



Software & Information  
Industry Association

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April 28, 2003

The Honorable Arlene Wohlgemuth  
Texas House of Representatives  
Capitol Office  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768

**RE: SUPPORT OF STATE EDUCATION FUNDING FOR TECHNOLOGY  
APPLICATIONS INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Dear Representative Wohlgemuth:

On behalf of teachers, school leaders, high-tech employers, educational organizations, educational publishers and other concerned stakeholders in Texas and around the nation, we write to urge your support for full funding of the pending Proclamations for state adoption of K-12 instructional materials, and particularly the Technology Applications adoption, as you consider the Texas Education Agency's pending biennial budget.

As Texas strives to build on its recent educational successes, state support for instructional materials updated and aligned to the evolving Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is critical to improving student achievement. Similarly, as Texas focuses on ensuring its students possess technology literacy and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, the Technology Applications (TA) adoption in the Proclamation 2001 is especially important. We understand the difficult budget constraints faced by the state and appreciate the efforts to secure additional funding for education, but it is critical that the Texas State Legislature meet its responsibility to adequately fund the state's educational system. Only through full and on-schedule funding for the 2004-2005 TA implementation and other adoption proclamations will schools and teachers have the tools and resources necessary to ensure Texas students possess the knowledge and skills required to become productive citizens.

Our organizations view technology and online learning tools as critical to meeting our education needs and goals. The Texas State Legislature, Board of Education, Education Agency and others signaled their agreement by leading the nation through pledged support for state adoption and funding of the Technology Applications to address the relevant TEKS. In doing so, state leaders demonstrated their commitment to ensuring students have the resources necessary to meet our information and communications technology (ICT) literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning goals. State leaders also signaled their interest in transforming educational practice through integration of online instructional resources that allow for the more customized, engaging and anytime, anywhere learning environment that today's students require to achieve in core subject areas. By making TA instructional materials available, the state will leverage existing technology investment to impact overall student academic performance. Only by teaching to the TA TEKS can the state ensure students meet those standards, address federal No Child Left Behind mandates such as for student technology literacy by Grade 8, and continue towards its bold vision of educational reform through integration of technology and online instructional materials.

However, these efforts can only be as effective as the appropriations to meet the raised goals and expectations. To date there have been no Texas Technology Applications instructional materials available or provided, and thus very little compliance with these TEKS standards. While great strides

have been made in bringing technology and the Internet to the classroom, this state investment in Technology Applications is necessary to ensure all communities have a sustained and stable source of funding to leverage infrastructure investments and meet these needs and goals. Many students now lack the skills and knowledge required by the Technology Applications TEKS, largely due to inequities across Texas school districts in terms of acquiring quality instructional materials. Students and teachers can not prepare for the rigor of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) without the materials to address TEKS-based tests. And because the curriculum is cumulative and each grade supports the next, all years and materials are essential to prepare students for state-mandated tests. Any delay of materials necessary to teach the TA and other TEKS standards and prepare students for the TAKS will therefore be detrimental to students.

Our organizations are also concerned about the unintended consequences a significant reduction or delay in implementation will have on Texas' future ability to meet its goals and needs related to the Technology Application and other TEKS adoptions. In response to this new TA adoption, many educational publishers – including many small publishers new to the Texas adoption process – made significant investments to develop innovative instructional resources tailored to address Texas' unique learning standards and adoption requirements. With these publishers already having made their submissions for review on April 9th, most have similarly committed by now nearly all of their substantial product development investment. All relied in good faith on Texas' intent as expressed in the Proclamation 2001. The state's failure to follow through with the previously articulated resources will not only do irreparable harm to many of these vital educational partners, but will also make it more difficult in the future when the state seeks publishers for this and other state adoptions.

We therefore urge this Committee and the Texas State Senate to ensure the state does not cede its leadership role in education, integration of instructional technology and student achievement. The Technology Applications adoption will provide an important step toward improving learning resources and ensuring student achievement and preparation, but these goals and requirements can only be achieved if the state's vision is matched by the investment. Cuts would drastically reduce funding for instructional materials that have been instrumental in the progress that our public education system has made in the last decade and that now makes Texas a model for the rest of the nation. With the exception of money spent on teachers, the most important money spent in education is on instructional materials. With these funds traditionally representing only about 1 penny out of every dollar Texas spends for public education, proposed cuts are not an effective place to find savings. At a time when we have greatly raised accountability standards on our students, teachers and schools, we cannot afford to weaken the very programs that have proven so successful in helping them meet those challenges.

Our organizations and educational stakeholders look forward to working with you to achieve the support for pending Proclamations for state adoption of K-12 instructional materials, and particularly the Technology Applications adoption of Proclamation 2001 as you consider the Texas Education Agency's upcoming budget. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact any of the organizations or individuals listed below or in the attached document.

Sincerely,

**AeA**  
**Software & Information Industry Association**  
**Consortium for School Networking**  
**Texas Technology Education Coalition**  
**International Society for Technology in Education**

**IBM**  
**Apple Computer, Inc.**  
**Texas Instruments, Inc.**  
**Texas Association of Business**

### **About the Signatory Organizations**

**AeA**. AeA is the nation's largest high-tech trade association with more than 3,000 member companies that span the high-tech product spectrum, from semiconductors and software to computers and telecommunications systems. Currently, AeA represents more than 200 high-tech member companies across Texas and has offices in Dallas and Austin. Our Texas membership includes over 80 manufacturing sites, providing some 175,000 to Texans. For more information, please contact Steve Kester, Vice President for State Public Policy: [Steven.Kester@aeanet.org](mailto:Steven.Kester@aeanet.org); (512) 474-4403.

**Consortium for School Networking** (CoSN). CoSN is a national nonprofit organization, promotes the use of information technologies and the Internet in K-12 education to improve learning. Our members represent school districts, state and local education agencies, nonprofits, companies and individuals across the nation and in Texas who share our vision. For more information related to CoSN policy positions, please contact Jee Hang Lee at [jhlee@lharris.com](mailto:jhlee@lharris.com) or (202) 478-6131.

**International Society for Technology in Education** (ISTE). ISTE is a nonprofit professional organization with a worldwide membership of leaders and potential leaders in educational technology. We are dedicated to providing leadership and service to improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in K-12 education and teacher education. We provide our members with information, networking opportunities, and guidance as they face the challenge of incorporating computers, the Internet, and other new technologies into their schools. For more information related to CoSN policy positions, please contact Jee Hang Lee at [jhlee@lharris.com](mailto:jhlee@lharris.com) or (202) 478-6131.

**Software & Information Industry Association** (SIIA; [www.siiia.net](http://www.siiia.net)). SIIA is the principal trade association of the software code and digital content industries, representing more than 650 leading high-tech companies that publish for business, education, entertainment, consumers and the Internet. SIIA's members include Apple, AOL Time Warner, Citrix Systems, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Novell, Oracle, Reed Elsevier, Sun Microsystems and Thomson Corporation, as well as 22 Texas companies including Texas Instruments. All SIIA member companies depend on the nation's schools to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become productive citizens and help fill the nation's need for skilled high-tech workers. For more information, please contact Mark Schneiderman, Director of Education Policy at [marks@siiia.net](mailto:marks@siiia.net) or (202) 789-4444.