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U.S. Department of Education Launches Campaign to Encourage Schools to #GoOpen with Educational Resources

Department proposes rule requiring educational materials created with federal grants to be openly licensed so that any school has access

The U.S. Department of Education announced today the launch of #GoOpen, a campaign to encourage states, school districts and educators to use openly licensed educational materials. As part of the campaign, the Department is proposing a new regulation that would require all copyrightable intellectual property created with Department grant funds to have an open license.

“In order to ensure that all students – no matter their zip code – have access to high-quality learning resources, we are encouraging districts and states to move away from traditional textbooks and toward freely accessible, openly-licensed materials,” U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said. “Districts across the country are transforming learning by using materials that can be constantly updated and adjusted to meet students’ needs.”

The announcements were made at an Open Education Symposium hosted by the Department and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy for state and district superintendents and other educators from across the country committed to adopting openly licensed educational materials. They were joined by innovators from education technology companies and nonprofit organizations who have committed to working alongside these districts to create new tools that help educators find, adapt, create, and share resources.

With the proposed policy, the Department joins the U.S. Department of Labor, USAID, State, and other Federal agencies in leading the Administration’s open government initiatives. After the proposed policy is published in the Federal Register, members of the public can submit comments for thirty days at //www.regulations.gov.

“By requiring an open license, we will ensure that high-quality resources created through our public funds are shared with the public, thereby ensuring equal access for all teachers and students regardless of their location or background,” said John King, senior advisor delegated the duty of the Deputy Secretary of Education. “We are excited to join other federal agencies leading on this work to ensure that we are part of the solution to helping classrooms transition to next generation materials.”

The Education Department recently hired its first open education adviser, Andrew Marcinek, who is working with school district leaders, tool providers, nonprofits, and open education coalition members to expand awareness of openly licensed educational resources in PreK-12.

“Openly licensed educational resources support teachers as creative professionals by giving them the ability to adapt and customize learning materials to meet the needs of their students without breaking copyright laws,” said Richard Culatta, Director of the Office of Educational Technology.

Commitments

As part of the symposium, companies, organizations and districts committed to do more to ensure schools have access to open education resources.

- A cohort of 10 districts has taken up the #GoOpen challenge to replace at least one textbook with openly licensed educational resources within the next year. These districts are just beginning the transition process, and will work closely with tool providers and mentor districts to build capacity to sustainably implement openly licensed educational resources in their districts. We anticipate many more districts taking up the #GoOpen challenge in coming months. The 10 cohort districts are:
 - Affton School District, Saint Louis, MO
 - Colonial Public Schools, New Castle, DE
 - Oxnard Union High School District, Oxnard, CA
 - Department of Defense Education Activity
 - Grossmont Union High School District, La Mesa, CA
 - Kettle Moraine School District, Wales, WI
 - Lawrence Public Schools, Lawrence, KS
 - Mentor School District, Mentor, OH
 - Mountain Empire Unified School District, Pine Valley, CA
 - Vista Unified School District, Vista, CA
- A group of #GoOpen Ambassador Districts have committed to help other school districts move to openly licensed materials. These #GoOpen Ambassador Districts currently use openly licensed educational materials and will help other districts understand how to effectively discover and curate these resources. The ambassador districts are:
 - Bethel School District, Spanaway, WA
 - Bristol Tennessee Schools, Bristol, TN
 - Chesterfield County Public Schools, Chesterfield, VA
 - Columbus Municipal School District, Columbus, MS
 - Upper Perkiomen School District, Pennsburg, PA
 - Williamsfield Community School District, Williamsfield, IL
- Amazon will provide infrastructure and developer support for the Learning Registry for two years, ensuring that it remain a robust and freely available for all 15,000 school districts in our country so every child can benefit from these resources, cutting waste and allowing

teachers to focus their time and efforts more fully on teaching. In addition, Amazon is collaborating with education partners to leverage their technology and expertise in content discovery and distribution to support open education resources initiatives and the Learning Registry.

- Edmodo, a platform for teacher and student collaboration, announced an upgrade to Edmodo Spotlight to enable searching, curating, and sharing openly licensed educational resources from the Education Department's Learning Registry. Edmodo will also provide professional learning resources for districts to curate, organize and share openly licensed educational resources in Edmodo Spotlight.
- Microsoft committed to index content from the Learning Registry in the Bing search engine. They are also creating an app to provide educators with the ability to discover and search openly licensed educational resources from the Learning Registry through LTI compliant learning management and publisher systems. In addition, Microsoft announced enhanced features to [docs.com](#) to enable educators to create, discover, rate, and share openly licensed educational resources. [Doc.com](#) will allow for the tailored curation of resource collections, will encourage reuse by supporting open licenses and metadata sharing, and is fully integrated with Microsoft Office products.
- Creative Commons, the global leader in open licensing to enable use and re-use of content, announced they will lead workshops across the country with thousands of district leaders to help them scale the use of openly licensed educational resources with the goal to replace old, expensive textbooks in their districts with new, up-to-date, openly licensed educational resources. Creative Commons will provide the hands-on help that districts need to propel them to a new model of empowering their teachers to create, share, customize, and improve openly licensed educational resources.
- ASCD, a global community dedicated to excellence in learning, teaching, and leading, announced they will provide ongoing professional development resources and webinars for Future Ready school districts committing to transition to openly licensed educational resources. ASCD will work with district leaders to support districts pledging to replace one textbook with openly licensed educational resources by next fall.
- The Illinois Shared Learning Environment released a redesigned version of their IOER platform that makes it easier than ever for teachers and school leaders to find high-quality open educational resources by learning standards. Additionally, IOER developer code is available as open source for other states interested in implementing a similar functionality.

For more details on #GoOpen commitments made by school districts and technology companies, click [HERE](#).

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