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## **Board of Education Weighs Textbook Remedies** *Orders Review of All Five Ponds Textbooks on State List*

The Virginia Board of Education today directed Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright to outline a process for the board to determine whether two error-filled elementary history textbooks published by Five Ponds Press should be removed from the list of textbooks approved by the board for use in the commonwealth's public schools.

The board also asked Wright to obtain a review by qualified experts of all Five Ponds textbooks on the state-approved list and seek potential remedies from the Connecticut-based publisher for school divisions that purchased the grade-four Virginia-studies book *Our Virginia: Past and Present*, and the grade-five United States history textbook *Our America: To 1865*.

The state superintendent also was asked to present a plan for improving the commonwealth's textbook review process to ensure that textbooks are reviewed by qualified experts for factual accuracy before they are submitted to the Virginia Department of Education for review.

The board's directives to Wright were in the form of a motion made by board member David M. Foster of Arlington. The text of the motion — which was approved unanimously — is as follows:

MOVED that the Board of Education direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

1. To initiate on the Board's behalf a process to consider withdrawal of its approval of the textbooks "Our Virginia: Past and Present" (first edition) and "Our America to 1865" (first edition), published in each case by Five Ponds Press; and
2. To seek remedies from Five Ponds Press to help school divisions which have purchased those textbooks in replacing and/or correcting such textbooks as soon as possible, including pursuing any available assistance from and/or remedies involving the publisher; and
3. To obtain a review by qualified experts of any other textbooks published by Five Ponds Press that have been approved by the Board of Education; and
4. To present to the Board of Education for first review at its February 2011 meeting a detailed proposal to revise the Board's process for approving textbooks for purchase by school divisions to ensure that all textbooks approved are factually accurate, incorporating in such proposal a process for prior certification by publishers that each textbook submitted for approval has been reviewed for factual accuracy by qualified experts in the subject matter, and that the publisher will promptly remedy at its expense any substantial factual errors discovered thereafter.

*Our Virginia: Past and Present* and *Our America: To 1865* were approved by the Board of Education in March 2010. The list of history/social science textbooks approved also included Five Ponds Press textbooks for kindergarten, first grade, second grade and third grade.