

TREx Technical FAQ

1. Where can we get a copy of the technical specifications for the TREx application?

Answer: You can find the *2007-2008 Preliminary TREx Data Standards* on the TEA web site at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/trex/>. The TREx project web page also includes information on upcoming training, FAQs, and project announcements.

2. Do vendors have the import format for TREx?

Answer: The *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards* manual is available on the TEA web site at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/trex/>. The final version of the data standards documentation is scheduled for availability on June 29. We will send out an email notification when the final version is published.

3. Where can we get the download (TXT/XML) options? Are these set at the district level or does each user have to set their own options?

Answer: The schema definitions and XML format are available in the *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards*.

4. Is TREx SIF-compliant? If so, will districts need zone integrators?

Answer: Because SIF compliance is based on three layers (including data transfer and error handling), TREx is not SIF-compliant; however, TREx is consistent with SIF and PESC standards, particularly in naming standards. The *TREx Preliminary Data Standards* manual, which defines all of the TREx data elements including XML naming conventions, is available on the TREx project web page.

5. Will additional hardware be needed to implement TREx at districts and campuses?

Answer: No; additional hardware is not needed to use the TREx application. Districts and campuses need to work with their IT resources or software vendor to develop the capability to create XML extract files from their local student information system (SIS) based on the TREx schema.

6. Who does our vendor contact at TEA for TREx information?

Answer: General questions may be sent to the TREx project email account: TREx@tea.state.tx.us, which is monitored daily. We recommend you continue to check the HB1 web site and the TREx project web page for new announcements, schedules, FAQs, and other information as it becomes available.

7. How do we know if our vendor is on your contact list?

Answer: Contact your vendor to verify that their company is on the TEA focus group list. If your vendor is not currently signed up for a TREx focus group, please have that organization send their contact information to the TREx@tea.state.tx.us email account. TEA will add the vendor to the focus group distribution list.

8. Will an AS/400 system be compatible with TREx?

Answer: TREx is a web-based application that will require the use of Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher or an equivalent web browser. The AS/400 may not have the ability to run a web-based application. However, if the workstations are PCs emulating the AS/400, the PCs may be able to run the web browsers.

9. Is there a file format validation after the upload process? When considering the naming convention for the upload/download file, can you include at a minimum the Student ID and an 8-digit date with a time-stamp so that districts can retain a copy of all uploaded/downloaded requirements on their system?

Answer: Section 1 of the *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards* explains the TREx file naming conventions under the "Responsibilities" section.

10. Is it accurate to say that when TREx is complete, the upload/download file will be in XML?

Answer: Yes, the TREx file is an XML schema record type. Upload and download files must adhere to the TREx data standards.

11. Once the specifications for the creation of the XML file are available, we feel confident about producing the needed XML file. However, the import of the data into the receiving district's student information system (SIS) is a bit more complicated. When looking at importing the XML file, the receiving campus will not normally want information in a student record (created prior to receiving the data through TREx) to be overwritten by the data from the exiting districts. Districts/campuses may want a comparison screen to verify that the information they currently have matches the data from the sending school.
Answer: Yes, the key to implementation will be how the data is imported and how the receiving district will be able to select the data that is imported. This is the responsibility of each local student information system (SIS).
12. Will a test site be made available for vendors when they are testing the export/import function for TREx?
Answer: A test site will not be available but the vendor can work with a district to submit a student record in production to verify accuracy. Instead of sending the information to another school or university, the record can be deleted.
13. Will you offer a "human readable" file download option?
Answer: The format is readable.
14. In a district with multiple high schools, will all registrars have to extract to a central file location to be able to upload to TREx?
Answer: The file extract location can be from any location to which the registrar has access to the TREx application. In general, where the file is extracted from is a function of the student information system (SIS).
15. Will extremely large districts have the ability to register sub-district administrative users in order to manage monitoring TREx?
Answer: Yes.
16. Would you suggest that campuses purchase scanners for this system?
Answer: Since scanned documents can be sent as attachments with student records in TREx, the availability of a scanner may be beneficial to districts.
17. Will TREx have a mass upload/download feature? Do XML files allow for uploading "batch" transcripts? Are requests uploaded into TREx individually per student or does an XML format allow for more than one student record/transcript to be sent in an extract file?
Answer: At initial implementation, TREx will not have mass or batch upload/download functionality. XML files do not determine how many student records can be in each file; this is a function of the application itself. At the time of application release, TREx will support the ability to download/upload one student record at a time.
18. Are you going to offer this as a service (my server talks to your server)?
Answer: Not at this time.
19. How secure is TREx and what do the districts need to do for security?
Answer: TREx meets the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements. The application will use SSL Level 2 encryption. This is similar to the level of encryption required by banks that offer on-line banking to their customers. TREx requires no special software or hardware setup.
20. Will the ability to upload and import XML files be required on day one of the TREx implementation?
Answer: No. The *2007-2008 TREx Preliminary Data Standards* includes a project timeline, which includes district and vendor deadlines, in Section 1. Vendors will have approximately 60 days to meet the requirements to upload TREx files. The functionality to import TREx files to the local SIS is up to each SIS software.