

March 10, 2010

Austin American-Statesman
Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

As the Executive Director of the American Association of Publishers' School Division (AAP), I'm writing in response to the March 10, 2010 article, "Budget Woes, Technology Advances Make Battles over Book Content Less Important" by Kate Alexander. I commend the *Statesman's* front page coverage of this critical issue—the transition to digital instructional materials for students—and want to underscore the importance of ensuring quality educational content for Texas schoolchildren in the midst of this transition.

Regardless of the shifting influence of the State Board of Education and the Texas Commissioner of Education in the selection process, one criterion should remain paramount when choosing instructional materials and programs for Texas students: top-notch content. Publishers remain focused on providing the highest quality content and most advanced learning systems for students, whether the educational materials are a traditional textbook with an accompanying DVD or an electronic learning program delivered digitally.

Today, publishers develop comprehensive learning systems delivered in both print and electronic media. These programs are based on the latest scientific research, include instructional strategies to help students of all ability levels learn and are aligned with Texas Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards.

As mentioned in the article, Texas school districts in 2010 will have for the first time ever the option of choosing new open-source materials for the classroom. The introduction of open-source materials into the classroom is a promising step forward for public education, but also a step that must be taken with the proper safeguards to avoid the mistakes other states have made with open-source content.

Integrated, high quality curricula are designed to scaffold and build upon concepts students have learned and to provide students with a breadth and depth of knowledge. Legislators must champion the right of every child to have access to effective learning materials and be wary of siphoning resources away from basic student knowledge.

Sincerely,

Jay Diskey
AAP School Division