



## **Managing the Transition in Curriculum:**

### **Texas must proceed carefully with open-source materials and technology**

In 2010, Texas schools will adopt new English Language Arts curriculum for grades K-12. This reading adoption, as it is commonly called, is the most important adoption in decade, and will be the most important for the next decade.

Also in 2010 Texas school districts will be faced with new open-source textbook materials, and be permitted to use state allocated textbook funds for technology purchases for the first time.

At the same time, nothing has changed the state's obligation to provide every student with access to quality, research-based instructional materials. All students must receive these new TEKs-aligned reading materials in 2010.

The transition to technology in the classroom represents a dramatic step forward. Digital content and delivery of instructional material can only improve performance for Texas students. But the same oversight, review and regulation that the state has always used with print materials should apply to digital and online content as well.

And Texas still must meet its obligation to provide all students with access to this instructional material before any curriculum funds are expended on technology purchases.

State officials should move carefully and implement these changes with deliberation.

The reading adoption is not one that we can afford to compromise.

House Bill 2488, the legislation which created the open-source textbook process, and House Bill 4294, a technology equipment measure, are moving quickly through the rulemaking process at TEA and will undoubtedly change the way students receive and process information.

If both bills are implemented carefully, they will improve Texas education. However, the rulemaking process must insure full alignment of new open-source instructional materials with state standards, and the funding of instructional content must not be sacrificed for technology equipment purchases.

## **HB 2488: Open Source Textbooks**

Texas has a well-known reputation for delivering high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum to our schoolchildren.

The implementation of HB 2488 must insure full alignment of new open-source instructional materials with state standards. In order to continue improving public education in Texas and maintain the highest level of curriculum standards, we must include the public in the instructional materials review process. The implementation of HB 2488 should be transparent and provide an opportunity for parents, educators and citizens to review the proposed materials.

Texas schoolchildren deserve to receive high-quality instructional materials based on the highest quality standards. Anything less would be less than satisfactory and result in low-quality curriculum for our Texas students.

## **HB 4294 must not divert instructional materials funding for technology purchases**

This new measure, which took effect Sept. 1, 2009, allows districts to use any savings it accrues by purchasing electronic instructional materials to be applied to the purchase of technology to deliver those digital offerings.

The state's obligation to provide access to new curriculum to all students remains unaltered. The requirement to provide the content for all students still comes before any equipment purchases.

The state textbook fund is designed to deliver instructional content. In many cases, that content is already delivered in both print and electronic formats, which enables school districts to make flexible and informed choices on classroom implementation. Technology and digital content play increasingly important roles in publisher-developed instructional systems, including dedicated websites to support the student textbook, electronic lesson plans correlated to state standards, links to digital support materials and standalone CDs and DVDS.

As the state manages this transition to greater technology offerings in public education, it cannot abandon the state's commitment to top-notch curriculum and content.

Texas has an important job to do. The state must continue to ensure that every student receives the instructional content guaranteed by the Texas Constitution.