

Project Share is a new initiative of the TEA designed to expand the development and delivery of high quality professional development in an eLearning environment and provide access to online resources, online course content, academic networking, and professional learning communities. Project Share utilizes Epsilon, an academic and professional networking and content delivery service.

When a teacher or administrator account is set up he/she receives an email notification and an invitation to participate in the Texas Tour, an online module designed to introduce first-time users to Project Share and the Epsilon platform.

Project Share Feature	Questions to Ponder	Some Guidance
<p>Accounts</p> <p>There are several types of Project Share accounts. There are institutional admin accounts which enable the user to build the institutional website, generate reports, and manage accounts, courses, and groups. There are individual accounts with varying levels of functionality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will have institutional admin accounts? Who will have individual accounts? How do I communicate acceptable use procedures? When will I allow student accounts? What happens to a person's account if they leave the district? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will probably want to have at least two people with institutional admin accounts. One that is the technical contact to manage accounts and one that is a content contact that would approve courses and groups. All teachers, campus administrators, and central office curriculum staff should have accounts since this will be the platform for delivery of more and more professional development. If you develop in-house professional develop for other audiences such as paraprofessionals and other support staff they would also need accounts. Epsilon members are subject to a Terms of Service agreement and a Privacy Policy. Epsilon is also fully aware of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Child Online Protection Act (COPA) guidelines and adheres to those requirements. In addition most districts that utilize the TASB policy services have Local Policy CQ which would cover any acceptable use concerns. The original timeline included pilot use by students in the 2010-11 school year. However it is entirely a district level decision. Student accounts do not have all of the same access privileges that educator accounts have. Epsilon accounts are for life and will follow the educator to a new district even though they are removed from your district accounts.

<p>Courses</p> <p>The Epsilon eLearning system includes course-management tools that make it easy to create syllabi and lesson plans and to enhance them with multimedia, videos, and Internet links. As a bonus, Epsilon members have access to more than 150 years of <i>New York Times</i> archives through the New York Times Content Repository. Educators will also have access to other repositories, such as Smithsonian Education, NASA Education, and PBS Digital Learning Library.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can I develop courses in Project Share to deliver professional development to my staff? Do I allow teachers to develop courses for students? How do I insure that district developed courses are of acceptable quality? Which staff members should have accounts that allow them to create and approve lessons and courses? How will I provide for the facilitation of district developed courses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally developed courses in Project Share would be an efficient way to deliver some of the mandated beginning of school year trainings. Teacher developed courses for students would be allowed. You would probably want to establish a course review process using some rubric or standard such as the <i>INACOL</i> National Standards for Quality Online Teaching prior to course approval. Teachers that create courses should be familiar with the <i>INACOL</i> standards listed above. Course approval should be left up to a staff member with an institutional admin account as mentioned under Accounts. Some courses are self-paced and do not require facilitation. An instructor-facilitated course should be facilitated by the course creator.
<p>Groups</p> <p>Groups provide a means for online communication and networking among users who have a mutual interest. Members may send messages to each other, engage in discussions, share files, and collaborate on editable Web documents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who can create groups? Who will facilitate groups once they have been created? Who will monitor group communication? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any teacher or administrator who needs to collaborate with other teachers and/or administrators with common professional interests can create a group. Normally the group creator would facilitate the group. If the facilitator is not the group creator they will need moderator/management permissions. The group facilitator will monitor group communication.
<p>ePortfolios</p> <p>ePortfolios are what visitors see when they enter a users Epsilon web address. An ePortfolio may contain contact info, pictures, resumes, certifications, publications, etc. An ePortfolio may sound like personal page on Facebook or MySpace, but there are big differences between Epsilon and social-media sites - Epsilon is about education, and users ePortfolios should reflect that emphasis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What guidelines should I put in place about what may be added to a user's ePortfolio? Can I monitor what staff members are displaying in their ePortfolios? Will I allow students to have ePortfolios? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content of a user's ePortfolio should be guided by local policy. Districts that utilize the TASB policy services and have Local Policy CQ have a policy in place that would provide guidance. Also the Epsilon Terms of Service provides guidelines about posting of content. Account holders can be required to grant access to all items in their ePortfolio to their employer. This is one of the first areas that the TEA has envisioned for student use. Some districts have had ePortfolios in place for several years on other platforms.

<p>Learning Matrix</p> <p>The Epsilon Learning Matrix (ELM) provides a management tool for both formative and summative learning assessment. Individual student, departmental, and/or campus-wide learning matrices can be built. Staff members can also build a learning matrix to reflect their professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can teachers and administrators use ELMs to guide instruction? • How can a campus administrator use ELMs to plan staff professional development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use the ELM to collect, select, reflect, and present their learning accomplishments in a very easy-to-use format. Teachers can then use this information to review and assess student learning outcomes and to individualize instruction. • Likewise campus administrators can use the ELM to create campus-wide professional development activities based on campus or department learning outcomes.
<p>Read/Write Web Tools</p> <p>Project Share has several read/write web tools available to users including Epsilon mail, blogs, wikis, chat rooms, and forums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I communicate acceptable use procedures for these tools? • Do I need to monitor the use of these tools? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epsilon members are subject to a Terms of Service agreement and a Privacy Policy. Epsilon is also fully aware of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Child Online Protection Act (COPA) guidelines and adheres to those requirements. In addition most districts that utilize the TASB policy services have Local Policy CQ which would cover any acceptable use concerns. • Epsilon users must be aware and cautious of the kind of behavior that is acceptable and unacceptable when participating in the online world. Local policy must be clear that the use of these tools are subject to monitoring and of the potential consequences of inappropriate use. When to monitor a particular user's account is a local district decision.



Administrator's Implementation Guide

