



Texas Transforms K-12 Education with Innovative Policy



“One size does not fit all. Local schools want to choose the solution or combination that will work for them.”

– Anita Givens,
Associate Commissioner of
Standards and Programs, Texas

Overview

When Texas set out to accelerate the transformation to 21st century education for all its students, it started at the top. The state recently passed legislation that allows schools and teachers to use traditional textbook funding for digital content and technology. Developed in collaboration with educators and both print and digital educational publishers, the legislation is forging new ground in education innovation. Texas is demonstrating the vital role policy makers can take in ensuring that high-quality education goes hand-in-hand with access.

Preparing Today’s Students for Tomorrow

Texas policy makers began with a close look at the impact technology has on the world we live in today—and a commitment to prepare students for their future. They assessed the challenge of delivering quality instructional materials to over 4.8 million students, while providing quality, flexibility, and economies of scale. They found digital content had the potential to meet the needs of new generations of learners comfortable with technology and Web 2.0 tools—and decided to ensure these engaging learning opportunities were aligned to state standards.

More Choices

In essence, the legislation allows schools and teachers to use textbook funds for electronic textbooks and the technological equipment needed to bring digital content into classrooms. It includes a bill (HB 2488) supporting inclusion of open source textbooks—giving schools even more options. Electronic textbooks are broadly defined and include educational software applications, CD-ROMs, tools, models, online courseware and services, and open source materials. Unlike print

content, which has to be repurchased when updates occur, under qualifying circumstances, digital and open source materials have the advantage of being modifiable to suit specific curriculum goals and lesson plans.

Allowing technology purchases is a powerful component of the new policy—legislators saw that schools could not take advantage of digital materials without the infrastructure hardware and teaching and learning platforms to use them. “Teachers may be reluctant to rely on digital content, if they also have to provide alternatives to meet the needs of students who don’t have access to the hardware. When digital content is used in lieu of traditional textbooks, every student must have access,” says Texas Associate Commissioner of Standards and Programs, Anita Givens. “School districts often are very interested in using digital content, but do not have sufficient resources to provide the hardware to the teachers and students to ensure meaningful access. When sufficient hardware is available, digital content is likely to be used in more subject areas, more grade levels, and embraced by more teachers, students, and parents.”

Informed Content Creators

The State considered educational publishers an important collaborator, and called for digital instructional materials in core competencies in both English and Spanish. Interested publishers are developing effective electronic materials, CDs, and PDFs that take full advantage of the new media, including training and assessment. For example, embedded assessments in digital content are providing ongoing data to teachers and informing instruction. Once curricula materials are approved, local district purchases may be made or a statewide license acquired, simplifying management for school IT.

“To help our students compete in a knowledge-based economy, we need to give them 21st century tools. House Bill 4294, which passed the Texas Legislature in 2009, is bringing world-class, interactive instructional materials to our 4.8 million public school students. I hope the exciting innovations taking place in Texas will spread to other states.”

—Representative Dan Branch,
Texas State Legislature

Trusted Teaching and Learning Materials

Because the State provides a list of validated digital learning materials, educators can choose the options that best fit their student population and pedagogy, confident that the materials are high quality and meet state standards. For products approved for the Commissioner’s list and state-developed or state-owned digital content, the process includes review by teachers and other experts to ensure content is aligned to standards and free from factual errors. Says Givens, “One of the concerns is the quality and accuracy of available content, and the time educators spend looking for and selecting content to use in their classrooms. By identifying open source and digital content in legislation and providing the conditions for validating alignment to state standards and accuracy, local districts may be more confident in locating and using that digital content.”

GETTING STARTED

Texas school districts and educators can begin taking advantage of the new legislation immediately. Options for allocating instructional material funds include:

- State Board of Education-adopted materials (print and electronic)
- The Commissioner’s list of electronic instructional materials
- University-developed open source materials (may be available in 2011)
- State-owned open source materials (may be available in 2011)
- Technology equipment



In Texas, digital content and technology are possibilities for all students. Digital content can bring additional options and formats to meet the needs of ESL students and students with learning disabilities. Special and bilingual state-developed open source textbooks and electronic textbooks must meet the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard, to the practical extent determined by the commissioner. The state already provides textbooks in English and Spanish for grades K-6, and Braille, large-type, and audio formats for blind and visually impaired students.

“Curious, eager minds...are the foundation for world-changing innovation.”

-Paul Otellini, President and CEO, Intel Corporation

Providing a Model for Other States

As educators explore the best combination of print, digital content, and technology, Texas is taking the steps necessary to validate and empower schools by putting essential policies, procedures, and programs in place. Texas legislators are succeeding in part because of their openness and collaborative spirit toward working with a broad range of concerned stakeholders, and consideration for the needs of all impacted constituents, from K-12 students to parents, teachers, and school administrators. They see their model for education reform as a work-in-progress and urge other states to enter the conversation. As Givens notes, “During the legislative session when these bills were under consideration, those who were enthusiastic about the possibilities were eager to share their stories with us and the legislature. We anticipate learning a lot more as the processes unfold.”

WHAT MAKES TEXAS STAND OUT

1. Finding ways to use existing funding differently in support of 21st century education
2. Giving schools and teachers the option to choose the mix of print and digital content and technology that’s right for their students and requirements
3. Allowing technology purchases with instructional materials funds, so schools can make use of digital offerings
4. Encouraging use of digital and open source content, which can be modified and updated as needed
5. Putting the structure in place to validate digital content, ensuring offerings are pre-approved and meet state standards
6. Listening to stakeholders, including districts, educators, parents, students, and educational publishers



Texas Transforms K-12 Education with Innovative Policy

For more information on how to apply the new Texas education policies to your district or school, visit the Texas Education Agency website at: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/adoptprocess/index.html>

To learn about Intel® technology solutions and programs for education, visit <http://www.intel.com/education/>.

INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED IN CONNECTION WITH INTEL® PRODUCTS. NO LICENSE, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, BY ESTOPPEL OR OTHERWISE, TO ANY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IS GRANTED BY THIS DOCUMENT. EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN INTEL'S TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE FOR SUCH PRODUCTS, INTEL ASSUMES NO LIABILITY WHATSOEVER, AND INTEL DISCLAIMS ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTY, RELATING TO SALE AND/OR USE OF INTEL PRODUCTS INCLUDING LIABILITY OR WARRANTIES RELATING TO FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, MERCHANTABILITY, OR INFRINGEMENT OF ANY PATENT, COPYRIGHT OR OTHER INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHT. UNLESS OTHERWISE AGREED IN WRITING BY INTEL, THE INTEL PRODUCTS ARE NOT DESIGNED NOR INTENDED FOR ANY APPLICATION IN WHICH THE FAILURE OF THE INTEL PRODUCT COULD CREATE A SITUATION WHERE PERSONAL INJURY OR DEATH MAY OCCUR.

Intel may make changes to specifications and product descriptions at any time, without notice. Designers must not rely on the absence or characteristics of any features or instructions marked "reserved" or "undefined." Intel reserves these for future definition and shall have no responsibility whatsoever for conflicts or incompatibilities arising from future changes to them. The information here is subject to change without notice. Do not finalize a design with this information.

The products described in this document may contain design defects or errors known as errata which may cause the product to deviate from published specifications. Current characterized errata are available on request. Contact your local Intel sales office or your distributor to obtain the latest specifications and before placing your product order. Copies of documents which have an order number and are referenced in this document, or other Intel literature, may be obtained by calling 1-800-548-4725, or by visiting Intel's Web site at www.intel.com.

© 2010, Intel Corporation. All rights reserved. Intel and the Intel logo are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and other countries.

*Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others.

Printed in USA

0910/EL/CMD/PDF

 Please Recycle

324059-001US

