



## **Texas Association of Supervisors of Mathematics**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Math Educators Call on Legislative Candidates to Fund New Math Textbooks for Texas Classrooms**

(March 3, 2006 AUSTIN, Texas) – The Texas Council of Mathematics Teachers (TCMT) and the Texas Association of Supervisors of Mathematics (TASM) marked the upcoming observance of *Mathematics Education Awareness Month* with a call on all officeholders and candidates for the Texas Legislature to support funding for new textbooks scheduled for the state’s classrooms in 2007.

“We are appealing to candidates and officeholders alike to approve funding for new mathematics instructional materials,” said Jim Wohlgehagen, Ph.D, president of TASM.

In both 2003 and 2005, the Legislature failed to fully fund textbooks the State Board of Education had ordered.

“We simply cannot afford for that to happen in 2007, districts are expecting new instructional materials for middle school and high school math and the need for these materials is dire,” said Wohlgehagen,

In Texas, textbooks for public schools are funded from an endowment which was established by Texas lawmakers over 150 years ago with money from oil and gas interests on state-owned land. In 1876, the Texas Constitution was amended to appoint a State Board of Education to manage the Fund and use the revenue to ensure every child in public schools in Texas had a book.

Currently, the amount of money in the endowment hovers around \$20 billion dollars, generating approximately \$800 million a year in interest. That interest -- called the Available school Fund (ASF) --- is what has caused contention in the Texas Legislature in the last

several years because the Legislature now has the authority to determine what amount of money from the ASF should be spent on books, while the remainder can go into the general pot of money for education. Since this money is not generated by tax dollars it is a very attractive source of education funding.

“We appreciate the fact that the Legislature is struggling with an enormous task to finance public education in Texas. However, dollars for textbooks---including invaluable lesson plans and supporting materials ranging from interactive software to CD Roms--- have always represented a miniscule amount of the total public education bill, they are not dependent on tax dollars and afford every school district in Texas with equal access to quality instructional materials,” said Michelle King, government relations representative for TASM.

“It is a system that provides an equitable opportunity to update instructional resources to address the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and we are committed to reminding officeholders and candidates of its importance,” King said.

The current books are not aligned to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) 2000 Principles and Standards for School Mathematics. According to Dr. Cynthia Schneider, president of the Texas counterpart TCTM, "The mathematics textbooks in classrooms today are out-of-date. They are not aligned to the state curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, revised in 2005. These books are also falling apart, their natural life span is only so long. We also need to consider how much technology has changed our educational environment since 1998, the last mathematics adoption year, and be sure our mathematics textbooks reflect these changes."

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