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States Ceding Power Over Classroom Materials



Texas state school board members, from left, Donna Bahorich, David Bradley, and Thomas Ratliff, signal to ask questions during a textbook adoption hearing last July in Austin. —Eric Gay/AP-File

By **Catherine Gewertz**

States are increasingly giving up a long-standing source of their power over education by allowing school districts to choose the instructional materials they use in the classroom.

The shift in authority has taken shape little by little, mostly in the past four years, as one state after another has modified or thrown out its procedures for adopting textbooks and other kinds of print and online learning resources.

Only 19 states are now considered "adoption states"—states that review textbooks and other resources and create lists of "approved" materials—by the Association of American Publishers. Only a few years ago, the AAP's...

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