



2017

»» ANNUAL REPORT

LEARN
LONESTAR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH NETWORK

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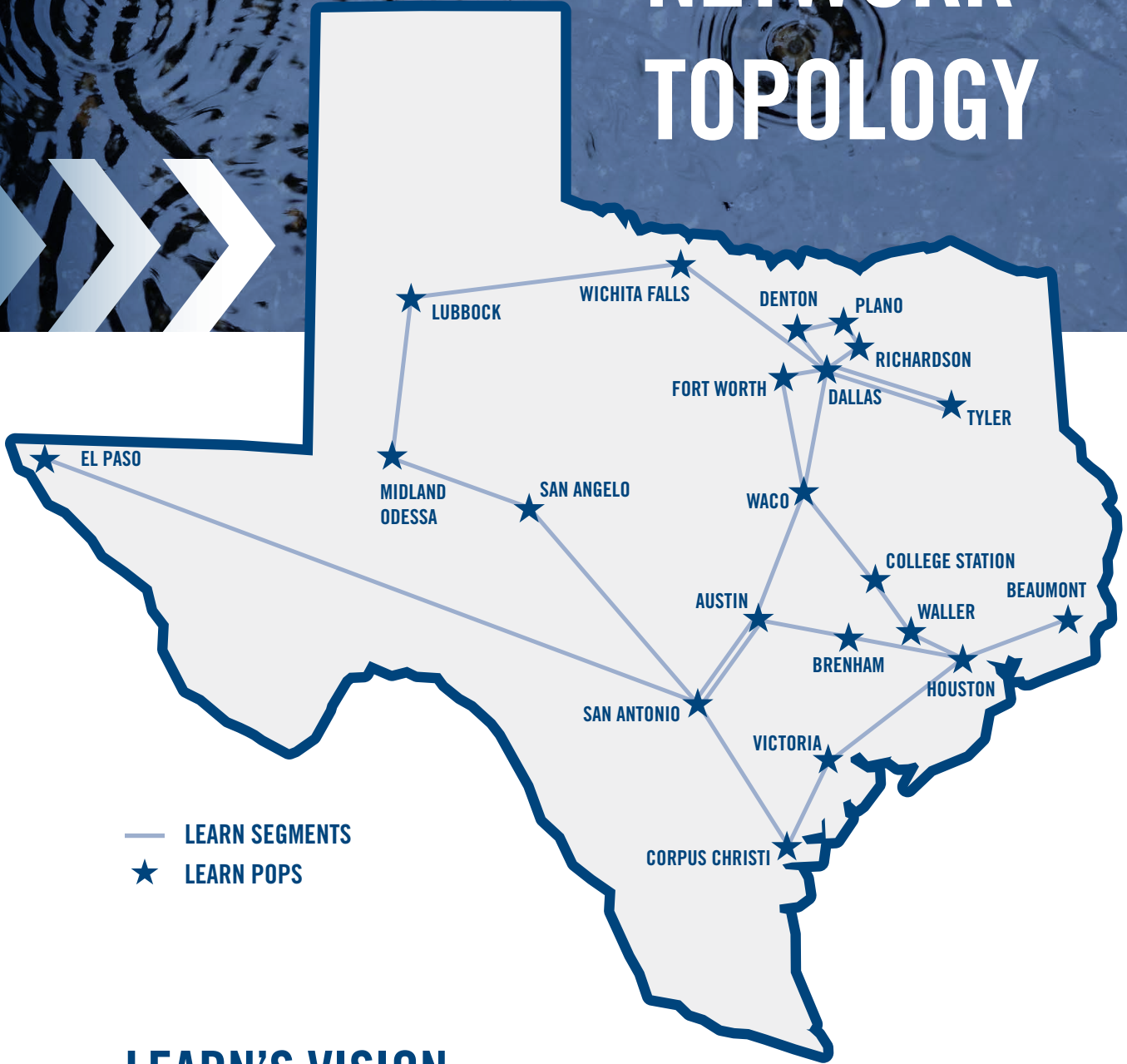


ON THE COVER

Our cover image reflects the flooding that affected many of our families, friends and neighbors in Texas in 2017 with the effects of Hurricane Harvey being the most devastating. It was inspiring to see communities come together in the wake of the devastation to help their neighbors even as they faced their own loss. Community and neighbors helping neighbors, that is what Texas and LEARN are all about.

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LEARN'S NETWORK TOPOLOGY



- LEARN SEGMENTS
- ★ LEARN POPS

LEARN'S VISION

LEARN will be the most efficient and effective enabler of research, education, healthcare, and public service communities in Texas using technology and shared services.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of our LEARN Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present LEARN's 2017 Annual Report. 2017 was an extremely busy year with activities ranging from completion of strategic planning, new mission and vision statements, a new service model, beginning focus on new verticals and growth in LEARN's membership.

The first LEARN Board meeting occurred in January 2004 with 30 members dedicated to high performance networking in Texas and participation in the emerging national network. Today, LEARN is 41 members strong, with 2 additions in 2017, and includes public and private institutions of higher education, community colleges, the National Weather Service, and K-12 public schools. LEARN connects its members and over 600 affiliated organizations through high performance optical and IP network services to support their research, education, healthcare and public service missions.

This past year LEARN completed its strategic planning process and as a result created new Mission and Visions statements which are:

Mission: Empower non-profit communities to execute their missions through technology and collaboration.

Vision: LEARN will be the most efficient and effective enabler of research, education, healthcare, and public service communities in Texas using technology and shared services.

In addition, an outcome of strategic planning was creation of an ad hoc Business and Services Committee to study the LEARN business model and recommend changes for additional and future services to stay relevant and provide enhanced services to its customers. I'm pleased to report a new Unmetered Network Services option was added to the list of services after a lengthy West Texas pilot and then approval by the Board in December.

The LEARN Board meetings bring together the largest number of Texas higher education CIOs in a single

place for sharing of best practices and discussion of technology challenges. In 2017, LEARN members experienced round table discussions on:

- SPLUNK
- Office 365
- Data Analytics Platforms
- Electronic Signature
- Expansion of LEARN footprint to unserved and underserved areas within Texas
- West Texas MPLS Pilot Project Updates
- Campus Emergency Planning and Crisis Response
- Net Neutrality

Serving LEARN as the Board Chair in 2017 was an honor and I can say from experience that we have the hardest working and dedicated staff of any non-profit organization. The LEARN staff does an outstanding job working for us and serving our communities. The future is bright for LEARN!



Kay Rhodes
Texas Tech University System



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Colleagues,

Accomplishments, advancements and actions all accurately frame an exciting 2017 for the entire LEARN family. The many opportunities that surfaced this year invariably impacted our membership and affiliates statewide as well as our visibility on national platforms.

For starters, we completed a comprehensive strategic plan casting a vision for LEARN's future. Simply put, LEARN is no longer the best-kept secret! During the course of the year, LEARN's internal leadership team joined me on a statewide outreach mission to bring visibility to our services and share on the many value-adds that we provide. The fruit of our outreach efforts delivered both existing and potential new customers learning more about our services.

Moreover, the new strategic plan was completed in conjunction with the West Texas Pilot Program, which helped us restructure our rate cards and launched the now highly sought after Unmetered Network Services (UNS). This offering has received great interest and is being offered to members and affiliates at various flat rates, terms, and separate pricing available on an individual case basis (ICB).

On the national stage, our staff continues to serve in leadership positions, which bring visibility to LEARN as a viable R&E network. Also, we secured a collaborative NSF IRNC supplementary grant along with California and Oklahoma with more information on the way.

In this same vein of adding great value, our members now have more extensive benefits through the value we provide in our direct peering relationships with Google, Apple, YouTube, Amazon, Microsoft, and Netflix, just to name a few. We encourage our members to bring more of such peering possibilities with content providers of their choice to our attention.

Supporting our new vision and mission in alignment with our new strategic plan rollout, we added back-office enhancements systems, so that our team can be more efficient and effective.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not mention that as you read through this annual report, what is likely most significantly highlighted is that LEARN's services are all about connecting people to the resources they need in the most efficient and effective way. Among many things, you will read how our LEARN team responded to support the community in Houston after the negative effects of Hurricane Harvey. How we worked diligently to support radio station KHOU's broadcast needs, so they could resume broadcasting during that critical time. You will see how we've diligently promoted the power of aggregation to reduce costs and provide savings, and you will learn more of the value we provide as in the end, we are simply all about end users. This is why we were formed in 2004... whether connecting research institutions, universities, community colleges, K-12 institutions, health sciences centers, hospitals, medical centers, and city/county governments, the goal is simply about creating value out of connecting people, so that communities and humanity can flourish. LEARN is an extension of your enterprise and we are here to enhance our value and service portfolio for all members.



Pankaj Shah
LEARN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Chair:
Kay Rhodes
Texas Tech University
System



Chair Elect:
Ken Pierce
Texas State University



Past Chair:
Terry Tatum
Texas A&M University
– Corpus Christi



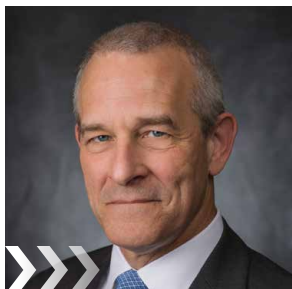
Secretary:
Jeff Early
Baylor College of Medicine



Treasurer & Chair,
Finance Committee:
Klara Jelinkova
Rice University



Chair, Operations &
Services Committee:
William Green
University of Texas
at Austin



Chair, Governance &
Participation Committee:
Mark Stone
Texas A&M University
System



President & CEO:
Pankaj Shah
LEARN





MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Angelo State University
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Baylor University
- Blinn College
- Lamar University
- National Weather Service
- Northeast Texas Consortium of Colleges & Universities (NETnet)
- Prairie View A&M University
- Rice University
- Sam Houston State University
- Southern Methodist University
- Stephen F. Austin State University
- Texas A&M Health Science Center
- Texas A&M University
- Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi
- Texas A&M University System
- Texas Association of Community Colleges
- Texas Christian University
- Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN)
- Texas State University
- Texas Tech University
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso
- Texas Tech University System
- Texas Woman's University
- Trinity University
- University of Houston System
- University of North Texas System
- University of Texas at Arlington
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Texas at Dallas
- University of Texas at El Paso
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
- University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler
- University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
- University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas
- University of Texas System



OVERVIEW & HISTORY

Network Infrastructure

LEARN’s fiber network spans over 3,200 miles across the state, connecting its over 600 direct or affiliated customers east to west from Beaumont to El Paso and north to south from Amarillo to Brownsville. LEARN is built on dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM) optical technology, providing the capability to transport multiple high capacity signals over a shared optical fiber by using the different color wavelengths of laser light. DWDM is state-of-the-art technology that is very scalable and permits LEARN to leverage its initial investment in optical fiber by adding additional capacity at marginal costs.

LEARN’s network relies on agreements with the private sector that provide the long-term use of optical dark fibers and/or long-term leases of optical wavelength capacity. When dark fiber is conveyed via an indefeasible right to use (IRU) agreement, LEARN provides the infrastructure to “light” the fiber and can add additional capacity as needed without having to revise a contract with the fiber owner. In wavelength capacity agreements, the service provider provides the infrastructure and bandwidth under the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Deploying LEARN-owned high-performance routers at its 20 strategically-located Points of Presence (POPs), LEARN makes it possible for its members and affiliates to bridge the last mile with their own network connections at minimal costs. In most cases LEARN’s network segments are protected through rings that insure continued operation of the network in case of a fiber cut or other disruption to a segment.

Several university systems as well as the Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN) operate their own networks which in turn are linked into LEARN’s statewide fiber infrastructure at LEARN’s POPs. LEARN cooperates closely with those other organizations to ensure that high-performance networking is made available at the lowest cost, best reliability, and highest performance possible.

Membership & Network Services

Members are entitled to appoint an individual to the Board of Directors and to acquire network services from LEARN at member rates. Network services are designed and provisioned based on the

needs of individual members through collaboration between those members and the LEARN staff. Network services, which are funded by the members who consume the services at rates which are set by the Board, sustain current and future network requirements including capital refresh at periodic intervals to keep the network state-of-the-art. Network services include:

- Layer 1 Transport Services Between LEARN Points-of-Presence (POPs),
- Layer 2 IP/MPLS Services,
- Routed Layer 3 Services,
- Connection Gateways to the National Research and Education Network (Internet2 and Energy Sciences Network and starting in mid-2018, on 100G ramps to reach Pacific Wave International Exchanges),
- Colocation Services at LEARN POPs,
- Commodity Internet Services (80G burst capacity spread across 4 POPs), and
- Low-Latency High-Capacity Access to Content and Application Providers (Peering and Caching Services), and
- DDoS Mitigation Service
- Managed Network Service and Consultation

LEARN applied for and received a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) with the Universal Service Administration Company. Acquiring a SPIN number permits LEARN’s school, library, and rural health customers to receive significant discounts through the Universal Services Fund.

The Board and the staff are committed to ensuring LEARN remains the trusted and preferred means by which its members obtain network services in Texas. There is a broad consensus among LEARN’s members that the organization has a unique role to play in the state in providing highly reliable, cost effective network services to the higher education, K-12, and not-for-profit communities. LEARN is a trusted partner and convener in these communities.

Infrastructure Performance

LEARN has deployed and operates a sophisticated state-of-the-art fiber-based optical and IP network throughout the large state of Texas. That “carrier



Road work for the installation of fiber optic cable.



grade” optical and switching technology is highly reliable and capable of provisioning high-speed bandwidth between LEARN’s customers in Texas cities and smaller communities throughout the state. While bandwidth capacity is important, LEARN recognizes that the reliability of the network is just as important to the daily operation of its customers who depend upon the network for most of their service functions.

To ensure that LEARN’s network operates at “five nines” or greater reliability, LEARN operates a Network Operations Center (NOC) under an agreement with the Texas A&M University System, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The NOC serves as the central point for monitoring and managing the overall health and performance of the network. LEARN engineers have a suite of network management tools at their disposal as well as the training they need to manage the configuration of the network, monitor the performance of the network segments and their components, diagnose and isolate the cause of performance issues, and manage incidents until they are resolved. LEARN’s staff works closely with its members to align the network management practices and performance with their needs.

A critical component of LEARN’s network reliability toolset is a comprehensive database of hardware assets, network configuration, circuits and other strategically important data that are essential to LEARN’s overall strategy of continuously improving the operational performance and efficiency of its growing network. At the end of 2017, that database had 4,400 entries with information such as the acquisition date, service records, contract expiration dates, projected replacement cycle, etc.

The vast majority of LEARN’s network topology is designed to provide network rings which serve as protected paths for customers in the event of a failure in the network infrastructure. If one leg of the ring suffers a fiber cut or equipment failure, the network automatically reconfigures itself to use the other leg of the ring to maintain connectivity. This design redundancy is a key element of the network’s performance but despite the network design, failures of a network segment do occasionally occur. In order to reduce the time required to get the segment back into operation, LEARN has acquired and strategically deployed critical infrastructure spares throughout the

network. Additionally, LEARN maintains maintenance and support agreements for its critical infrastructure with the vendors of both the fiber paths and the network gear.

The results of LEARN’s efforts to provide a highly reliable network to its customers in 2017 were as follows:

- WaveNet Layer 1 services on LEARN’s backbone – **100% uptime**
- FrameNet or Layer 2 services – **99.999% uptime**
- Layer 3 services on LEARN’s backbone – **99.999% uptime**
- Connection gateways to Internet2 – **100% uptime**
- WaveNet services on the Beaumont spur – **99.974% uptime**
- Commodity Internet Services – **100% uptime**

While these performance levels are very favorable compared with other telecommunications providers, LEARN’s goal is to give its customers 100% reliability on all of its services. To that end, LEARN will continue to improve its technology, tools, training of its staff, and cooperation with its customers/partners and network staffs as it has done since the organization’s inception.



A technician measures the optical power loss after fiber installation.



ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Texas Tech CIOs & staff in their High-Performance Computing Center.

WEST TEXAS PILOT PROGRAM

LEARN helps the Texas Tech University System meet the growing needs of its institutions

Since 2009, Texas Tech University System (TTUS) has been a key participant in LEARN's backbone triangle. TTUS had concerns years ago as growth continued about connectivity between campuses, general connectivity of students, increasing bandwidth and costs, and the ability to utilize new technologies for research, supercomputing, distance learning and more. LEARN has provided opportunities for TTUS to save money while increasing their bandwidth for years. As of the fall semester of 2017, Texas Tech University (TTU) had 36,996 students with thousands more at other institutions in TTUS.

TTUS volunteered as a study case to expand FrameNet MPLS to West Texas and test a new "all-you-can-eat" business model where a flat fee is charged regardless of bandwidth usage, within the capacity provisioned by the customer. The pilot program began in 2017, starting with TTU,

TTU Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC), TTUHSC El Paso and Angelo State University. New POPs were added at TTUHSC, TTUHSC El Paso and Angelo State University. The new model unifies wide area networks (WANs) for four major institutions in TTUS and greatly increases commodity bandwidth with the 30GB MPLS ring available to share between the four locations.

Texas Tech's Increasing Needs

Sam Segran, CIO of Texas Tech University, noted that the pilot has been an overwhelming success for the TTUS institutions. TTU is always looking at least three to five years ahead of what is technologically necessary. In doing so, they are able to adjust and install new infrastructure before it is needed, ensuring a seamless transition for faculty, students

and staff without interruption. With the continued increase in student population and internet usage in general due to video streaming and other services moving to the cloud, commodity bandwidth needs to match the exponential growth in traffic. With the 30Gbps shared across TTUS, Texas Tech continues to stay ahead of the technological curve.

TTUS institutions rely on cloud-based services such as Office 365, Learning Management Systems, Skype for Business, Raider Connect, Tech Link and others. WAN management through LEARN has allowed Segran's staff to focus resources on other areas within the University. With LEARN managing their WAN infrastructure, TTUS is able to increasingly rely on cloud-based services that benefit students through greater access, and at slightly lower infrastructure costs at the institutions.

Being located in a relatively sparsely populated area of Texas and requiring the connectivity resources that

it does, TTUS requires the assistance of LEARN and the connectivity to collaborate with other institutions in the Texas Tech University System as well as peer collaboration between TTUS and institutions in other parts of the state. Between 2014 and 2017, TTU has more than doubled their online school offerings from just over 50 certificates, degrees and programs to more than 100. This is in part due to the cost effective bandwidth and services that LEARN has provided.

TTU Research and Supercomputing

In addition to the multiple high performance clusters located at the University, TTU continues to utilize the LEARN network and the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) at UT Austin for additional supercomputing resources to support research. LEARN connectivity is key to many researchers but especially to Dr. Rajesh Khare's research on hydrogel and Dr. Stefan Estreicher's theoretical research, dealing with semiconductor and nanostructure defects, along with their impact on electrical, thermal and optical material properties. Dr. Rajesh Khare's research group uses advanced molecular modeling techniques to predict the properties of soft matter systems based on the knowledge of their chemistry. These predictions are accomplished using supercomputing resources.

By utilizing the Lonestar 5 at TACC via LEARN for researchers such as Dr. Khare and Dr. Estreicher, TTU is able to dedicate its on-premise supercomputing resources for its other research scientists such as Drs. Hase, Ancell, Hussain, and Chen.

Dr. William Hase's research group uses chemical dynamics computer simulations to calculate the atomic level motions of atoms in interfaces, surfaces, collections of molecules and molecules.

Dr. Brian Ancell's research pertains to the predictability of high-impact weather events. Currently, his research focuses on severe convection, winter precipitation events, and wind power.

Dr. Fazle Hussain is a nationally-recognized researcher and is the President's Distinguished Chair in Engineering & Science, and professor in Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Hussain was inducted into the National Academy of Engineering in 2001 for contributions to



Lonestar 5, a supercomputer at Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC)



fundamental experiments and concepts concerning important structures in turbulence, vortex dynamics and acoustics, as well as for new turbulence measurement techniques. He continues his work today through TACC and LEARN's networking.

Dr. Chauchyun Chen's research includes thermophysical properties and fluid phase equilibria, molecular thermodynamics, process modeling and simulation, hydraulic fracturing and flow-back fluids, petroleum crude characterization, CO2 capture systems, energy storage systems and pharmaceutical solubility modeling.

Texas Tech Health Sciences Center Lubbock

TTUHSC Lubbock utilizes LEARN's network to support its multi-campus teaching and distance learning. Distance students currently match the number of traditional students at TTUHSC. LEARN provides the opportunity to connect multiple TTUHSC campuses, such as the physical therapy group that has a cohort spread across Lubbock, Amarillo and the Permian Basin. Online teaching environments use the Tech Link platform, a cloud-based service where traffic is managed via LEARN. Many TTUHSC programs have lectures hosted on Tech Link.

TTUHSC is always looking for opportunities to expand. In 2018, LEARN is exploring better connectivity options for TTUHSC Amarillo. Vince Fell, CIO of TTUHSC says they are looking for opportunities to utilize LEARN in the future to expand telemedicine and any educational opportunities that are presented. Fell says, "TTUHSC appreciates the partnership with LEARN and the service it has provided. LEARN and its constituents are valued business partners."

Angelo State University

Doug Fox, CIO for Angelo State University (ASU), echoed the difficulties outlined by Sam Segran of getting reliable WAN infrastructure in the West Texas areas such as San Angelo. The other major issue is the high cost of these extensive WAN services in the open market, now being provided by LEARN at a much more affordable cost, while LEARN is also

able to address the concerns of availability, reliability, speed and cost-efficiency and future scalability with access to its Statewide WAN services.

LEARN has provided ASU with enhanced reliability and network bandwidth that helps its students access course materials and information in a timelier manner. This connectivity further fosters collaboration between online students and gives them greater access to campus electronic resources. Fox says the LEARN network is a critical component for ASU's core teaching and learning mission, especially with the variety of online programs offered by a number of departments on campus.

TTUHSC El Paso

El Paso also offers distance learning for students, giving TTUHSC El Paso the ability to work with rural areas so they have access to the appropriate materials. LEARN enables TTUHSC El Paso to exchange information with other higher education institutions. TTUHSC El Paso works closely with county and private hospitals in the El Paso area. Doctors and students work with the hospital very closely on a local level and, with the assistance of LEARN, TTUHSC El Paso is able to exchange information with peers from other institutions, collaborating on research projects and comparing research and notes.

TTUHSC El Paso also strives to grow based on the needs of the area. In 2017, TTUHSC El Paso was approved for the addition of a Dental School of Medicine, with an anticipated completion date in March 2019 with a new building to support the new school. The first class of the TTUHSC El Paso Dental School of Medicine is slated for 2020. Jerry Rodriguez, CIO of TTUHSC El Paso, said "We also plan to house our research department in this building and will have need for LEARN services to support the new school and the continued research happening here."

Kay Rhodes, CIO of TTUS, said, "The West Texas Pilot Program is meeting the needs of the TTUS campuses currently involved while keeping costs down. With plans to expand its reach to all of TTUS, the infrastructure updates enabled by LEARN have proved to be an overwhelming success."



➤ BOOSTING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN HOUSTON

LEARN helps nation's 3rd largest city solidify its status as an international research hub

Above: Visit underground to the 15-metre-high Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment, located in Geneva, Switzerland. Paul Padley, a physicist at Rice University in Houston, serves as the manager of an experiment using the detector. LEARN's expanded connectivity to ESnet will make critical research by Padley's group possible.

[Image courtesy of CERN]

"The importance of a network is frequently not the network itself, but who it connects," asserts Pankaj Shah, LEARN president and CEO. "Upstream, downstream — peering is how the value of a network is increased."

Peering, which refers to the process of connecting separate Internet networks to facilitate traffic between the users of each network, is one of LEARN's greatest strengths. Houston has been a major hub of the LEARN network since its inception. In 2017, the city's connectivity received an extra boost through peering arrangements with two major national and international networks: the Energy Science Network (ESnet) and the Pacific Wave Network.

A high-performance, unclassified network built to support scientific research, ESnet — funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science and managed by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory — provides services to more than 40 DOE research sites including the entire national laboratory system, its supercomputing facilities, and its major scientific instruments. ESnet also connects to 140 research and commercial networks, permitting scientists to collaborate with partners around the world.

As a center for energy production and research, Texas — and Houston in particular — was a natural fit for an expansion of ESnet. "When I came on board, people were clamoring to connect ESnet to Texas," said Shah.



In partnership with ESnet, LEARN created a 100-Gigabit per second (Gbps) network path between the LEARN and ESnet backbone networks, which supplements the 100Gbps connection between Houston and Dallas already maintained by LEARN. The new path enables more direct, friction-free flows of data between researchers in Texas and tens of thousands of scientists at national laboratories and universities around the world.

“There are thousands of scientists that are part of the LHC experiments across the nation,” Jelinkova said. “The ability to connect from data transfer nodes on campuses at high speeds of 100 gigabits per second to the LHC Open Network Environment enabled by ESnet and the Internet2 backbone ensures our ability to support this international effort.”

Other major projects that will be supported by the ESnet connection include the National

“...partnerships like this one...is critical to ensuring that researchers can access, share and analyze data as they tackle important problems.”

ESnet Director Inder Monga

“As the nature of research is increasingly collaborative, partnerships like this one between ESnet and the Texas research and education community served by LEARN is critical to ensuring that researchers can access, share and analyze data as they tackle important problems,” said ESnet Director Inder Monga.

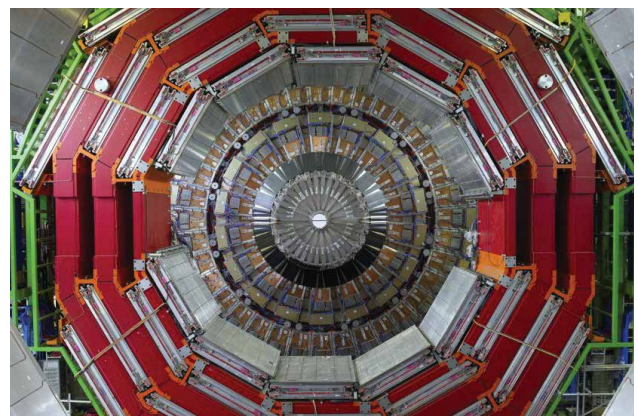
LEARN partners in Houston will be among the beneficiaries of the improved connection. One such partner is Rice University, a leading research institution, renowned for its computer science, math and engineering departments.

“Many institutions across Texas were awarded National Science Foundation Campus Cyberinfrastructure awards to enhance a low-latency, high-throughput networking and improve connectivity to global instruments,” said Klara Jelinkova, vice president for information technology and chief information officer of Rice University. “LEARN, in collaboration with its partners such as ESnet, allows us open communication across international and national labs unobstructed by firewalls. As the Texas state-wide research and education network, LEARN is a trusted partner and our collaboration is based on shared values and trust.”

Jelinkova pointed to the research of Paul Padley at Rice as an example of how expanded connectivity to ESnet makes critical research possible. Padley, a physicist, serves as the manager of an experiment using the Compact Muon Solenoid detector at the Large Hardon Collider (LHC), located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Science Foundation (NSF)-supported Chameleon experimental cloud system at the Texas Advanced Computing Center and physics research at the University of Texas at Arlington, which serves as one of only a handful of Tier 2 computing centers in the United States that receive all of the data processed by the ATLAS experiment at LHC, and provides computing cycles for physicists to interpret and analyze it.

Pacific Wave is another major networking initiative with whom LEARN recently established a peering relationship. Pacific Wave provides research and education networks and state-of-the-art networking



View of the CMS endcap through the barrel sections at the Large Hardon Collider (LHC).

[Image courtesy of CERN]

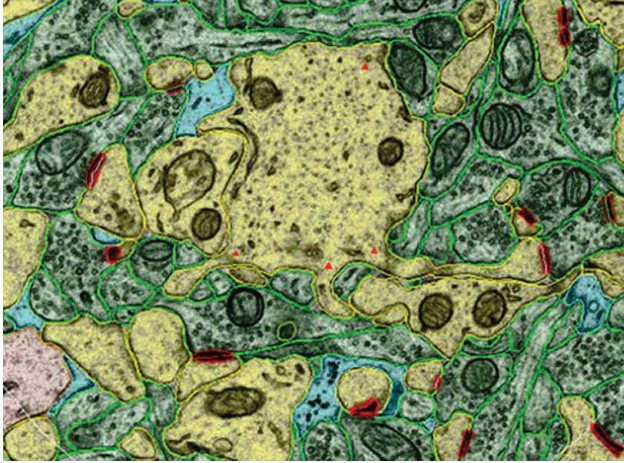


Image from an electron micrograph representative of the type researchers will explore in the Next Generation Networks for Neuroscience (NeuroNex) program. LEARN will help researchers across the U.S. share data and collaborate on analyses. Image courtesy of Kristen Harris.

capabilities throughout the Pacific Rim. With support from the NSF's International Research Network Connections Program, LEARN will be soon be directly connected to the Pacific Wave via a 200GB/second network that can carry traffic internationally to enable greater collaboration across borders.

LEARN and its consortium of public and private institutions have significant international research portfolios, which will benefit from the partnership with Pacific Wave. Moreover, new collaborations that were previously difficult will emerge because of the improved ability to collaborate, share, and access computing and scientific datasets instruments.

"Extending the Pacific Wave via a network node in El Paso will allow for frictionless scientific collaboration, exchange of large datasets, and access to global scale scientific tools and data," said Shah.

Researchers at Texas A&M plan to use the Pacific Wave network to facilitate international collaborations on climate modeling, while scientists at UT Dallas will use the network to share datasets relating to computational biology and earth science studies and to experiment with software defined optical networking. Scientists at UT Austin intend to

use Pacific Wave to share electron microscopy data for brain mapping with the Salk Institute in California.

In addition to its energy focus, Houston in recent years has become a nexus for biomedical research, with MD Anderson, Rice, the University of Houston and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) all contributing vital efforts.

The Baylor College of Medicine's Human Genome Sequencing Center is one of the three largest genomic centers in the U.S., and its collaborations are facilitated by the LEARN network, which connects the center to Internet2 and institutions across the nation.

Jeff Early, director of Communication Technologies at BCM, served as principal investigator on an NSF Campus Cyberinfrastructure award that allowed the regional Southeast Texas Gigapop network to update its connection to LEARN to 100 GB/second. This in turn, allowed Richard Gibbs, director of the Human Genome Sequencing Center, to apply for and win a five-year, \$500 million contract from the National Institutes of Health – a pre-condition of which was the ability to send terabytes of data per week to collaborators across the nation.

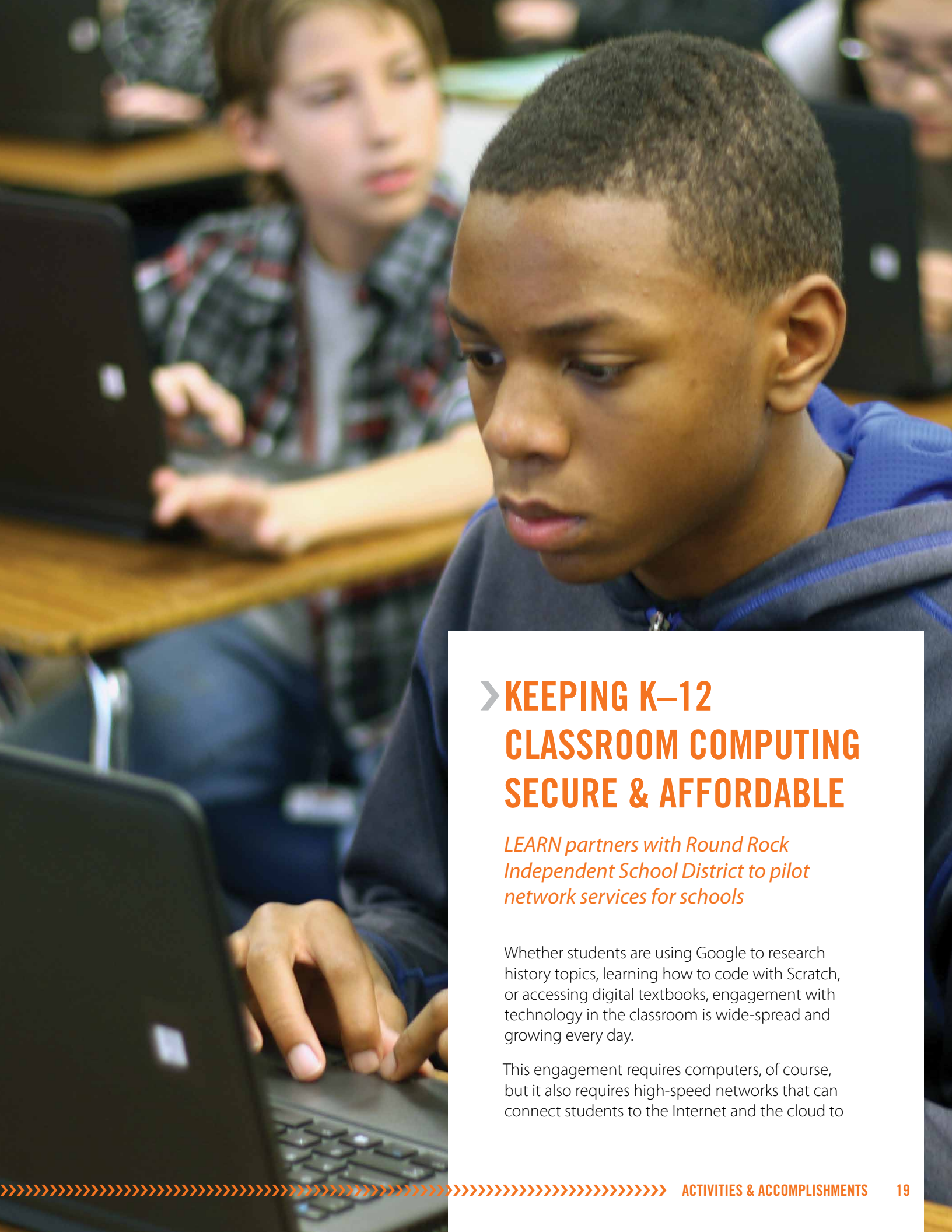
"Through a series of grants and other collaborations, we were able to create a pipeline between the Texas Medical Center and the Southeast region into the LEARN environment and on to Internet2," Early said. "This allowed us to compete for and win a massive NIH grant."

Over the past several months, LEARN has helped the Human Genome Sequencing Center deliver 6 terabytes of genomic data daily to its partners.

In an age where research increasingly relies on collaboration and large group efforts, peering with like-minded networks helps keep Texas scientists competitive.

"With growing linkages to major partnerships around the globe, LEARN is helping Texas, and in particular the City of Houston, maintain its leadership in research and education," said Shah.





➤ KEEPING K–12 CLASSROOM COMPUTING SECURE & AFFORDABLE

LEARN partners with Round Rock Independent School District to pilot network services for schools

Whether students are using Google to research history topics, learning how to code with Scratch, or accessing digital textbooks, engagement with technology in the classroom is wide-spread and growing every day.

This engagement requires computers, of course, but it also requires high-speed networks that can connect students to the Internet and the cloud to

LEARN already provided data transport and connectivity to more than 700,000 students across the state in collaboration with 17 ESCs. But the organization was eager to broaden its impact by piloting new service offerings to schools.

Round Rock began by testing out two of LEARN's new services for K–12: its peering and caching service; and its distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) mitigation solution.

"The peering and caching service allows us to have a direct connection from our district network to Google and a host of other sites through LEARN," Gabehart explained. "We're a major Google Apps school district. The peering and caching service potentially allows us to provide better service because it's faster and also it's more protected, so if our Internet did go down we could still reach the Google network."

Google allows organizations to establish a direct peering connection between their network and Google's. Doing so allows organizations to segregate diverse services, balance the traffic network and lower the cost for all participants. "The path is shorter; the response time is better; and the deals bring down the costs of network traffic," said Shah.

When Gabehart analyzed traffic over their network, he determined that roughly 50 percent of the monthly traffic from the district went to Google.

"This peering can potentially offset a lot of traffic that is currently using their commodity internet network that they purchase," explained Castillo.

In addition to Google, LEARN offers peering and caching with Microsoft, Amazon and Netflix.

Another service LEARN was able to provide to Round Rock ISD was the ability to protect students and systems from malicious malware and distribute denial of service (DDOS) attacks. It's a little-known fact that schools are frequent targets of cyberattacks — sometimes even from their own students. Protection can be expensive, but it is critical for keeping networks up and running.

"Members spend a significant amount of money annually for that protection," said Shah. "We came up with a strategy where we buy a service from a leading provider that can guarantee clean traffic.

Round Rock opted in and are now the beneficiary of our mitigation service."

The Round Rock ISD pilot kicked off in December 2017 and in February 2018 the district awarded a bid to TETN to continue the arrangement. "LEARN's model of aggregation of services will over time continue to bring down the costs of the services they provide to not only higher education institutions but also K–12 school districts," Gabehart said. "LEARN's leadership are passionate about doing this and have made it a top priority to provide aggregation services to school districts. We are pleased to be part of that initial pilot to work through the issues."

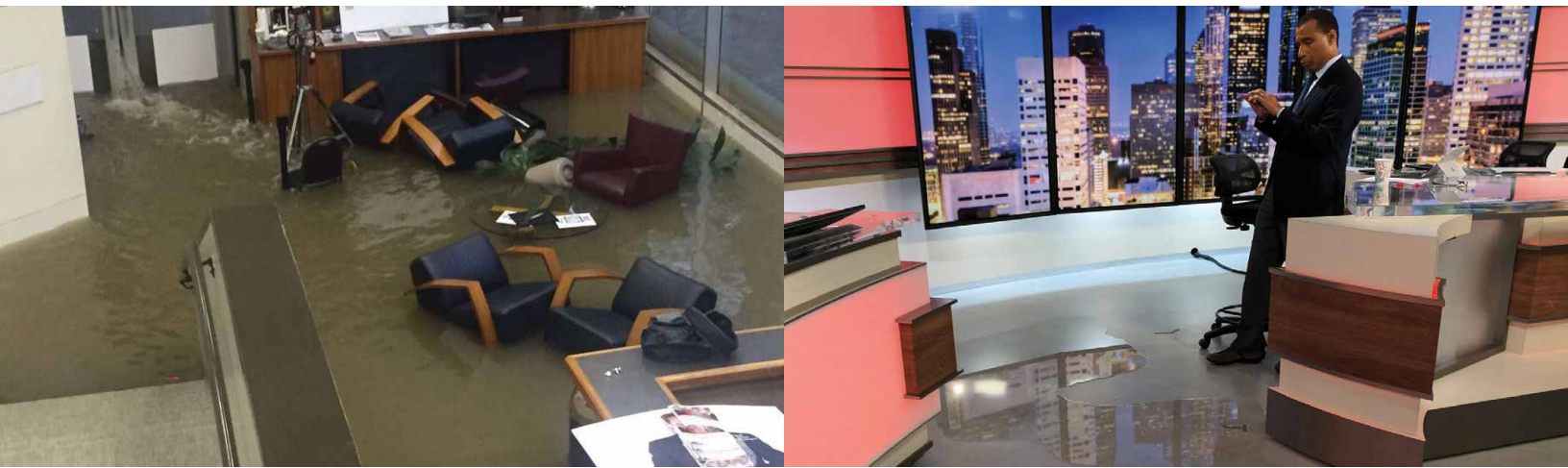
Given that Texas has more than 1,000 school districts, collaboration with TETN and the state's ESCs is critical. "We can't go to each one, so the model is to partner with the regional service centers to work out the arrangements with the school districts," said Shah.

The experience of Round Rock ISD, Region 13 and TETN, shows the value of bringing together organizations with shared objectives to help improve the learning opportunities of students in Texas.

"The hope is that this will grow," said Castillo. "The goal is to educate school districts about this process in order to save them money and expand their benefit down the line."



Round Rock ISD students are able to explore the Internet and collaborate in a faster more protected manner through their relationship with LEARN.



Flooding at the KHOU station and studio.

KHOU was soon sending multiple video streams to and from Dallas — not only for studio recordings but also for confidence monitoring, a process broadcasters use to ensure picture quality is optimal, which requires additional feeds. The station was ultimately sending up to 16 video feeds at a time.

“While it is theoretically possible to transmit such data over the internet, the internet is not a point-to-point, Layer 2 circuit like LEARN, which means you get dropouts, artifacts and other glitches,” said Gunnerson. “So, it wasn’t until we had the LEARN connection that we could work at production quality.”

Between the first call to LEARN shortly after the storm struck and the initial transmission from Houston to Dallas, only two weeks had elapsed.

“LEARN has an absolutely fantastic fiber network. It’s a great resource for the entire state of Texas,” Gunnerson said. “We were very happy that we received permission to use the network. It was a lifesaver for that time.”

LEARN served as the primary conduit between KHOU and WFAA until the end of 2017, when KHOU was able to get their network up and running. It currently serves as a backup circuit as KHOU continues to reestablish their studio and connections.

“It just floored me that they could go out of their way to help us as much as they did,” Gunnerson said. “It’s a testament of their desire to help in an emergency situation.”

During a moment of crisis, people and systems working together ensured that the citizens of greater Houston received critical and life-saving information.

“Our mission is always people first,” said Pankaj Shah, LEARN President and CEO. “In the case of KHOU and the city of Houston after Hurricane Harvey, we were happy that we had a ‘LEARN Champion’ on the ground in the form of the University of Houston.”

This, Shah says, is what LEARN is all about - supporting institutions and communities through their state-wide research and education network.

“We truly believe that LEARN is an extension of our members’ enterprise network. Whether in crises or growth, our subject matter experts carry this torch and repeatedly leverage partnerships to support people while providing seamless and friction-free connectivity.”



APPENDICES

➤ BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)

Dennis Fouty

Associate Vice President, Information Technology & CIO
University of Houston System

Rama Dhuwaraha

Chief Technology Officer & Interim CIO
University of North Texas System

Jeffery (Jeff) Neyland

Chief Information Officer
University of Texas at Arlington

William Green

*Director of Networking & Telecommunications,
Information Technology Services*
University of Texas at Austin

Frank Feagans

Vice President, Information Technology & CIO
University of Texas at Dallas

Stephen Riter

Vice President, Information Resources & Planning
University of Texas at El Paso

Bryan Wilson

Interim Vice Provost, Information Technology & CIO
University of Texas at San Antonio

Derek Drawhorn

Executive Director, Communications Technology
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Yeman Collier

Chief Information Officer
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

John D. Yoder, Jr.

Associate Vice President, Information Technology & CIO
University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler

Chuck Suitor

Associate Vice President & CTO
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Todd A. Leach

Vice President, Information Services & CIO
University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

Jeffrey Graham

Chief Information Officer
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Darnell Walker

Assistant VP, Infrastructure Services
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
at Dallas

Clair Goldsmith

Chief Technology Officer
University of Texas System



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 2017

ASSETS

	<u>2017</u>
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 10,184,917
Investments - short term (at cost):	
Certificates of deposit	1,125,000
Fixed Income Bonds	1,200,000
Total Short Term Investments	<u>2,325,000</u>
Accounts receivable	235,367
Prepaid expenses	174,308
Funds held by others	<u>1,900</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>12,921,492</u>
INVESTMENTS - LONG TERM (at cost)	
Certificates of deposit	2,475,000
Fixed Income Bonds	<u>3,748,472</u>
Total Long-Term Investments	<u>6,223,472</u>
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	
Network equipment	10,039,336
Furniture and equipment	<u>56,273</u>
	10,095,609
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(8,020,560)</u>
Property and Equipment - net	<u>2,075,049</u>
OTHER ASSETS	
Network and IRU access rights	9,843,211
Less accumulated amortization	<u>(5,952,112)</u>
Total Other Assets	<u>3,891,099</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>\$ 25,111,112</u></u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Deferred revenue	\$ 612,093
Accounts payable	152,073
Accrued vacation pay	10,134
Credit cards payable	36,276
Capital leases payable - current portion	<u>15,000</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>825,576</u>
LONG TERM LIABILITIES	
Capital leases net of current portion	<u>23,306</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>848,882</u>
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted net assets	13,835,494
Unrestricted board designated net assets	
Life cycle replacement	10,360,713
Member balances	<u>66,023</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>24,262,230</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u><u>\$ 25,111,112</u></u>

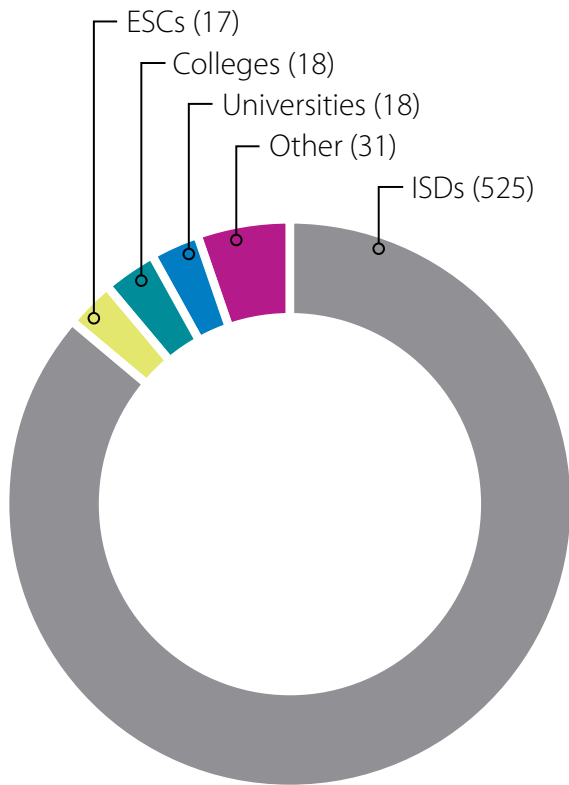


STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

	Current Operating Funds		
	Unrestricted		Total
	Program Services	Management and General	
REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT			
Network services	\$ 6,869,795	\$ -	\$ 6,869,795
Membership dues	-	790,000	790,000
Investment income	96,968	4,747	101,715
TOTAL REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT	6,966,763	794,747	7,761,510
EXPENSES			
PROGRAM SERVICES			
Connections and fibers	2,797,622	-	2,797,622
Network parts and supplies	125,912	-	125,912
Installation	56,441	-	56,441
Amortization	632,430	-	632,430
Depreciation	763,809	-	763,809
Total Program Expenses	4,376,214	-	4,376,214
SUPPORTING SERVICES			
Professional fees:			
Administration	557,258	546,345	1,103,603
Auditing	-	19,750	19,750
Consulting	-	23,195	23,195
Accounting	-	9,748	9,748
Legal	-	6,931	6,931
Salaries and wages	303,702	44,360	348,062
Software subscriptions	11,376	97,339	108,715
Travel	88,023	49,138	137,161
Insurance	-	47,562	47,562
Sponsored meetings	-	76,902	76,902
Membership dues	-	20,100	20,100
Office rent	-	23,325	23,325
Payroll taxes	16,873	3,647	20,520
Office expenses	11,219	14,489	25,708
Computer supplies	2,096	4,343	6,439
Books and subscriptions	5,533	3,072	8,605
Telephone	267	6,595	6,862
Marketing, education and awards	-	6,565	6,565
Office utilities and maintenance	-	5,919	5,919
Depreciation	-	2,052	2,052
Total Supporting Services	996,347	1,011,377	2,007,724
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,372,561	1,011,377	6,383,938
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	1,594,202	(216,630)	1,377,572
NET ASSETS:			
Beginning balance at January 1, 2017	21,985,695	893,231	22,878,926
Prior period adjustment	5,732	-	5,732
Balance at January 1, 2017 as restated	21,991,427	893,231	22,884,658
Ending balance at December 31, 2017	\$ 23,585,629	\$ 676,601	\$ 24,262,230

➤ AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS



Colleges

- Angelina College
- Austin Community College
- Brazosport College
- Del Mar College
- Galveston College
- Houston Community College
- Lamar Institute of Technology
- Lamar State College - Orange
- Lamar State College - Port Arthur
- Midland College
- Navarro College
- Northeast Texas Community College
- Panola College
- Paris Junior College
- Texarkana College
- Trinity Valley Community College
- Tyler Junior College
- Victoria College

Education Service Centers

- Education Service Center - Region 1
- Education Service Center - Region 11
- Education Service Center - Region 13
- Education Service Center - Region 14
- Education Service Center - Region 15
- Education Service Center - Region 16
- Education Service Center - Region 17
- Education Service Center - Region 18
- Education Service Center - Region 19
- Education Service Center - Region 2
- Education Service Center - Region 20

- Education Service Center - Region 3
- Education Service Center - Region 4
- Education Service Center - Region 5
- Education Service Center - Region 6
- Education Service Center - Region 7
- Education Service Center - Region 9

- Benjamin ISD
- Bexar County Academy
- Big Sandy ISD
- Big Springs Charter School
- Birdville ISD
- Blackwell CISD
- Blanco ISD
- Blanket ISD
- Bluff Dale ISD
- Bob Hope Charter School
- Boerne ISD
- Boling ISD
- Booker ISD
- Borden County ISD
- Borger ISD
- Bovina ISD
- Bowie ISD
- Boys Ranch ISD
- Brackett ISD
- Brady ISD
- Brazos ISD
- Breckenridge ISD
- Brenham ISD
- Broadus ISD
- Brock ISD
- Bronte ISD
- Brookeland ISD
- Brookesmith ISD
- Brooks Academy of Science And Engineering
- Brooks County ISD
- Brownfield ISD
- Brownwood ISD
- Buckholts ISD
- Buena Vista ISD
- Buna ISD
- Burkburnett ISD
- Burkeville ISD
- Burnet CISD
- Burton ISD
- Caldwell ISD
- Calvert ISD
- Canadian ISD
- Carpe Diem Schools
- Carrizo Springs CISD

ISDs

- Abernathy ISD
- Academy of Careers And Technologies
- Adrian ISD
- Alamo Heights ISD
- Albany ISD
- Alief ISD
- Alpine ISD
- Alto ISD
- Amarillo ISD
- Amherst ISD
- Anderson-Shiro CISD
- Andrews ISD
- Angleton ISD
- Anson ISD
- Anton ISD
- Apple Springs ISD
- Archer City ISD
- Aspermont ISD
- Aubrey ISD
- Austin ISD
- Austwell-Tivoli ISD
- Baird ISD
- Balmorhea ISD
- Bandera ISD
- Bangs ISD
- Banquete ISD
- Bartlett ISD
- Basis Texas
- Bellevue ISD
- Ben Bolt-Palito Blanco ISD
- Benavides ISD

- Benjamin ISD
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- Carrizo Springs CISD



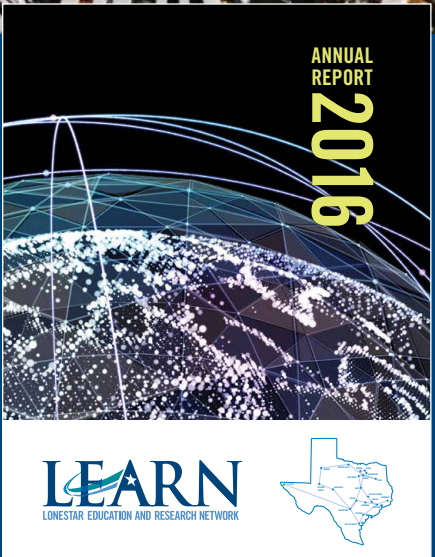
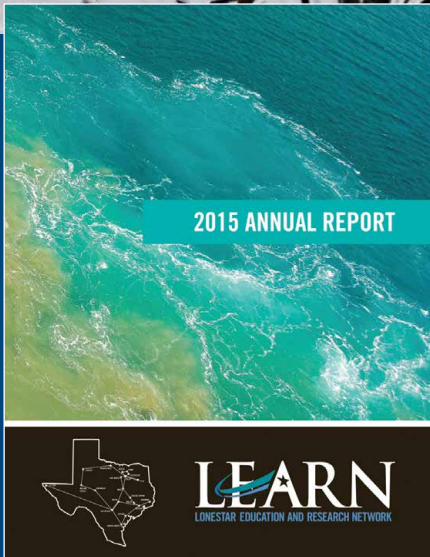
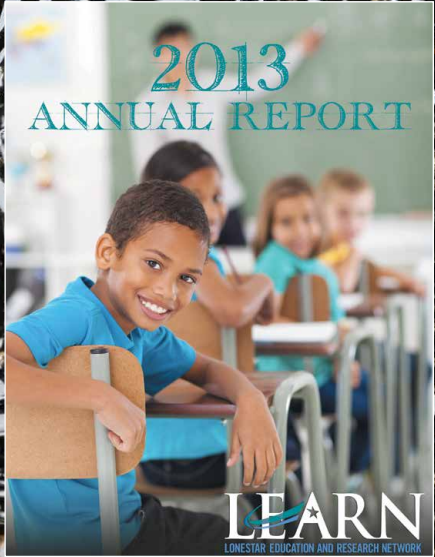
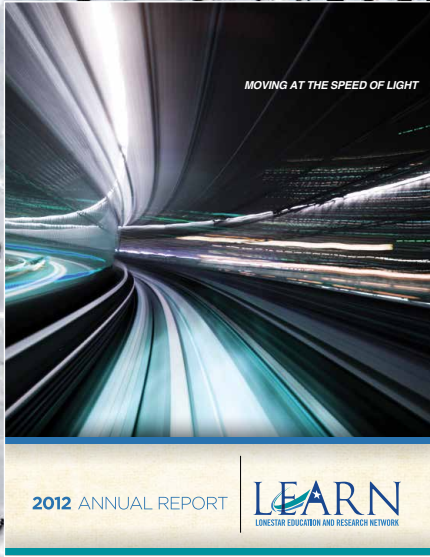
➤ AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS (CONTINUED)

Castleberry ISD	Devine ISD	George Gervin Academy	Highland ISD
Cayuga ISD	Deweyville ISD	George West ISD	Highland Park ISD
Center Point ISD	D'Hanis ISD	Giddings ISD	Holliday ISD
Centerville ISD	Dilley ISD	Glasscock County ISD	Holy Cross
Channing ISD	Dime Box ISD	Godley ISD	Hondo ISD
Charlotte ISD	Dimmitt ISD	Gold Burg ISD	Huckabay ISD
Chester ISD	Divide ISD	Gonzales ISD	Hunt ISD
Childress ISD	Doss Consolidated CSD	Good Shephard Network	Idalou ISD
Chillicothe ISD	Douglass ISD	Goodrich ISD	Ingram ISD
Christoval ISD	Dumas ISD	Gorman ISD	Iowa Park CISD
Cisco ISD	Eagle Pass ISD	Grady ISD	Ira ISD
City Center Health Careers	Early ISD	Graford ISD	Iraan-Sheffield ISD
City View ISD	East Central ISD	Grandfalls-Royalty ISD	Irion County ISD
Clarendon ISD	East Fort Worth Montessori Academy	Grandview-Hopkins ISD	Jacksboro ISD
Claude ISD	Eastland ISD	Granger ISD	Jarrell ISD
Clint ISD	Eden ISD	Grape Creek ISD	Jim Ned CISD
Clyde CISD	Edgewood ISD	Grapeland ISD	John H. Wood Jr. Public Charter Dist
Coahoma ISD	Ehrhart School	Great Hearts Texas	Johnson City ISD
Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD	Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy	Greenwood ISD	Joshua ISD
Coleman ISD	Electra ISD	Groom ISD	Jourdanton ISD
Colmesneil ISD	Era ISD	Groveton ISD	Jubilee Academic Center
Colorado ISD	Erath Excels Academy, Inc.	Gruver ISD	Jundson ISD
Comanche ISD	Etoile ISD	Gustine ISD	Jundson Montessorri of San Antonio
Comfort ISD	Eula ISD	Hale Center ISD	Karnes City ISD
Compass Academy Charter School	Evadale ISD	Hamlin ISD	Kelton ISD
Comstock ISD	Excelsior ISD	Happy ISD	Kenedy ISD
Cotton Center ISD	Falls City ISD	Hardin-Jefferson ISD	Kennard ISD
Cotulla ISD	Farwell ISD	Harlandale ISD	Kennedale ISD
Crane ISD	Fayetteville ISD	Harmony Science Academy	Kermit ISD
Crockett County Consolidated CSD	Flatonia ISD	Harper ISD	Kerrville ISD
Crockett ISD	Floresville ISD	Harrold ISD	Kinkaid School
Crosbyton CISD	Floydada ISD	Hart ISD	Kipp Aspire Academy
Cross Plains ISD	Follett ISD	Hartley ISD	Kirbyville CISD
Cross Roads ISD	Forsan ISD	Haskell CISD	Klondike ISD
Crowell ISD	Fort Davis ISD	Hawley ISD	Knippa ISD
Crystal City ISD	Fort Elliott CISD	Hedley ISD	Knox City-O'Brien CISD
Culberson County ISD	Fort Sam Houston ISD	Hemphill ISD	Kountze ISD
Dalhart ISD	Fort Stockton ISD	Henrietta ISD	Kress ISD
Danbury ISD	Fort Worth Christian	Henry Ford Academy Alameda School for Art + Design	La Gloria ISD
Darrouzett ISD	Frankston ISD	Hereford ISD	La Grange ISD
Dawson ISD	Fredericksburg ISD	Hermleigh ISD	La Pryor ISD
De Leon ISD	Frenship ISD	Higgins ISD	La Vernia ISD
Denton ISD	Friona ISD	Higgs Carter King Gifted & Talented	Lackland ISD
Denver City ISD	Gause ISD	High Island ISD	Lake Travis ISD

➤ AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS (CONTINUED)

Lake Worth ISD	Medina ISD	Onalaska ISD	Reagan County ISD
Lamesa ISD	Medina Valley ISD	Orange Grove ISD	Richards ISD
Laneville ISD	Memphis ISD	Orangefield ISD	Richland Springs ISD
Lapoynor ISD	Menard ISD	Overton ISD	Rio Vista ISD
Latexo ISD	Merkel ISD	Paint Creek ISD	Rising Star ISD
Lazbuddie ISD	Meyersville ISD	Paint Rock ISD	River Road ISD
Leakey ISD	Miami ISD	Palacios ISD	Robert Lee ISD
Lefors ISD	Midland Academy Charter	Palo Pinto ISD	Roby CISD
Leggett ISD	Midway ISD	Pampa ISD	Rochelle ISD
Leon ISD	Milano ISD	Panhandle ISD	Rockdale ISD
Levelland ISD	Miles ISD	Panther Creek ISD	Rocksprings ISD
Leveretts Chapel ISD	Monahans-Wickett-Pyote ISD	Patton Springs	Roosevelt ISD
Lexington ISD	Monsignor Kelly Catholic	Pearland ISD	Roscoe ISD
Liberty Hill ISD	High School	Pearsall ISD	Rotan ISD
Lighthouse Charter School	Montague ISD	Peaster ISD	Round Rock ISD
Lingleville ISD	Moran ISD	Pecos-Barstow ISD	Round Top-Carmine ISD
Lipan ISD	Morton ISD	Perrin-Whitt CISD	Rule ISD
Little Cypress-Mauriceville CISD	Mount Enterprise ISD	Petersburg ISD	Runge ISD
Littlefield ISD	Muleshoe ISD	Petrolia ISD	Sabinal ISD
Lockhart ISD	Mumford ISD	Pilot Point ISD	Sabine ISD
Lockney ISD	Munday CISD	Pine Tree ISD	Sabine Pass ISD
Loop ISD	Murchison ISD	Plains ISD	Saint Jo ISD
Lorraine ISD	Natalia ISD	Plainview ISD	San Antonio ISD
Lorenzo ISD	Navarro ISD	Pleasanton ISD	San Antonio Preparatory
Lovelady ISD	Navasota ISD	Plemons-Stinnett-Phillips CISD	Academy
Lubbock ISD	Nazareth ISD	Ponder ISD	San Antonio School for
Lubbock-Cooper ISD	Neches ISD	Poolville ISD	Inquiry & Creativity
Lueders-Avoca ISD	New Braunfels ISD	Por Vida Academy	San Antonio Technology
Luling ISD	New Deal ISD	Port Arthur ISD	Academy
Lumberton ISD	New Frontiers Charter School	Positive Solutions	San Isidro ISD
Lytle ISD	New Home ISD	Charter School	San Perlita ISD
Madisonville CISD	Newcastle ISD	Post ISD	San Saba ISD
Malakoff ISD	Newton ISD	Poteet ISD	San Vincente ISD
Mansfield ISD	Nixon-Smilely CISD	Poth ISD	Sands CISD
Marathon ISD	Nocona ISD	Prairie Lea ISD	Sanford-Fritch ISD
Marfa ISD	Normangee ISD	Prairie Valley ISD	Santa Anna ISD
Martins Mill ISD	North East ISD	Presidio ISD	Santa Maria ISD
Mason ISD	Northside ISD	Pringle-Morse CISD	Santa Rosa ISD
May ISD	Northside ISD	Quanah ISD	Schertz-Cibolo-U City ISD
McCamey ISD	Nueces Canyon ISD	Radiance Academy of Learning	Schleicher ISD
McDade ISD	Nursery ISD	Ralls ISD	School of Excellence
McLean ISD	O'Donnell ISD	Randolph Field ISD	In Education
McMullen County ISD	Olfen ISD	Ranger ISD	School of Science
Meadow ISD	Olney ISD	Rankin ISD	And Technology
Meadowland Charter School	Olton ISD	Raven School	School of Science
			And Technology
			Discovery (015-831)





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