

**Testimony of Sandy Kendell in Favor of SB6 before the
Senate Education Committee
March 29, 2011**

Thank you for hearing my testimony today.

My name is Sandy Kendell and I am a career educator. I have a master's degree in Educational Technology Leadership and 18 years of experience in K-12 public education, including 8 years in the classroom, 6 years as a campus-level technology facilitator, and 4 years as a district-level instructional technology specialist in Georgetown ISD.

It is from all of these perspectives that I am here today to support the passage of SB6 and the resulting institution of an Instructional Materials Allotment. There are three primary reasons for my support of this bill.

First, the time when textbooks encompassed the sum of all knowledge needed in a course of study has passed us by. During the master's degree I just completed, my learning came from traditional, video and multimedia presentations, articles pulled from research journals in digital format, online web resources, and an online textbook which with links and multimedia embedded throughout to help me delve deeper into the curriculum I was studying. Everything I accessed was an instructional material with content relevant to my course of study. Expanding the definition of "instructional materials" to include but also move beyond a traditional print textbook acknowledges what we know to be true about the nature of education in 2011 and beyond – relevant instructional content can be found in a variety of formats, and each of those formats has the potential to speak to the diverse learning styles of our students.

Second, one of the aspects of being able to purchase digital instructional materials which excites me the most, and which my superintendent also highlighted when I conversed with him yesterday regarding SB6 and my testimony today, is the frequency with which digital materials can be updated as compared to traditional print materials. Depending on whose research you read, the sum of human knowledge doubles conservatively every five years and less conservatively every 18 months. To rely completely on bound print materials which may not contain the latest information even as they are published is to deny our students access to the latest knowledge. SB6 will allow districts to purchase materials which can be updated as soon as new breakthroughs come to light, whether they are breakthroughs in content or the best methods for delivering the content. Even as we learn more about learning itself, we can incorporate best practices through changing up lesson delivery models. Access to a variety of instructional materials will empower educators to teach students the latest information and problem solving skills using the latest proven instructional techniques.

Finally, inclusion of a provision for purchasing technological equipment and training using funds from the Instructional Materials Allotment is a key provision of SB6. According to the *TEA Progress Report on the 2006-2010 Long Range Plan for Technology*, released in December 2010, 59.3% of Texas educators rate themselves as developing in their use of technology in their classrooms in a primarily teacher-directed manner with students utilizing technology on an individual basis to complete assignments. Another 37.8% of Texas teachers self-reported as advanced in their use of instructional technology, which means they facilitate students use of technology in “work(ing) with peers and experts to evaluate information, analyze data and content in order to problem solve” and engage in higher order thinking and collaborative efforts.

The encouraging news is, Texas teachers are using technology. However, when the 2.1% of teachers who still rate themselves at a very beginning/early tech level are factored in, **99.1% of Texas teachers and classrooms still need to grow to the Target Tech level set by the State by for the year 2020.** This level is exemplified by “Students hav(ing) **on-demand access to all appropriate digital resources and technologies to complete activities that have been seamlessly integrated into all core content areas, providing learning opportunities beyond the classroom that are not otherwise possible.**” School districts have been using the \$30 per student technology allotment for the last 20 years to continually increase the integration of technology into teaching and learning. In the absence of technology allotment funding going forward, it is critical that districts have access to the funds in SB6’s Instructional Materials Allotment to provide the equipment for accessing digital resources as well as the training necessary to facilitate the pedagogical paradigm shift required to fully leverage these resources.

In conclusion, the structure of the proposed Instructional Materials Allotment in SB6 allows districts to move at their own pace in the utilization of nontraditional materials. If they so choose, they can continue to buy textbooks just as they always have. But for those who are moving toward Target Tech, the opportunity to bring in digital resources and the equipment to access those resources is critical. 2020, the date Texas set for Target Tech, is only nine years away, and districts need every resource possible at their disposal reach the target.

I encourage the passage of SB6 and implementation of the funding structure to begin this biennium.

Thank you.

*Statistics and quotations taken from the Texas Education Agency
2010 Progress Report on the Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006-2020, accessed at
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147490399&libID=2147490397>