



Memorandum

To: Superintendent Hocker, Board of Trustees
From: Katie Graupman, Curriculum Coordinator
Date: June 16, 2023
Re: Benchmark Advance Update

Dear Trustees,

I have the following update on Benchmark Advance resources to share.

Delivery and Distribution:

Three semi trucks carrying 76 pallets of Benchmark Advance materials arrived at 5 am on Monday, June 5. Thanks to the hard work of our maintenance staff including Noah Kearl, Randy Lancaster, and JJ Winger, and Ed Ducar with Food Services, the trucks were unloaded and staged for delivery by school by 8 am that day. (For the sake of reference, the largest shipment we typically receive at one time is 15 pallets.)

That morning, Rebekah Rhoades, Curriculum and Assessment Assistant, quickly created entries of the materials in our asset tracker, Destiny, and by the end of the day, 8 of our 11 schools received delivery of their materials. By 10 am Tuesday, all the schools had received their materials. In short order, district library managers, office staff, paraprofessionals, instructional coaches, teachers, and administrators set to work unboxing, barcoding, and checking out materials to teachers so they would have their materials before they left for summer on June 12.

We are very grateful for the timely action of the Board and the work of all these different individuals to ensure teachers who wanted to begin exploring their resources could do so.

More materials are set to arrive over the summer as some of the decodable kindergarten books were not yet shipped.

Review of Culturally Responsive and Social Emotional Learning Questions:

As requested by the Trustees, we conducted a review of all Culturally Responsive and Social Emotional Learning Questions. We copied the questions into documents by grade level. They are linked below:



[Kindergarten: Benchmark Advance Culturally Responsive Perspective and SEL Questions](#)

[Grade 1: Benchmark Advance Culturally Responsive Perspective and SEL Questions](#)

[Grade 2: Benchmark Advance Culturally Responsive Perspective and SEL Questions](#)

[Grade 3: Benchmark Advance Culturally Responsive Perspective and SEL Questions](#)

[Grade 4: Benchmark Advance Culturally Responsive Perspective and SEL Questions](#)

[Grade 5: Benchmark Advance Culturally Responsive Perspective and SEL Questions](#)

In reviewing the questions, two stood out as potentially problematic:

- **Grade 3, Unit 7, “Communities Then and Now,” Week 2, “All Kinds of Communities,” Culturally Responsive Perspective: Space Concept.**

Question: “Some geographic locations in the United States have names with origins in Native American or European languages. There are also places that carry names that some groups of people may find offensive (e.g. Squaw Valley). Invite students to research names of geographic locations in the United States including where they originated and what they mean. As a class, discuss how some of these names respect a group of people or how in other cases they might disrespect a group of people.”

Potential Problem: Although rare, in researching the term, “squaw,” children might find references or debate about whether the word refers to female genitalia.

- **Grade 4, Unit 10, “Power of Electricity” Week 3, “Two Forgotten Electrical Inventors”, Culturally Responsive Perspective: Gender.**

“Discuss with students how their gender affected their role in society or within their family or community.”

Potential Problem: Discussions around gender and gender roles at this age require careful consideration, and if done at all, should have a clear purpose and intention. The purpose of this prompt appears unclear.

We will ask teachers not to use these prompts.

That said, teachers will not use every question presented in a teacher resource (or sometimes any of the questions from the resource). Rather, teachers select and ask questions based on their knowledge of their students and what will help drive student learning deeper. In addition, teachers help students learn to form and seek answers to their own questions in order to increase comprehension and critical thinking, as asking questions and finding answers is a life-long skill.