

June 30, 2006

The Honorable Cynthia Thornton
State Board of Education District 10
P.O. Box 321
Round Top, Texas 78954

Dear Mrs. Thornton:

IBM is pleased with recent legislative action that sets wheels in motion for Texas high school students to take a required fourth year of math and science. You may know that IBM employs some 12,000 Texans throughout the state, including more than 6,000 at the Austin development site. In Austin, 80% of IBMers have Bachelors degrees or higher, concentrated in computer science, engineering and some business majors. A highly technical workforce enables IBM to be a global leader in information technology. IBM produces more patents each year than any other company around the world. Last year, IBM-Austin produced the most patents of any IBM site. We are proud to hire many Texas university graduates.

IBM wants to continue this recruitment and employment success in Texas. Therefore, as you draft implementation rules for the fourth year of science and math, please focus on high level, effective courses without “dumbing down” the curriculum. Courses such as calculus, statistics, computer science, pre-engineering and others will offer young Texans more choice and better preparation for the high skills, high demand workplace required by IBM and other employers. Texas must become even more competitive in the global workplace; our customers demand world-class skills, innovation and creativity. Advanced courses will better connect young Texans with the expectations and opportunities of the 21st century.

To demonstrate our commitment to education improvement, IBM has worked with the Computer Science Teachers of America to develop a new high school computer science curriculum. The courseware will help to prepare students for college-level computer science/IT courses and reflect current industry standards. In association with an industry trade association, IBM is glad to share this curriculum at no charge or obligation with TEA to help with the fourth year science course development work.

By raising student knowledge of relevant technology and academic expectations, you will contribute to the academic, social and economic development of Texas. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandy Dochen
IBM Corporate Community Relations Manager