

Welcome Back To School!

First, let us welcome you to the 2012-2013 school year and wish you a very exciting and productive year! In this edition of the newsletter, we will share the latest resources and information in educational technology.

Educational Technology Website

To begin the update, we would like to bring to your attention our [newly revised Educational Technology website](#). The following categories of information are provided:

- Technology Planning and Funding;
- School Technology Planning, E-Rate, and Reporting;
- Online Professional Development, Tools and Resources;
- State Funds and Most Recent Grants;
- Other State Information and Resources; and
- National Reports and Studies.

Enjoy learning about educational technology!

Texas Education Today

New graduation requirements, efforts to update the Fine Arts curriculum standards and changing leadership at the Texas Education Agency are some of the topics covered in the [July Texas Education Today](#) newsletter. New 2012–2013 Graduation Credit Requirements charts are provided.

These charts provide graduation plan information that includes several Technology Applications courses. “A student may now take Digital Art and Animation or 3-D Modeling and Animation to satisfy the Fine Arts graduation requirement.” AP Computer Science remains as an option for the mathematics graduation credit.

Connected Educator Month

You are returning to school as the nation is in the midst of August *Connected Educator Month*. The U.S. Department of Education declared August *Connected Educator Month* which is aimed at broadening and deepening educator participation in online communities and networks while providing opportunities for education leaders to work together to move the field forward.

What’s the buzz in education for 2012-2013? Get in the know without going anywhere during [Connected Educator Month](#), a unique all-online opportunity to take control of your professional development, with a little help from your friends and many of education’s leaders. This opportunity features events and activities ranging from starter kits to contests and challenges, from more than 60 of the nation’s education organizations, communities, and companies.

Progress Report on the Long-Range Plan

As our division works on the Progress Report on the Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006-2020, we would like to invite schools to share success stories, photos, and videos exemplifying digital learning in your classrooms, schools, and homes. The progress report will be shared at the beginning of the next legislative session. If you would like to submit success stories to be considered for selection in the report, please send them to tammy.brite@tea.state.tx.us by October 1, 2012.

Revised Technology Applications Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

The revised Technology Applications TEKS adopted by the SBOE may be accessed on the [TEA rules page](#). These TEKS are for students at grades K-12. They are effective beginning with school year 2012-2013.

New Horizons in Project Share - The Launch of the Project Share Gateway

Project Share takes Texas educators and students beyond the walls of the traditional classroom and gives them an online environment of educational resources that incorporates the use of today's digital tools. [Take a look at our new features](#).

The Project Share gateway is designed to provide faster, easier access to online resources for educators, students, parents, and community members. Anyone visiting the home page will now be able to search for resources by student expectations (SEs) as listed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Search results will provide instant access to videos, interactives, links to other educational sites, online courses, and other instructional resources.

The Project Share gateway will have resources you can use in and outside of the classroom this fall. Watch for them at the [Project Share Gateway](#).

Project Share Professional Development

Explore the [new online PD courses](#) available in Project Share, including new courses in mathematics, English language arts and reading, Career and Technical Education, and Technology Applications. Contact your [local education service center](#) for more information on access to these courses. For all of the courses available, visit the [course catalog](#).

New Professional Development for Technology Applications TEKS

The new [Technology Applications TEKS Professional Development](#) for grades K-8 is being released by TEA. High School Technology Applications TEKS PD is under production now with an anticipated release date in the fall. The facilitated courses are free and will be offered to staff in districts and open-enrollment charter schools with Project Share accounts. They are delivered completely online and the participants will earn 6 CPE hours. Each regional education service center (ESC) has at least one facilitator to offer these courses online through Project Share.

The goal of the new courses is to provide teachers with a core understanding of the new Technology Applications Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8, as well as ways to integrate these standards into everyday learning experiences. Teachers will walk away with an understanding of 21st century learning, how technology can enhance the learning, and how to prepare students to be global citizens.

Contact your [local education service center](#) for more information.

Intel® Teach Elements Courses Available in Project Share

As part of a continuing effort to augment the collection of online resources available to Texas educators, Project Share has expanded its offerings to include Intel® Teach Elements online professional development courses. Intel Teach Elements courses examine strategies for educating 21st century learners and provide animated e-learning tutorials, interactive learning exercises, and offline activities to apply concepts.

For additional information, contact your ESC, the Project Share Gateway [News stream](#), the [Course Catalog](#), and the [@projectsharetx Twitter feed](#).

Texas Education on iTunes U

[Texas Education on iTunes U](#) is a state-of-the-art tool that students and teachers can access in order to ensure students are engaged in an environment that maximizes teaching and learning. The latest collections on Texas Education on iTunes U include:

- Humanities Texas Teacher Enrichment Institutes videos
- New videos from the Texas Archive of the Moving Image, including "Texas: The Big State," a 1952 promotional video
- The City of Austin Watershed protection Department's "Austin Underground"
- New resources from the McDonald Observatory
- New Technology Applications TEKS Videos from Digital Discoveries

Download the iTunes U app for easy access to digital content on Texas Education on iTunes U.

Additional information on Texas Education on iTunes U is found at www.projectsharetx.org.

Texas STaR Chart

The STaR Chart is open for the 2012-2013 school year. At this time, many Texas teachers and librarians are in the process of completing their Texas Teacher STaR Charts.

The STaR Chart system can be found at <http://starchart.epsilon.com/>.

Support for the STaR Chart system has moved to the Texas Education Agency. The email address for support is starchart@tea.state.tx.us.

Enrollment Open for Fall 2012 Texas Virtual School Network Online Courses

If you have students who are in need of courses that aren't offered locally or who need the schedule flexibility or the individualized instruction possible through online learning, the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) can help. Enrollment for online courses offered through the TxVSN statewide course catalog is open for fall 2012. The TxVSN provides quality, teacher-led, interactive online high school, Advanced Placement, and dual credit courses for Texas students in grades 8-12. The TxVSN offers a wide range of foundation and enrichment curriculum courses, languages other than English, and electives. Additional course offerings continue to be added to the catalog. For more information, go to the TxVSN website at www.txvsn.org. For additional assistance or to arrange a webinar or training opportunity for your school or region, contact the TxVSN Help Desk at 866-938-9876.

Virtual Learning Scholarships Available for Texas Virtual School Network Online Courses

School districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating with the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) have the opportunity to apply for [TxVSN Virtual Learning Scholarships \(VLS\)](#). The TxVSN VLS program is designed to provide opportunities for students in grades 8-12 to enroll in TxVSN online high school level courses that meet state graduation plan requirements in the event that other funding is not available. TxVSN VLS will be available for the 2012 -2013 school year. For more details about the TxVSN scholarship program, visit www.txvsn.org.

ePlan

Completion of the STaR Chart is generally the first step in the process as Texas school districts file each year for E-Rate discounts under the federal universal service program. The next step in the process is usually the filing of a school district technology plan in the state's electronic technology planning system known as ePlan. Schools can access their district plans at <https://www.sedl.org/cgi-bin/mysql/eplan/eplan.cgi>.

The Texas Education Agency uses the ePlan system to facilitate the creation, development, submittal and review of school district technology plans.

ePlan Volunteer Reviewers

As part of the ePlan process, each education service center oversees the review of school district technology plans. This review process relies on the use of volunteer reviewers from school districts across the state to recommend plans to the Agency for approval for state technology planning rules, federal funding, and the E-Rate process. Having enough volunteer reviewers ensures that the plan review process moves along efficiently and that target dates can be met. If you or someone else in your district can serve as a volunteer reviewer, please contact your education service center. There can be more than one volunteer reviewer in each district. Contact your ESC if you are interested.

E-Rate

The window for filing E-Rate applications closed on March 20, 2012. Statewide support for the E-Rate program has moved to the Texas Education Agency. Support is also available through the education service centers. Information on the E-Rate program and dates for the filing window are found at <http://www.usac.org/sl>.