

## **THECB highlights benefits of digital learning during National Distance Learning Week**

**Nov. 9, 2020, Austin, Texas** – As part of [National Distance Learning Week](#) (NDLW), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) joins the United States Distance Learning Association to highlight the success of digital learning by spreading awareness and promoting best practices across the country.

“Digital learning plays a vitally important role in shaping the future of higher education for Texas,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Harrison Keller. “When the pandemic disrupted higher education institutions earlier this year, educators across the state, nation and world had to pivot very quickly to digital learning. This monumental shift put a spotlight on the critical need to invest in advancing innovation in digital learning.”

Recently, the THECB announced its Open Educational Resources (OER) Course Development and Implementation Grant Program, and a newly launched [OERTX Repository](#), which will enhance the quality of online course offerings and reduce the costs of educational materials for students at Texas public and independent institutions of higher education.

“Our OER initiatives are just two examples of our commitment to delivering quality, affordable curriculum in a digital environment,” Keller said. “We are also providing students access to virtual advisors, and are [using an artificial intelligence](#) chat bot that can text proactive, personalized guidance to high school students as they navigate the college application process.”

To further its commitment to advancing digital learning, the Coordinating Board has created a new Division of Digital Learning which will be led by Assistant Commissioner for Digital Learning Michelle Singh, who will join the THECB on Nov. 16.

Dr. Singh joins the agency from Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, where she has served as the associate vice president of teaching and learning technologies since 2018. Over her 20-year tenure in higher education, Dr. Singh has held positions as board chair for the Texas Distance Learning Association, member of the United States Distance Learning Association Board, chair of the Texas A&M University System Council for Academic Technology and Innovative Education, and is a former chair of the THECB Learning Technology Advisory Committee.

The new Division of Digital Learning will partner with institutions to expand digital success and foster quality digital learning experiences for students in Texas. Dr. Singh and her team will be responsible for the agency’s OER grant programs, the OERTX Repository, and the future Digital Learning Clearinghouse.

“Digital learning in Texas has a proven record of success,” Dr. Singh said. “It spans the spectrum of higher education service and delivery and it is time to discover how it can be leveraged to strengthen current practice and support innovation as we establish a new normal for teaching, learning, and student success in Texas. I am pleased to be joining the Coordinating Board and helping to launch this important new division.”

For more information, visit the current [OER Course Development and Implementation Grant Program](#). To explore OER materials used in Texas higher education, visit the [OERTX Repository](#).

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### **THECB Mission Statement**

*The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.*