



# TEXTBOOK COORDINATORS' ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

## Statement by Brian Squyres President, Textbook Coordinators' Association of Texas

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### Chairman Shapiro, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me time to speak to you this morning.

I am the textbook manager for Northside ISD in San Antonio and have the honor of serving as president of the Textbook Coordinators' Association of Texas, or as we call it: T-CAT.

As you know, every school district and open enrollment charter school has a textbook coordinator, responsible for ordering, processing, inventorying and distributing instructional materials – printed or electronic – into the hands of 4-plus million Texas schoolchildren.

We're the folks in the trenches. TCAT also is the only entity in the state – private or public – that provides general, hands-on training for coordinators, at our annual conferences. Being a coordinator is tough and often thankless work, and the turnover rate is high. Our conferences draw more than 300 attendees, and every year almost a third are newly named coordinators at their respective schools.

As you review House Bill 188 and its changes that are dependent on legislative action in the 81st session, TCAT is eager to provide any information or support your Committee might need.

As we all aspire to lower the price tag for instructional materials, it becomes more important to make the most efficient use of textbooks that the State has already purchased.

Our membership feels that the Legislature should broaden its view and address the recommendations of the State Auditor's report last March, including establishment and funding of a surplus redistribution center to end the inefficient – and costly – system that has been cobbled together since 2003.

I and other TCAT members are working with Texas Education Agency contractors to re-conceptualize one portion of the computer system that tracks orders and inventory of textbooks. That system, EMAT, must be more robust to handle an increasing variety of instructional materials and increasingly complex transactions, such as the credit system envisioned by HB188. That robustness will require some money, but we think it will be well-spent to track and account for the billions of dollars the state invests in its instructional materials.

Nobody wants the state to spend more than it needs to for instructional materials. At the same time, nobody wants a child to wait longer than necessary for the knowledge in those instructional materials.

TCAT welcomes the opportunity to work with you to strike that balance.