

*Families Engaged for
Effective Education*



June 4, 2024

To: Members of the Texas House of Representatives

Subject: Repeal House Bill 1605 - Amplify Vendor Bill

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) opened a modifiable portal for [SBOE review](#) this week. The [letter](#) you recently received from Representative Brad Buckley regarding HB1605 asking you to endorse a product which is not supported by the teachers nor parents is an indication this bill is not being well-received by taxpayers.

The link provided by the TEA to review the OER is not operable and ends the review session before the reviewer can read the full content. The vast majority of the OER content is hidden from view. Additionally, the online portal for parents is dynamic and modifiable. Digitizing instructional materials allows them to be altered at any time without accountability. This essentially nullifies the possibility of Due Process, which is codified in the Fourteenth Amendment. There can be no such thing as transparency with dynamic technology. HB1605 ensures that parents will continue to be excluded from seeing and knowing what their children are learning. The issues with HB1605 are as follows:

Open Education Resources (OER) - OER was listed 65 times in HB1605. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [coined and defined Open Education Resources \(OER\)](#) in 2002 to establish a global curriculum and implement the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) and Agenda 2030. The [US Department of Education defines OER](#) to shift resources from textbooks to technology.

Removes practical control and transparency for parents - HB1605 mandates OER instructional material “allows for free use, reuse, MODIFICATION or sharing with others as described by Section 31.07101” According to the bill, Amplify must be dynamic and [can be modified at any time](#). Parents will not be able to keep up with what their children are being taught. The parent portal was a marketing ploy perpetuated by lobbyists during the legislative session.

Not a classical education - A classical education involves a teacher instructing students with textbooks and time-tested curriculum, not dynamic and modified lessons printed and piled together as scripted lessons to be regurgitated by teachers. [Amplify Texas is a rebranded](#) digital resource to be distributed on 1:1 technology devices purchased by school districts across Texas.

Increases screen time - Technology was mentioned 50 times in HB1605 Under Section 28.0211 of HB1605, “the commissioner shall ensure full subject Tier 1 instructional materials are available as OER instructional materials in an integrated manner and for approximately 240 minutes of instructional time per day including time needed each day for accelerated instruction under Section 28.0211.”

Reduces the role of teacher - Teachers will be relegated to digital facilitators and purveyors of printed manuals with scripted lesson plans, undermining the experience and knowledge of professional educators. A teacher’s time cannot be reallocated to teaching when they are burdened by printing manuals locally and begging for printer paper and limited printing rights.

Common Core - Amplify aligns with the Common Core Standards which is illegal in the State of Texas. Common Core shifts learning away from academic standards to behavioral standards. HB1605 is digital Common Core.

Massive government growth - HB 1605 has a [\\$2.44B fiscal note](#), further expanding the failing TEA. TEA concealed a \$50 million no-bid contract. They spent another \$19M to buy the rights to Amplify Texas. TEA gave another \$84 million consulting contract to the Boston-based Public Consulting Group to revise the curriculum. TEA is now taking bids to revise the revisions.

Money carrot—Based on how districts are funded and grants issued for use of Amplify, schools cannot afford to opt out. Effectively, HB1605 does not give local districts a real option outside of OER (Amplify). HB1605 is a back-door state curriculum that undermines local control and autonomy.

False choices for school districts - House members were told schools could opt out. However, based on how districts are funded and grants are issued for use of the curriculum, the schools cannot afford to opt out. Effectively, the bill does not give local districts realistic options outside of OER.

Texas Education is in trouble - HB1605 aligns with the Texas SBOE Long-Range Plans for Technology (first published in 1988), which aligns with Department of Education National Education Technology Plans (first published in 1996) and UNESCO initiatives.¹ The latest State (and national) education planning documents explicitly recommend a “mastery-or competency-based education learning and assessment system that is self-paced rather than the current system that places students in a particular grade based on their ages. Instruction for each student would be individualized and students would be assessed as they reach certain instructional milestones.”² Powered by adaptive software, “students no longer need to be bound by the traditional classroom space or by traditional learning methods. Data can be used to present the right lessons at the time most needed.”³ The “personalized, flexible, empowered learning environment” envisioned in the SBOE’s [Long-Range Plan for Technology 2018-2023](#) is “conceived as a vision for education by 2030.” Effective June 2021, [Texas Education Code 29.928](#) mandates that “a study on competency-based educational programs” be completed by the end of this year, December 1, 2022. *In short, the “school transformation” movement in Texas is real.*

Creating a new social order - The SBOE published their [Long-Range Plan for Public Education 2018](#). The plan presented a stunning redirection of Texas public school systems, unveiling “student-centered, adaptive learning” as the cornerstone of a new social order. School buildings are to be local outposts of nanny state-satellite centers where computer “data-driven” educational, vocational, health and social services are provided to virtual learners under one roof just like [Jasper’s 1993 New American article](#) forewarns. In the name of “equity, accessibility and personalized learning;” “data-driven and science-based” instruction; “college and career readiness;” “comprehensive counseling and social emotional learning;” “student engagement and student empowerment;” the state is pushing to replace teacher-led learning with computer-led learning, thereby “tying every child into a master computer system.”

¹ For example, 1-1/2 years before the publication of the Visioning Document, the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) published the very same education vision called Vision 2020 in their [Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006-2020](#), wherein they say “in order to have this educational system, Texas must consider extending the traditional boundaries of the school year, scholastic age, and geographic location, and the state must provide both the technology and human infrastructure to facilitate, support and maintain this transformation.”.

² See the [2016 Report to the Governor of Texas and Texas Legislature](#), by the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability (TCNGAA)

³ See the SBOE’s most recent [Long-Range Plan for Technology 2018-2023](#)

There is no status quo - Legislators can demand locally developed curriculum centered on specific content goals, administered by teachers engaged in the conversational Socratic method. Legislators can demand the reprioritization of student: teacher ratios over student-device ratios. Or, legislators can barrel forward into a [brave new world](#) of computer-led learning, where children are programmed for “outcomes” algorithmically defined by unaccountable third-party interests. Legislators can allow children to be subjects in a project where no human answers for anything.

[Families Engaged](#) works with parents, teachers, and school boards across the state. We hear complaints from teachers who became familiar with Amplify when piloted in districts such as Temple ISD, Canyon ISD, and Midland ISD. These are not high-quality instructional materials and require districts to supplement with additional materials. The pilot districts were given stipends from TEA to supplement the content. The results were misleading and gave credit solely to Amplify. Parents are fed up with the technology expansion and do not want their children tracked on devices and their data harvested by vendors and the government.

The unprecedented threats by the tyrannical TEA to takeover districts creates unspoken pressure to comply with “The Agency” to adopt OER. Unfunded mandates contribute to budget deficits giving school districts no choice but to accept the HB 1605 grants. **If a district chooses not to adopt Amplify, will they be targeted for takeover under this Commissioner Morath’s regime?**

Please do not sign another endorsement of this experimental product without understanding the end goal of TEA and Commissioner Morath to shift all learning and assessments from textbooks to technology and digital devices using [AI, machine learning, and predictive analytics](#) in order to usher in UNESCO’s plan for a [global education system](#).

The solutions to fix our failing government schools are:

1. Repeal bad laws like HB1605
2. Abolish TEA and the 20 Regional Service Centers and restore local control
3. Remove behavioral and technology TEKS, education technology and 1:1 devices
4. Return to tried and proven pedagogies (great teachers, strong academic curriculum, books, paper and pencil) and pay the teachers with the money saved on wasteful devices and vendors

Sincerely,

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