



October 30, 2012

**Testimony Submitted to the Texas Senate Education Committee  
Comments of Jennifer Bergland, Director of Government Relations**

Chairmen and Members of the Committee,

SB 6 significantly changed the laws regarding the purchase of instructional materials. It provided districts more flexibility in the selection of materials that are used in their classrooms. Instead of districts having to choose from a select few textbooks that were then purchased by the state and delivered to the school districts, they now have an Instructional Material Allotment (IMA) that can be used by each district to choose the instructional materials that best meet the needs of their students. The IMA is also to be used as a replacement for the Technology Allotment that was placed in state statute in 1992 in order to assist districts in meeting the goals of the Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology.

The freedom to choose resources that best meet the district's needs came with additional responsibility to ensure that these resources were properly reviewed to make sure they were aligned to the state and district curriculum. This additional responsibility has taken time for both the districts and the state to implement. It has taken a year to fully grasp the myriad of changes that have cascaded from this law. TCEA has always been, and is still, supportive of the local control that SB 6 has afforded school districts and has been working collaboratively with TASB, TASA, IMCAT, TASBO, and TEA to help districts adjust to the new law.

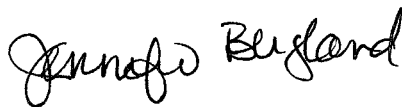
In this biennium, school districts received approximately \$158 per student in Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) funding, with which to purchase instructional materials and technology. For the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, the law directs districts to purchase instructional materials that help prepare students for the STAAR exams. As a result, districts have used over 90% of the utilized IMA for instructional materials and only 10% has been spent on technology related purchases<sup>1</sup>.

A district's unspent IMA balance rolls forward to the next school year. According to TEA expenditure reports, districts have spent 67% of this biennium's IMA. Some districts are accumulating a balance in their account. Uncertainty about the future may be a reason<sup>1</sup>. In the 2012-2013 biennium, the only required newly adopted instructional materials were supplemental science and language arts. Many districts seem to be saving their Instructional Materials Allotment to purchase the new math, science, and technology applications materials when they become available in 2014.

As with any new law, the implementation produces some issues that need to be monitored and possibly addressed. As of October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, school districts have spent only \$50,195,745 of the Instructional Materials Allotment for technology-related purchases in this biennium<sup>1</sup>. In the past, approximately \$135 million was appropriated for the Technology Allotment for each school year so that they could purchase technological equipment, services, resources, and professional development. Since the IMA funding has not totally replaced the Technology Allotment, school districts are making difficult decisions that have impacted their ability to meet the goals of the state's technology plan. Without adequate funding, Texas schools will be unable to provide students and teachers with the digital resources that are absolutely necessary to transform the one-size-fits-all education model to one that ensures that a student's educational path, curriculum, and instruction are personalized to meet his/her unique strengths and weaknesses, interests, and ways of learning.

It is still early in the 2012-2013 school year, so no one can be certain how much of the allotment districts will spend in the remainder of the school year. However, we urge the Texas legislature to monitor the use of the IMA to ensure that there is adequate funding for both the instructional materials and technology that is necessary to prepare our students for a society and workforce that is dependent on a rapidly changing flow of information due to technological advances.

Respectfully,



Jennifer Bergland  
Director of Government Relations

---

<sup>1</sup> Texas. Education Agency. *Instructional Materials Allotment Expenditures Report*. October 27, 2012