February 9, 2015

Dear Educational Resources Providers:

This communication is to formally notify you of the Houston Independent School District's (HISD) Expectations for Digital Educational Resources for the 2015-2016 school year. As you know, HISD has launched PowerUp, a district wide initiative aimed at transforming teaching and learning. PowerUp is about "powering up" all 282 of our schools serving 215,000 students. This is to promote a personalized learning environment for today's 21st-century learners and to enable teachers to more effectively facilitate instruction, manage curriculum, collaborate with their peers, and engage today's students. The PowerUp HUB is a digital teaching and learning platform (a service provided by itslearning) that is in the process of becoming the "hub" of collaboration, curriculum, instruction, and communication for HISD staff, students, and parents. When fully implemented, the HUB will allow all HISD educators to create and share instructional resources and assignments, enable students to tailor their classes to their own personal learning profile, and allow parents to track their children's progress. More information can be found at http://www.houstonisd.org/hubinfo.

HISD is aligning our selection criteria for digital resources with the IMS Global Interoperability Standards. This will allow for mapping of learning objectives according to Texas and other standards and minimize interoperability challenges stemming from various proprietary formats.

In order to enable the delivery of digital resources through the HUB, HISD will strongly preference the purchase of digital content, assessment, and applications which are IMS conformance certified to the following IMS Global Interoperability Standards, specifically Learning Tools Interoperability®(LTI®), Common Cartridge ™(CC), Thin Common Cartridge (TCC), and/or Question and Test Interoperability®(QTI®). HISD is using the IMS Global standards to establish a standard way of integrating rich learning resources and applications (often remotely hosted) with our learning platform, the "Hub." Our primary goals are ease of access by teachers and students to quality educational resources and the ability to aggregate results in a single location. IMS Global Learning Consortium provides a set of interoperability standards to address the most often-encountered educational enterprise integration issues for digital content and learning software/platforms. IMS offers voting memberships for those organizations that wish to support the IMS standards and developer memberships for those organizations that wish achieve conformance certification. For more information regarding IMS Global Standards, see this website: http://imsglobal.org. IMS is also providing a direct email contact to answer questions regarding IMS standards, conformance certification or membership for HISD suppliers at HISDsupport@imsglobal.org.

Additionally, HISD is strongly favoring all digital materials to be: (a) offered in flexible formats, allowing for customization to all users' accessibility needs and preferences (e.g. text size, read aloud, high contrast, highlighting, note-taking and copy/paste.)

If a company is intending to move forward with IMS Global Standards capabilities but is not yet certified, HISD will consider vendors if a notice of a reasonable timeline for completion is submitted. All confirmations and/or intentions of interoperable capability should be communicated in writing to HISD by **March 9, 2015**. In the letter of intent, HISD also will require a point of contact from your technology department (name, email and phone number) for future interoperability questions and discussions.

For more information on our integration expectations, please contact Beatriz Arnillas, HISD lead for Digital Resources Integration, at EdTech@HoustonISD.org. For information about IMS. Global Interoperability Standards, go to http://www.imsglobal.org/specifications.html. You may also learn more about our HUB at the following URL: http://www.houstonisd.org/hubinfo.

Sincerely,

Daniel Gohl
Chief Academic Officer