TREx General Information FAQ

1. What is TREx?

    Answer: **T**exas student **R**ecords **E**lectronic e**X**change system (TREx) is a web-based application for the exchange of electronic student records between Texas public school districts* and for the submission of electronic transcripts to Texas public colleges and universities.

    * For convenience, "school districts" is used to refer to open-enrollment charters and independent, consolidated, municipal, and common school districts.

2. Will Texas school districts be required to use TREx?

    Answer: Yes. House Bill 1 (HB1) of the 3rd called session of the State of Texas 79th Legislature states "Each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and institution of higher education shall participate in an electronic student records system."

3. What is the purpose of TREx?

    Answer: The application electronically moves student records from the sending school to the receiving school in Texas. Additionally, a Texas public school district can use the application to move student transcripts from the sending school district to a receiving Institute of Higher Education (IHE) that is a member of the UT Austin SPEEDE server service.

4. Is there a cost to the school districts to use this system?

    Answer: No. The Texas Legislature has funded the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for this service.

5. How does TREx work?

    Answer: Section 1 of the *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards* describes the both student record transfer and the high school transcript transfer processes in detail. The data standards are available on the TREx project web page at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/trex/. A brief description of the student record transfer process follows:

    -   A school district creates a records transfer request from within the application. This request containing student identifying information is sent to the exiting school district.
    -   The sending school district can accept, place on hold, or reject the request. The registrar or counselor who receives this request has the ability to create notes to describe why the request was accepted, placed on hold, or rejected.
    -   The sending school district creates an extract from their local student information system with the student record data a selected student.
    -   The sending school district uses the TREx application to send the extract file with shipping information (i.e. send to information) to the receiving school district.
    -   The receiving school district receives the student record file at the user's workstation.
    -   The receiving school district is able to use the student's information to ensure accurate placement for the student.

6. Will TREx create the file from data that exists within the school district's student information system (SIS)?

    Answer: No. TREx does not have the ability to extract information from the school district's SIS. The student information system needs to create the electronic student record used as input to TREx in the extract file as specified in the *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards*, which are available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/trex/

7. After a school district receives a students record, will TREx have the ability to import the record into the school district's SIS.

    Answer: No. TREx delivers the student's information in an electronic XML format. The ability to import the student's record is a function that must exist within the school district's SIS.

8. Will the receiving school district be able to review the data prior to importing to the school district's SIS?

   Answer: The data will be viewable within TREx. How or if the data is imported is a function of the school district's SIS.

9. Will changes be required within our student information system (SIS) to use this application?

   Answer: The most effective and efficient way for a school district to use this application will require software changes to the school district's SIS to create an electronic XML format file.

10. Will the district software vendor charge us to use this system?

    Answer: TEA does not have the authority to direct the relationship of the school district and their student information system (SIS) software vendor.

11. How is this application a net savings to the school districts?

    Answer: The TREx application offers a fast, secure, reliable, and consistent method of transferring student information. The *TREx Data Standards* support this application and assist in creating a standard set of information needed to ensure a successful transfer of data. TEA conducted a study of student records transfer costs prior to the approval of funding for this application and the numbers are included as follows:
    - Manual transfer - a school district expends $ 7.50 for each manual student records transfer.
      $ 13.00 per hour paid in direct labor costs.
      30 minutes required for each record transfer.
      This cost estimate does not include phone charges to fax, postage to mail or the cost to the student and family if the student is placed in the wrong educational environment while waiting on the arrival of the student's record.
    - TREx transfer – 44 cents for each electronic records transfer.
      $ 13.00 per hour paid in direct labor costs.
      2 minutes required for each record transfer.

12. If we currently have a contract with a software vendor for this service, can we continue to use their service?

    Answer: House Bill 1 (HB1) of the 3rd called session of the State of Texas 79th Legislature states that each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and institution of higher education shall participate in the TREx electronic student records system.

13. Who will train district and campus personnel to use TREx?

    Answer: TEA will train the Education Service Centers (ESCs) and the ESCs will train the school personnel. This education model is similar to other applications offered by TEA.

14. Will there be special training for sending transcripts to UT/SPEEDE server?

    Answer: This will be included in the TREx training as one of the major functions of the application. TEA will ensure the ESCs have adequate training to instruct the schools.

15. When will training take place?

    Answer: TEA will conduct the ESC training on July 31 at the Agency. This will be a hands-on training session using the train-the-trainer approach. Each ESC will set up training schedules and notify their school personnel.

16. When are districts expected to have the new XML format file process from their SIS?

    Answer: Some software vendors will create the student information XML file within their student information system (SIS) at the time TREx is available on September 1, 2007. See #17 below.

17. What is the last date for districts to begin participation?

    Answer: TEA expects everyone to be using TREx no later than February 1, 2008. Please reference the project timeline in Section 1 of the *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards* manual, which is available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/trex/.

18. What happens if a selected student record is not available electronically?

    Answer: The TREx application allows the registrar, counselor, or admissions person to enter the student information on-line manually.

19. When will the *TREx Data Standards* be available?

    Answer: The preliminary *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards* manual is available now at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/trex/.

20. Can TREx be used for older student records that are currently on microfiche?

    Answer: In this case, users will be required to manually enter the minimum required fields on-line then attached the scanned transcript.