



NEWS RELEASE

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Students Meet Authors and Illustrators Daily with TeachingBooks.net

*Cost-Effective Multimedia Solution for Houston Students Fosters
Personal Relationships with Books and their Creators*

MADISON, WIS. (May 1, 2006) – Every day students at Hancock Elementary School in Texas experience what used to be a once in a lifetime opportunity – the chance to meet an author or illustrator. With funding in a constant state of jeopardy, many school libraries can no longer afford to host on-site author visits for students. According to the American Library Association, library funding cuts have reached nearly \$2 million in the past three years. Faced with a limited budget, Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District turned to *TeachingBooks.net*, a provider of multimedia resources designed to generate enthusiasm for reading, as an affordable way to bring books to life for students, educators and families.

Original author programs from *TeachingBooks.net* bring award-winning authors and illustrators directly into libraries and classrooms, allowing students to learn first hand how ideas, art and text come together to create a book. Featuring more than 1,500 author programs, *TeachingBooks.net* original movies are filmed in the studios of authors and illustrators and include interactive slideshows, demonstrations and book readings. Once a student is given the opportunity to make a personal connection with an author or illustrator, a relationship forms which further ignites a student's interest in reading.

School libraries today provide more than books; they have become school library media centers with resources to engage children in learning opportunities through books and technology. Cypress-Fairbanks ISD's Hancock Elementary School is no exception, embracing the power of technology into the library's daily activities. For example, after reading two books illustrated by Denise Fleming to a group of students during story time, Library Media Specialist Heather Jankowski has students watch the corresponding *TeachingBooks.net* author program in which Fleming demonstrates her pulp painting technique used in "Alphabet Under Construction."

"After using *TeachingBooks.net* for two years, my students speak of authors and illustrators as if they know them personally, and they request books specifically because they have a relationship with the book's creator(s)," said Jankowski. "I'm able to give my students more experiences with authors and illustrators than any district's budget would normally allow."

In addition to providing original author programs, *TeachingBooks.net* also offers a wealth of other K-12 multimedia literacy resources. Multiple book guides for specific titles stimulate discussion and learning about books in the classroom, book readings allow students to hear the rhythm and pacing of a book's text, and links to official author and illustrator websites allow students to access biographies and other interactive activities.

“Although budgets for school libraries these days are less than abundant, *TeachingBooks.net* is extremely affordable,” said Jankowski. “When you consider that an actual author visit is \$1,000 per day plus travel expenses, the author programs alone more than justify the cost of the subscription. Also, unlike on-site author visits, students can enjoy the experience as many times as they choose.”

To promote the use of *TeachingBooks.net* in the classroom, the Educator Area assists educators with the integration of multimedia resources throughout the curriculum. The section features more than 800 thematic K-12 booklists, information on most English language children's and young adult book awards and distinctions, plus thousands of valuable links to professional resources for educators. To further support the use of *TeachingBooks.net* in schools, easy-to-use support and training resources are now included with every subscription.

As part of Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, Hancock Elementary School is included in the *TeachingBooks.net* district-wide license available to more than 86,000 students.

Launched in 2003, *TeachingBooks.net* is licensed by more than 9,000 schools across the United States and Canada, including Boston Public Schools, Calgary Board of Education in Alberta, Dallas Independent School District, Montgomery Public Schools in Alabama and all schools in Wisconsin. Pricing for *TeachingBooks.net* varies depending on the number of schools per district. For more information, or to sign up for a free 14-day trial, visit www.teachingbooks.net or phone 800-596-0710.

About TeachingBooks.net

TeachingBooks.net LLC is committed to bringing books to life by providing thousands of author programs, book readings, book guides, and other K-12 multimedia resources that reveal the spirit and personality within books. The company delivers an interactive online service designed to facilitate learning about and discussion of books to inspire students to read. The company was established in 2000 and is headquartered in Madison, Wis. For more information, visit www.teachingbooks.net or phone 608-257-2919.

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