
For Immediate Release: June 4, 2014

Waco ISD Approves Pre-K STEM Initiative with STEMscopes
STEMscopes Early Explorer Brings STEM to Waco ISD's Youngest Students

Houston, TX: Beginning this fall, Waco ISD will be piloting STEMscopes Early Explorer, a new STEM curriculum solution from Accelerate Learning and Rice University that is designed to bring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to pre-kindergarten students. "It's a model that provides students with engaging, hands-on discovery lessons so that they can explore the world around them, and expand their natural curiosity to build new concepts," said Terri Patterson, executive director of elementary education for Waco ISD.

Starting STEM early allows students to not only develop critical, scientific reasoning skills, but it also fosters a love for science and discovery. Many classrooms are home to students who struggle with science; and science is treated as a vocabulary list rather than a process. "STEMscopes Early Explorer seeks to change how students interact with STEM, and it also opens career options to them in the ever-growing STEM workforce. Our new program helps teachers dive deeper into scientific understandings and also helps students question the world around them. With STEMscopes children become scientists starting the first day they arrive at school," said Accelerate Learning's Chief Academic Officer, Reid Whitaker.

Approved at the WISD board of trustees meeting on May 22, the pilot program will run for one academic year across the district's 15 elementary campuses. In turn, Waco ISD schools would have access to the entire online curriculum, activity kits, supplementary print, and summer training with ongoing support. Accelerate Learning and Rice University hope to collect data over the course of the pilot, while focusing on the length of lesson mastery, vocabulary comprehension, and student questioning to refine the tools in STEMscopes Early Explorer.

"We've talked and complained because the state does not see the critical value of pre-K education, and has [only] funded half-day. Our children need more than half a day, so we always look for alternative sources," said Superintendent Bonny Cain. Waco ISD's diverse instructional offerings, IB program, Montessori campuses, and Head Start partnerships make it an ideal candidate for effective implementation of this pre-K STEM curriculum. Rice University and Accelerate Learning hope to use the data gleaned from Waco ISD's pilot to expand its reach and offer STEMscopes Early Explorer nationwide.

About Accelerate Learning, Inc.: Accelerate Learning, in conjunction with Rice University, is focused on becoming the preeminent and most effective digital PreK-12 STEM resource used by teachers, students, and parents as measured by adoption and usage by schools, districts, and families. With over 1.5 million student users and growing, Accelerate Learning has grown from a single product, STEMscopes in 2007, to a brand that now offers a variety of curriculum and professional development solutions across the United States, which supports early learning, NGSS,

and state-aligned curriculum. Previously, Accelerate Learning has earned recognition in District Administration's Top 100 Products, SIIA Innovation Incubator, and EdTech's Cool Tool Awards.

###

Media Contacts:

Javier Encinas
Vice President Marketing, Accelerate Learning
480-529-9449
javier@acceleratelearning.com