Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What are Open Educational Resources?
- Open Educational Resources, or OER, are learning materials that can be used for teaching, learning, and assessment without cost.
- OER materials take advantage of open licenses that allow teachers and schools to collect, modify, and re-share resources - eliminating any copyright concerns.

Why use Open Educational Resources?
- Maintain relevant, current, and high quality content and instructional resources.
- Take advantage of Chromebooks and access to the power of web-based applications and resources.
- Provide students with opportunities to learn content in a format that matches up to how they will be consuming and learning information after high school.
- Empower teachers to be creative professionals by giving them the ability to adapt and customize learning materials to meet the needs of students.
- Save money on the purchase of new and replacement textbooks. PLEASE NOTE: This is NOT a fiscal decision, it is an educational decision. Money will still be spent on teachers, digital resources, supplemental instructional materials, etc.

Why move away from traditional textbooks?
- By August 2017, everyone of our students will have a Chromebook that they take home each day, allowing teachers to regularly deliver digital curriculum.
- Many teachers have already customized their classes and moved away from textbooks - for both pacing and content. OER provides a vetted set of resources AND a broad selection of supplemental resources.
- Digital textbooks sold by the major textbook companies cost the same or more than traditional hard copy books.
- Using digital materials in our classes helps prepare our students for a world where most information consumption is done on a screen.
- The K-12 textbook industry is an $8 billion business.

Can we buy any textbooks or printed materials?
- Current textbooks will remain at schools. Textbooks are NOT being taken away.
- For any new adoption requests, the district and department councils will review the feasibility of using OER materials instead of a traditional textbook. Some subject areas may never lend themselves to the development of an OER Curriculum Collection (e.g. AP courses, CTE courses, etc.).
- Both digital and print supplemental resources can still be purchased if site or district funding is available.

Will all textbooks be replaced?
- No. Some subjects may never lend themselves to development of an OER Curriculum Collection.

If my subject has an OER Curriculum Collection, do I have to use it?

- No. Teachers have the freedom to select instructional materials to meet state standards.

Will these materials meet the Williams Settlement requirements?

- Yes. The core portion of the content will be housed in CK-12. This website allows students to download a PDF version of the resource.
- Teachers may also print versions of the materials for some or all students.

What does the research say about digital content?

- There are a few different finding regarding the research. Some of it indicates that deeper learning is more difficult reading on a screen. However, in numerous other studies the differences are not significant. Others indicate it has a lot to do with attitude and how the information is chunked.
- Regardless, students need opportunities to critically read academics texts on a screen. Digital texts are replacing printed materials across our learning and living experiences. Educators should consider the implications of the research and provide the best opportunities for our students.
- For more information, visit these links (print them if needed):
  - [The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper versus Screens](#) (Scientific America)
  - [Screen vs. paper: what is the difference for reading and learning](#) (UKSG Academic Journal)
  - [The Current State and Potential Future of eTextbooks](#) (Educause Learning Initiative)

Development

What will OER Curriculum Collections look in GUHSD?

- Development will happen in specific subject areas (US History, Biology, Geometry, etc.).
- The finalized Curriculum Collections will include the following:
  - A unit-by-unit outline that includes relevant standards, unit topics, and suggested pacing guide(s). See an [example here](#).
  - A textbook-style core content component that is printable and downloadable to meet Williams Settlement requirements
  - Additional supplemental materials, including readings, links, online simulations, videos, etc.
  - Suggested instructional strategies and project ideas.
  - Optional skill-based assessments.
- All of the teacher-based resources will be housed in Google Drive and hosted on the GUHSDtech website.
- All of the student content will be hosted at CK12.org - a nonprofit foundation that develops and hosts OER content.
- All of the materials will be formally reviewed and updated every two years. Updates can also be made as needed.

How will OER Curriculum Collections be created in GUHSD?

- With input from department councils, subjects will be selected (3-5 in Spring 2016, 3-5 in Fall 2016).
- A committee of teachers from each site will develop the course outline over a series of release days or summer work days.
- The Subject Area Lead will find and curate materials for each unit based upon the scope and sequence.
- The committee members will provide feedback and collection instructional resources related to the content.
- The committee and other interested teachers will review and vet resources. A rubric will be adopted to vet the materials systematically.
- View the [GUHSD OER Development Process document](#) for more information.

How long will the process take?

- The first set of Curriculum Collections will be ready for use by August 2017. However, the materials will be made available as they are developed if teachers would like to start using versions of them before the official release.

Will teachers be compensated for their time?

- Yes. View the [Teacher Roles and Compensation / Admin Roles document](#) for more information. An MOU between the district and GEA set the compensation levels.

What is the difference between writing and curating content?

- Teachers will NOT be writing these collections. For most subjects, open licensed content is readily available. The Subject Area Leads review existing OER materials, collect them, do an initial vetting, and organize the resources that match the instructional objectives and state standards for each unit. Leads and committee members may opt to edit, augment, or otherwise change the content.

What about Special Education and English Language Learners?

- During the development process, Special Ed and/or EL representatives will be consulted.
- These materials can also be easily adapted and modified to meet the needs of specific students.

Implementation

Can OER materials be printed? Should they be printed?
- The text-based materials in a Curriculum Collection, including the core content, can be printed.
- Students need a balance of digital and analog educational experiences. Teachers should provide a variety of learning experiences, including the use of traditional teaching practices.

How will teachers use these materials with students?
- There will be several ways for teachers to distribute the finished materials to students. Options include Google Classroom, CK-12, Actively Learn, and Gooru.
- While there is an emphasis on digital delivery of these materials, many of the resources can also be printed. Teachers need to provide a balance of learning opportunities for students, both digital and analog.

Will professional development on how to use these resources be provided?
- Yes. Online resources and workshops will be offered. Digital Learning Coaches will also provided individual support as needed.