TexQuest Collection Development Policy

July 2020

I. Introduction and Collection Scope

TexQuest is a statewide digital resources program that provides anytime, anywhere access to high quality, authoritative digital resources to all educators, students, and students' immediate family members in Texas K-12 public schools and open enrollment charter schools. The TexQuest program enables participating and eligible Texas K-12 public school libraries to broaden the range of materials and services available to their students, teachers, and community to supplement school curriculum. The program is designed to provide a flexible and robust means for school districts to support their learning objectives. The program's digital resources provide access to broad multi-topic, authoritative, full-text content for all levels of K-12 students.

II. Collection Funding

The TexQuest resources are provided, in part, by appropriations from the Texas state Legislature and through the collection of a small participation fee from participating districts.

III. Intellectual Freedom

TexQuest enhances student learning and success in schools by providing digital resources to meet a wide variety of information needs through a program available to all students statewide. The primary objective of TexQuest's digital resources is to assist, enrich, and support instruction and independent learning in Texas K-12 schools. Given finite resources and the diversity of Texas' numerous schools, the program may not meet the digital resource needs of all students.

The school library plays a unique role in educating students about the importance of individual critical thinking and protecting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shapes the resources and services of a school library, the principles of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* apply equally to all libraries, including school libraries. Under these principles, all students have equitable access to library facilities, resources, and instructional programs.

School librarians work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School librarians cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources that meet the needs as well as the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources that support the mission of the school district and are consistent with its philosophy,

goals, and objectives. Resources in school library collections are an integral component of the curriculum and represent diverse points of view on both current and historical issues. These resources include materials that support the intellectual growth, personal development, individual interests, and recreational needs of students.

It is the responsibility of the local education authority (LEA) or school district to adopt policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. It is the responsibility of school librarians to implement their district's policies and procedures in the school to ensure equitable access to resources and services for all students.

IV. Accessibility

All content available through the TexQuest Program must be accessible to users with a wide range of disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, and cognitive limitations.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is required to follow Texas Administrative Code, Title 1, Part 10, Chapter 213, and the Federal Section 508, Accessibility Standards for Electronic and Information Resources to submit a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT). Once received, TSLAC reviews VPATs for compliance with the State of Texas accessibility requirements, based on the federal standards established under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. VPATs that are not in compliance must provide a timeline for correction.

V. Selection Criteria

TexQuest digital resources are selected and purchased through a competitive bid process for specific subject content. These are identified and prioritized by recommendations of the K12 Program Advisory Group, which reviews products for the TexQuest program and solicits and reviews input from member libraries in the Texas school library community. Membership in the Advisory Group is representative of TexQuest member libraries. Advisory Group decisions are guided by the following criteria when making decisions:

- Membership surveys
- Individual school and district input (see details below)
- Usage statistics
- Subject content
- Digital resource content

- Vendor reliability
- Best value

Individual schools and districts can participate in TexQuest digital resources selection by:

- Sending comments and recommendations to the *K12 Program Advisory Group*
- Sending comments and recommendations to *TexQuest staff* (all comments are forwarded to the K12 Program Advisory Group)
- Sending comments and recommendations to *Education Service Center, Region 20* (ESC-20 serves as the TexQuest Support Center: all comments sent to ESC-20 are forwarded to TexQuest staff)
- Filling out and submitting digital resource surveys
- Sending comments during the statewide digital resources trial periods to the K12 Program Advisory Group and TexQuest staff

The TexQuest digital resources offer access to a wealth of material to meet the information needs of Texas K-12 public schools and open enrollment charter schools. Professional librarians select the TexQuest digital resources by a process involving a statewide effort over an extended period. The purchase of digital resources and e-books by TSLAC does not constitute an endorsement of the ideas or opinions expressed in the content of those digital resources and e-books Use of all TexQuest digital resources and e-books is **governed by local library/school policies and procedures**.

School Library Selection Criteria

School library criteria for selection of materials in these libraries are dependent on the goals and objectives of the educational institution of which the library is a part, however, there are general criteria that will fit most, if not all, school libraries.

General Criteria

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and learning
- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; and technical aspect;
- Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected
- Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
- Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues

- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures
- Include a variety of resources in virtual formats such as electronic and multimedia resources (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies)
- Balance cost with need

Top Five Recommended School Library Reviewing Sources

- Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- We Need Diverse Books website
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults

VI. Responsibility for Selection

Resources in the TexQuest program will be selected by the members of the K-12 Program Advisory Group and TSLAC. The K-12 Program Advisory Group is composed of professional school librarians from around the state of Texas. TSLAC staff will be responsible for the acquisition and licensing of selected content.

VII. Reconsideration of Materials

TexQuest provides resources that include differing points of view on controversial or debatable topics. TexQuest does not promote a specific belief or viewpoint, and selection of an item or resource does not express or imply agreement or endorsement of an author's belief or viewpoint.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission welcomes feedback from the public who may request the reconsideration of a selection decision by completing the "Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources" form located at **https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texquest/ texquestreconsideration**. The form must be completed in its entirety and returned to the program coordinator at TSLAC. An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within five business days. Upon receipt of the completed reconsideration form, the item in question will be reviewed by the TexQuest K-12 Program Advisory Group, TSLAC staff, and additional reviewers if particular expertise is needed for any reason. The resource will continue to be available while it is being reviewed. Recommendations will be made based on this policy, the material, and a careful review of professional standards that guide our library collection development. After an initial confirmation of receipt, a preliminary response to any request for reconsideration will be provided in writing within twenty business days of receipt of the original reconsideration request, in accordance with TSLAC's Compact with Texans and Texas Administrative Code (Title 13, Section 2.53).