

TexQuest GALE Resources

The State of Texas should only provide TexQuest GALE Resources for K-12 schools that have been curated for K-12 schools.

Background:

TexQuest is a “statewide digital resources program that provides anytime, anywhere access to high quality, authoritative digital resources to all educators, students, and students' immediate families in Texas **K-12 public schools and open enrollment charter schools.**”¹ The **Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)**, authorized by Texas Government Code 441.222,² administers “the **TexQuest** program and is responsible for selection and coordination of all TexQuest resources, as well as district invoicing.”

Supported by appropriations from the **Texas State Legislature**, Texas districts pay a small per student participation fee to gain access to TexQuest resources from the providers including **Gale Academic OneFile, Gale General OneFile, Gale OneFile: Informe Académico.**³ Funding for TexQuest is also provided in part by a grant from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** in combination with state and local funds.⁴

Districts pay an **annual per student participation fee of \$.29** based on enrollment data for the previous year for access to all resources provided through TexQuest. According to Purchasing and Bids posted on the TSLAC website⁵, the state of Texas paid GALE/Cengage \$3,582,672.50 for access in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

According to TexQuest 2019-2020 Participation Summary Reports⁶, **868 or 71% of Texas School Districts and Open Enrollment Charter Schools** participated in TexQuest, serving **5,023,854 or 93% of Texas students.**

Problem:

The majority of schools have network web content filters for inappropriate searches and websites in compliance with the **Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).**⁹ However, once students pass through a school network filter by accessing an allowed resource, the **school network filter stops filtering** for inappropriate content, including pornography and content harmful to minors, embedded in that resource.

Through an open records request in Colorado, Cengage GALE admitted that **GALE Academic OneFile** database was “**not curated specifically for a K-12 audience**” and may contain content that is “inappropriate for K12 students”.⁷ GALE falsely **advertises** its Academic OneFile product on its website as suitable for elementary, middle and high school students.⁸ In Texas, OneFile is listed as a resource available for TexQuest³ which is exclusively for K-12 schools. (Appendix A)

Research of Cengage GALE performed on May 17, 2021 revealed inappropriate Categories and Publications available in the TexQuest **General OneFile database.** (Appendix B)

Solution:

The State of Texas TexQuest GALE Resources should not include **Gale Academic OneFile** or **Gale General OneFile.**

Sources:

¹ <http://texquest.net/welcome/program>

² <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.441.htm#441.222>

³ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LUqRRZLoMnmqpcZ9FrvKJfI90gyVUolZJKz2UHmEwRE/edit>

⁴ <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/IMLS>

⁵ <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/landing/business.html>

⁶ <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/TexQuest%20Participation%20Summary%20Reports>

⁷ <https://pornographyisnoteducation.org/f/gale-k-12-“databases”—scholarly-or-full-of-porn-for-kids>

⁸ <https://www.gale.com/databases/catalog?sort=ascending&pre=true&audience=k-12>

⁹ <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>

Appendix A: TexQuest Resources for 2020-2021

Gale/Cengage

- Gale Academic OneFile
- Gale Chilton Library
- Gale OneFile: Educator's Reference Complete
- Gale eBooks (GVRL)
- Gale General OneFile
- Gale in Context: Environmental Studies (GREENR)
- Gale Health and Wellness
- Gale OneFile: Informe Académico
- Gale OneFile: News (InfoTrac Newsstand)
- Gale OneFile: High School Edition (InfoTrac Student)
- Gale in Context: Elementary (Kids Infobits)
- Gale Literary Sources (includes Literature Resource Center, LitFinder, Scribner Writers Series, and Twayne's Authors Series)
- Gale Presents: National Geographic Kids
- Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints
- Gale Power Search
- Gale in Context: Middle School (Research in Context)
- Gale in Context Science (Science in Context)
- Gale in Context: High School (Student Resources in Context)

Source: TexQuest Resources for 2020-2021

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LUqRRZLoMnmqpcZ9FrvKJfI90gyVUoiZJKz2UHmEwRE/edit>

From: Shomali, Lemma <Lemma.Shomali@cengage.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 14, 2019 6:26 AM
To: Koenig, Jason R
Cc: Goodfriend, Steve; Kravitz, Hilly; McDade, Melissa
Subject: Re: Varied Search Results by location

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jason,

Thanks for sending this along! I wanted to follow up my voicemail with some brief information about the below.

It appears that Cherry Creek HS has access to Gale Academic Onefile, a periodical database that aggregates more varied content, including some that might be considered inappropriate for K12 students but more suitable for an older audience. While Academic Onefile certainly has academic research content, which is the primary reason Cherry Creek acquired it, it is not curated specifically for K12 students, and therefore you're seeing titles that you wouldn't find in a K12 specific database, such as our In Context series.

Access to this product also explains your content count discrepancies - Powersearch, which appears to be the resource you're conducting your searches through, is set to cross search all available resources. Students and teachers will see different results based on the inclusion on Academic Onefile.

There are a few other things I'd like to share with you about how we curate content and determine appropriateness level, however, I'll save that for Monday when we can discuss in detail and you can ask questions.

Our intent is always to provide the most robust content for students that allows them to seek information in a safe environment, and to provide our school partners with continuous support. Please feel free to reach out anytime, and looking forward to connecting in person on Monday.

Best regards,
Lemma

Appendix B: GALE General OneFile

Categories Include
Burlesque (Theater)
Clitoris
Condoms
Prostitutes
Ejaculation
Erotic Literature
Escorts (Dating Service)
Female Identity
Female-Male Relations
Premarital Sex
Fifty Shades Trilogy (Series)
Gay Literature
Gay Men
Gay Rights Groups
Gay Youth
Gays
Homosexuality
Lesbianism
Lesbians
Libido
Masochism
Masturbation
Orgasm
Polyamory
Polygamy
Promiscuity
Pornography
Prostitute's Customers
Prostitution
Sex Communication
Sex Crimes
Sex Education
Sex Oriented Businesses
Sex Oriented Businesses
Sex Research
Sex Roles
Sex Tourism
Sexual Abuse
Sexual Behavior
Sexual behavior surveys
Sexual Behaviour
Sexual behaviour surveys
Sexual Excitement
Sexual Fantasies
Sexual Identity
Sexual Intercourse
Sexuality
Stigma (Social Psychology)
Striptease
Virginity

Publications Include
Annual Review of Sex Research
Archives of Sexual Behavior
Chatelaine
Cosmopolitan
Curve
Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality
Glamour
Herizons
How to Have More Sex
International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health
Journal of the History of Sexuality
Lambda Book Report
Law & Sexuality
Men's Health
off our backs
Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health
Redbook
Self
Sex Drive and the Pill
Sex Roles: A Journal of Research
Sexual Health Exchange
Sexuality & Culture
Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Sexually Transmitted Infections
Teen Vogue
The Advocate
The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality
The Cut
Women's Health

Source: TexQuest GALE database research performed on May 17, 2021.

Tami Brown Rodriquez
Jaco Booyens Ministries
LD 1395

Testimony in Support of LD 1395

An Act to Protect Minors from Obscene Material in School Libraries and to Educate Them on Human Trafficking Prevention

Submitted by: Tami Brown Rodriquez

Director of Policy, Jaco Booyens Ministries

Family Member of a Survivor

April 12, 2025

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1395—a bill that brings clarity, accountability, and courage to the spaces where our children learn, grow, and are meant to be safe.

My name is Tami Brown Rodriquez, and I serve as the Director of Policy for Jaco Booyens Ministries, a national organization committed to the prevention of sexual exploitation and trafficking. But today, I also come before you as something far more personal—a family member of a survivor.

My niece was trafficked for over 15 years. Her abuse began in a place many parents consider safe: her school. She was groomed by a teacher, silenced by institutional failures, and passed through systems that lacked both safeguards and accountability. That story is not unique—and that is the greatest tragedy of all.

LD 1395 takes three long-overdue steps to address these exact failures:

1. It removes the legal exemption that currently allows obscene content to be distributed in schools.

Under current Maine law, Title 17 §2911(2)(A), public and private schools are exempt from prosecution if they provide obscene material for “educational purposes.” This exemption would not protect a private citizen in any other context—and it should not protect an institution tasked with forming young minds.

LD 1395 repeals this exemption for schools. If material is legally defined as obscene, it should have no place in a classroom, library, or student database—regardless of intent.

2. It establishes content filtering standards for K-12 digital resources.

Today, students access much of their learning through third-party databases and online platforms. Unfortunately, many of these platforms have exposed students to graphic, sexually explicit material—with no age verification, no content warnings, and no accountability.

LD 1395 requires vendors to block access to obscene content, child pornography, and sexual exploitation of minors in school-based platforms. If they refuse to comply, they don’t get paid. That’s not censorship—it’s stewardship. Many think it already does, but I can assure you in Maine and many other states the providers missed many aspects such as web search aggregators like Symbaloo enables educators to compile and share resources with students, facilitating blended learning and easy access to curated content.

3. It gives schools the option to offer age-appropriate human trafficking prevention education.

This provision doesn’t mandate a new curriculum. It simply gives schools the legal room to teach students how to recognize grooming, how to report abuse, and how to protect themselves and others.

If my niece had been given this education—if her school had been equipped—her story might be different.

As Director of Policy, I’ve tracked 1678 child protection bills across 46 states this year. I’ve also filed a brief in the Paxton v. Free Speech Coalition case before the U.S.

Supreme Court, defending Texas' age verification law to shield minors from online exploitation.

Across the country, lawmakers are waking up to the reality that what's happening to children—online, in schools, and in silence—is far worse than most people realize. LD 1395 places Maine on the right side of this national conversation. It prioritizes prevention, protects the innocence of our children, and affirms that public institutions must be held to the highest standard—not exempt from it.

I urge you to support this bill not only as a policymaker, but as someone who now carries the voice of a survivor. Her story—and the stories of thousands more—are why this cannot wait.

Thank you for your time, service, and willingness to protect the next generation.

Respectfully,

Tami Brown Rodriguez

Director of Policy, Jaco Booyens Ministries

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