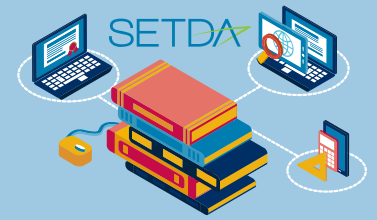


State K12 Procurement Case Studies: Spotlight on Digital Instructional Materials Acquisition



Excerpt

Indiana

Indiana does not have an adoption policy for digital instructional materials and does not procure resources for schools or districts on a statewide level. Each school district has the constitutional authority, from state and/or local resources, to procure and use digital resources and innovative educational technologies as they deem appropriate to meet educational goals and requirements. School boards have the statutory authority to determine curricular and instructional materials for their schools and school corporations at the local level. As a matter of law and practice, curriculum and instruction decisions are determined by the local school corporations.



Although Indiana does not directly procure instructional materials for districts, the state offers some guidance and resources that districts may use. For example, Indiana updated their [textbook definition](#) to include digital instructional materials and devices. As districts transition to digital learning, state or local funding that was available for textbooks is now available for digital instructional materials. Additionally, districts are allowed to collect textbook rental fees from parents; these rental fees can now be used for textbooks, online services, subscription services, devices, or anything that supports student learning.

Indiana also provides guidance to districts on accessibility issues. Indiana utilizes [Promoting Technology through Achievement and Instruction for all Students \(PATINS\)](#) to help districts evaluate and acquire instructional materials that meet the [National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards \(NIMAS\)](#). Indiana provides annual grants to districts through the [AEM Intensive Targeted Assistance Grant program](#). In 2017-18, Indiana awarded grants to eight districts in the state. Indiana does not have guidelines for commercial or OER publishers, developers, or vendors related to accessibility features in products/services.

State Partnerships

Currently, Indiana does not have state master purchasing contracts available for districts and schools to purchase instructional materials or devices. However, Indiana partners with teachers, other states and districts and publishers to provide free resources to districts. Indiana enters into these partnerships to support districts in the selection and implementation of digital instructional materials for teaching and learning. However, districts have full autonomy to choose instructional materials and are not required to use any of these resources.

Partnerships

Indiana supports districts and schools in the selection and implementation of digital instructional materials through partnerships.

For example, Indiana partners with teachers across the state to review quality digital content and curate digital lessons and learning activities to support students and teachers. Known as the [Rockstars of](#)

[Curation](#), this state level cohort of educators includes K-12 English language arts, science, social studies, and math teachers along with media specialists who are proficient in implementing digital learning in the classroom. Indiana provides cohort members with small grants to compensate them for their time and expertise so that all educators in the state have access to high quality digital instructional materials that are free and OER.

In 2015, Indiana formed a partnership with [Amazon Inspire](#) to house their digital content repository, including the content created and curated by the [Rockstars of Curation](#). Amazon Inspire offers all Indiana teachers a free place to look for high quality vetted resources by keyword or Indiana state standard. Teachers can take content from Amazon Inspire and add it to their own learning management system. Districts across the state vary in their learning management system platforms.

In 2012, the Office of eLearning formed a partnership with [NBC Learn](#) to acquire licenses for all Indiana teachers, students and parents to access thousands of standards-aligned digital resources. All Indiana faculty, staff, students, and parents can access these videos for use in classroom instruction, student projects, and homework.

Indiana is also a founding member of the [#GoOpen movement](#), a partnership between the U.S. Department of Education and states and districts across the country, to encourage the use of OER to change teaching and learning. State leaders are working together with education technology companies and nonprofit organizations to share effective strategies for OER. Currently, there are [20 #GoOpen states](#).

- Adopt/Implement a statewide technology strategy that includes the use of openly licensed resources as a central component.
- Develop and maintain a statewide repository solution for openly licensed resources.
- Develop the technical capability to publish OER to the Learning Registry.
- Participate in a community of practice with other #GoOpen states and districts to share learning resources and professional development resources.
- Create a webpage to share the commitment to #GoOpen and document the state's progress.

Funding

State funds are available for instructional materials via state coordinated competitive grants that include the option to purchase digital instructional materials. General state funds are also available for districts to use for the purchase of devices. In 2009, when the State Board of Education modified the textbook definition to include digital content and devices, districts now have more funding options for acquiring digital content and devices. For purposes of reimbursement, the state issued a waiver and districts could spend all or some of their traditional textbook funds for computers and other data devices, instructional software, internet resources, interactive and magnetic media, and other systematically organized materials. In 2011, this practice became state law.

Textbook Definition

Systematically organized material designed to provide a specific level of instruction in a subject matter category, including: books; hardware; computer software; and digital content.

[Indiana House Bill 1429](#)

Indiana districts have the option to collaborate on the purchase of digital instructional materials and the option to purchase digital instructional materials with local funds. Districts and schools are encouraged to collaborate to lower the cost of acquisition of textbooks, computers and other data devices, and their

content. Some districts have been successful in working with the private sector to purchase devices and digital content together. For example, some schools have purchased low cost, content-loaded mini-laptops. The Office of eLearning supports the implementation of digital instructional materials through multiple grants and professional learning opportunities including the Innovation Planning grants for districts to develop a comprehensive plan to implement digital learning.

Challenges and Considerations

This section presents some of the challenges and considerations for conducting procurements identified during interviews with state leaders and independent research.

Sustainability

From 2013- 2015, Indiana partnered with My Big Campus, a learning management system and content repository that was available for all districts free of charge. My Big Campus hosted instructional content created by Indiana teachers. In 2015, My Big Campus went out of business and Indiana did not have a state platform to host the content. Teachers were frustrated that they had spent time and effort to create and curate content that they could no longer access. Some of the lesson learned:

- More intentional about hosting content in multiple places
- Develop a back-up plan for hosting content
- Encourage teachers to utilize multiple content management systems

State Partnerships

Currently, Indiana does not have state master purchasing contracts available for districts and schools to purchase instructional materials or devices. However, Indiana partners with teachers, other states and districts and publishers to provide free resources to districts. Indiana enters into these partnerships to support districts in the selection and implementation of digital instructional materials for teaching and learning. However, districts have full autonomy to choose instructional materials and are not required to use any of these resources.

