

## **Texas Textbook Controversy Focus of “Independent Lens” on NET Television**

Every ten years a group of 15 individuals convene to discuss, debate, and rewrite the teaching and textbook standards for the next generation of students. Hugely influential, these decisions mandate how science, history, and other core subjects will be taught.

Who are the people who get to shape the textbooks for our nation’s students? In large part it is the members of the Texas State Board of Education, whose decisions about standards for the state’s nearly five million schoolchildren hold enormous financial sway over publishers, who craft their textbooks based on the needs of their biggest buyers.

“The Revisionaries” goes to ground zero in the textbook wars, a moral battleground where every word is a weapon in the fight and no child can be left behind. The program premieres Monday, Jan. 28, at 9 p.m. CT on NET1 and NET-HD as part of the “Independent Lens” series.

Shot over the course of three years, “The Revisionaries” follows the rise and fall of some of the most controversial figures in American education as they wage tumultuous intellectual battles.

Don McLeroy is a dentist, Sunday school teacher and an avowed young-earth creationist. After briefly serving on his local school board, McLeroy was elected to the Texas State Board of Education and later appointed chairman. During his time on the board, McLeroy has overseen the adoption of new science and history curriculum standards, drawing national attention and placing Texas on the front lines of the so-called “culture wars.”

In his last term, McLeroy, aided by Cynthia Dunbar, an attorney from Houston and professor of law at Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University, finds himself not only fighting to change what students are taught, but fighting to retain his seat on the board. Challenged by Kathy Miller, president of the Texas Freedom Network, a nonpartisan group that supports religious freedom and individual liberties, and Ron Wetherington, an anthropology professor from Southern Methodist University, McLeroy faces his toughest term yet.

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