)	· Authorized by the Minister of Education (To prevent national identity and ideology related controversy)	· Approved by the Minister of Education (To fill in for unavailability or insufficiency of or to supplement designated/authorized textbooks)
Approved by	· Minister (Appoints examiners)	· Minister (Entrusted to relevant authorizing institution)	· Minister (Delegated to superintendents)
Process	· Compilation → Review	· Development → Evaluation → Authorization	· Development → Review(evaluation) → Approval
Subjects	· Primary school: Korean, ethics, social studies, mathematics, science, integrated courses	· Primary school: English, music, arts, PE, home economics · Secondary school: Korean, ethics, social studies (Korean history)	· Textbooks for secondary schools, excluding authorized textbooks · Middle school: Math, science, technology, home, PE, music, arts, English, electives[Chines letters, information, environment and green growth, foreign languages, health, career and vocation] · High school
# of textbooks (incl. teachers' manuals)	53(9%)	42(7%)	494(84%)
	Total 589(100%) : 540 textbooks, 49 teachers' manuals		

※ Numbers distinctively different from the 7th curriculum(1997) : Designated 69%, Authorized 18%, Approved 13%

- Designated textbooks

Develop quality textbooks, effectively incorporating the general national curriculum and per subject curriculum

- Participating institutions

- Colleges of education, teachers' colleges and other relevant educational institutions
- Associations for subjects of Korean, social studies and ethics
- Relevant R&D institutions such as KICE and KEDI
- Research associations composed of in-service teachers

- Qualifications for research·writing staff

- Specialist, in-service teacher, assistant professor or above, primary/secondary school teacher with more than 5 years of teaching experience, or researcher with more than 5 years of research experience, of the relevant subject

(※ More than 30% of the research/writing staff should be in-service, primary school teachers)

- Authorized books

Write · publish quality textbooks via autonomy and competition of private publishers, and examine to ensure adequacy, accuracy, neutrality and universality

- o Digital textbooks

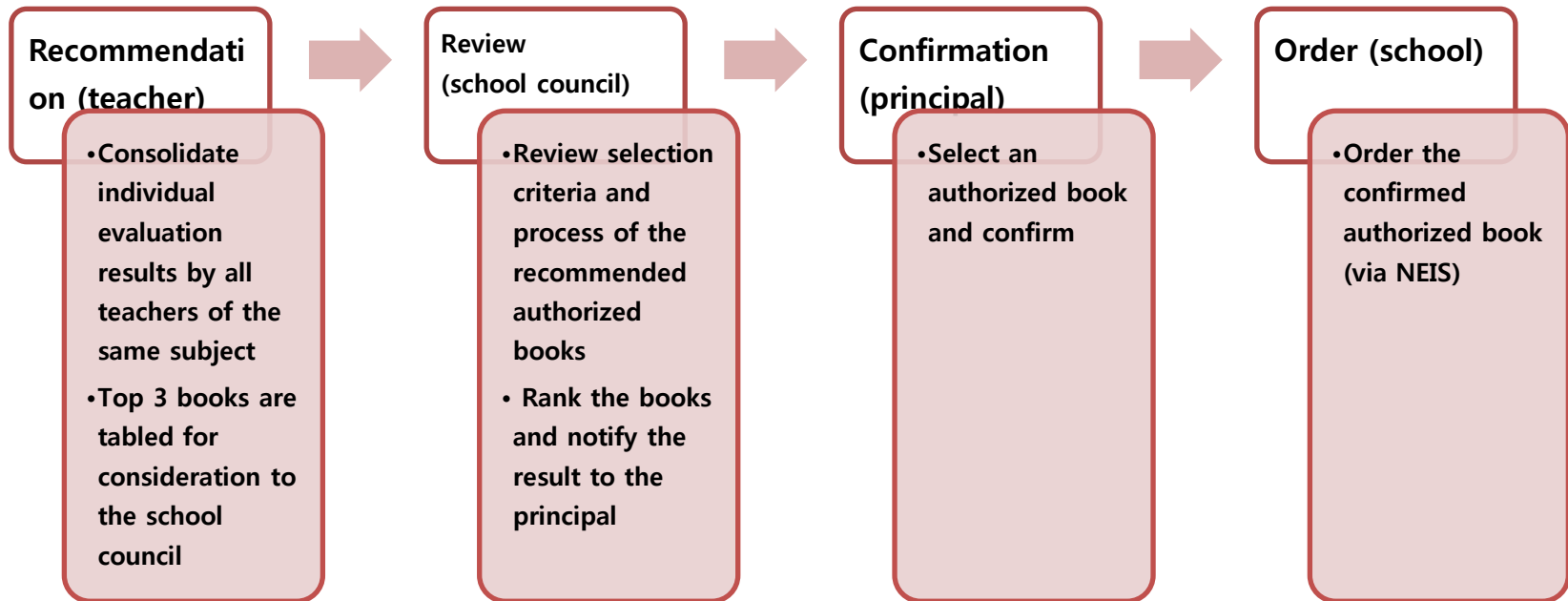
- As per 'Smart Education' initiative, ICT development and shift to ubiquitous learning environment, the MOE defined 'digital textbook' in 2011 as a type of future-oriented textbook which includes multimedia materials such as video, audio, visual and animated materials

- Developed social studies and science textbooks for 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th (1st of middle school) grades in 2013

- Piloting in 163 schools (81 primary schools, 82 middle schools) since 2014

- Currently reviewing nation-wide implementation based on cost for building infrastructure and equipment such as smartpads

- School-level selection process of authorized books



- Approved books

: Enables the supply a variety of creative textbooks to meet diversified student needs and can reflect rapid societal changes. Also, it ensures stronger autonomy of offices of education and schools to increase student satisfaction.

■ Approved books for secondary schools

Subjects (Cluster)	Middle School			High School	
	Publication	Digital	Teachers' Manual	Publication	Digital
Korean Language Arts			【1】		
Math	【1】		【1】	【9】	
Science/ Technology·Home	Science【1】	【1】	【1】	Science【20】	【1】
	Technology·Home【1】		【1】	Technology·Home【7】	
Foreign Languages (excl. English)/ Chinese Letters/ Liberal Arts	Foreign languages (excl. English)【8】		【8】	Foreign languages (excl. English)【64】	
	Chinese letters【1】		【1】	Chinese letters【2】	
	Information, environment and green growth, health, career and vocation【4】		【4】	Liberal arts【9】	
Social Studies(Incl. Korean History/Ethics)			【3】	【10】	
Physical Education	【1】		【1】	【18】	
Arts(Music/Arts etc.)	Music【1】		【1】	Music【1】	
	Arts【1】		【1】	Arts【1】	
				Dance, literature, theater, photography【26】	
English	【1】	【1】	【1】	【15】	【5】
Advanced Subjects				Agriculture【42】	
				Industry【113】	
				Commerce【30】	
				Fisheries/maritime【33】	
				Home economics【37】	
Total	20	2	24	451	6

3. Considerations for compiling(writing) textbooks and authorization(approval) criteria

- Considerations for compiling textbooks

Common considerations	Subject-specific considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with the constitution and other related legislation• Maintain neutrality of education• Comply with intellectual property law• Deliver curriculum and describe objectives• Selection and organization of content• Accuracy of citations and writing• Develop recommended reading list and integrated curriculum textbooks• Reflect cross-curricula activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direction of textbook development• Composition of textbook• Selection and organization of content

- Authorization(approval) criteria for authorized(approved) textbooks

Evaluation Area	Evaluation Viewpoint
I . Comply with constitutional spirit	1. Does any part of the content deny/distort/malign the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea, which succeeds the legal authority of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea? 2. Does any part of the content deny/distort/malign the basic principles of liberal democracy of Korea and a peaceful unification policy based on liberal democracy? 3~7. (omitted due to lack of space)
II . Maintain neutrality of education	8. Does any part of the content convey a political opinion/the opinion of political party/individual bias or/and can any part of the content be used as a tool to teach a particular religion?
III . Respect intellectual property	9. Does any part of the content plagiarize/imitate unpublished works of others or significantly plagiarize/imitate published works?

- Common criteria is evaluated as either "yes" or "no". If any one of the evaluation viewpoint is a "yes", the evaluated textbook will be disqualified.

- Subject specific authorization(approval) criteria
(ex: middle school social studies)
 - o Compliance with curriculum
 - o Selection and organization of content
 - o Accuracy and fairness of content

- Authorization committee members evaluate textbooks by scoring each evaluation item. The item scores are averaged and summed to calculate the final score and determine its authorization.

4. Year of Textbook Development·Review and Application

Developed · Reviewed in	Applied from	Designated textbook	Authorized textbook	Approved textbook
2012	2013	▶Grade 1~2 ▶Grade 3~4	▶Middle school	▶Middle school ▶High school
2013	2014	▶Grade 5~6	▶Grade 3~4 ▶High school	▶High school (excluding English)
2014	2015		▶Grade 5~6	

* Primary school: Grade 1 ~ 6