

How Eastern Iowa Community Colleges Deliver Day One Access

Impact by the Numbers

\$23
per credit hour

98%
participation

80%
digital materials

District Snapshot

3 community colleges

7,500+ students enrolled

45% of students are concurrent or dual-enrolled

72% of students take at least one online class

The Vision: Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC) serve a widely distributed student population along the Mississippi River, spanning three campuses and 24 partner high schools. The district faced a complex access challenge as approximately 45 percent of students are dual or concurrent enrolled and 72 percent take at least one online course. Ensuring consistent access to course materials across the district required a thoughtful, coordinated approach.

Under EICC's traditional store model, course materials depended on physical inventory and in-person purchasing. Students were often surprised by textbook costs and, in some cases, delayed purchasing required materials, which made it difficult to ensure timely access at the start of the term.

When the existing bookstore contract came up for renewal, EICC decided to move away from the traditional store model. To better support dual-enrolled students, EICC transitioned to a Total Access model, branded **Flat Rate Access**. Total Access, also called Equitable Access, is the course materials delivery model that gives students day one access to all required learning materials, no matter their major.

The focus was clear: EICC wanted to deliver day one access, improve cost transparency, and better support students across campuses and partner high schools, while establishing clear approval processes for physical materials where needed.



“At EICC, students often arrived on the first day unaware of textbook costs. Many couldn’t afford the additional \$400–\$500, tried to go without materials for several weeks, and by the time they purchased the textbook, it was often too late to catch up leading to lower grades or course withdrawal.”

– Jeremy Pickard, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, EICC

The Journey: After completing a formal RFP process, EICC identified key academic and technology leaders, engaged instructors and advisors, made a decision in January, and successfully launched Flat Rate Access in the fall.

The Outcome: When Flat Rate Access launched, students across EICC's three campuses and 24 partner high schools automatically received their required materials at the start of the term. EICC delivers digital materials through its learning management system (LMS), Canvas, and ships print materials directly to students. Participation remains high, with 98 percent of students opting in.

Students and families benefited from knowing the cost of course materials up front. Instructors saw more consistent access to materials across their courses. For the institution, the shift reduced reliance on physical textbook inventory and supported a smaller bookstore footprint across a district with a broad geographical footprint.

Early use of analytics has begun informing conversations about course materials usage, alongside established approval processes for physical materials.



"Our end goal is always to reduce the cost. Every optimization we make helps student costs go down, and moving more digital is a big part of that."

– Brandon Lange, Associate Dean of eLearning and Educational Technology, EICC

The Impact: Flat Rate Access reduced delays in obtaining course materials and strengthened day one readiness across EICC's campuses and partner high schools, creating a more predictable experience for students and instructors.



"We're excited about the partnership with VitalSource. It keeps improving every year, and EICC is now in a really good place with our bookstore."

– Jeremy Pickard, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, EICC



"Communication is key for a successful implementation. EICC didn't have the runway others had, and we were a little slow on professional development for our team. With three campuses and 22 K-12 school districts, you can't assume everyone knows how to troubleshoot issues."

– Jeremy Pickard, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, EICC

What's Next: EICC is evaluating the addition of nursing and select healthcare programs to Flat Rate Access, while continuing to increase digital adoption and maintaining established approval processes for physical materials.



VitalSource + Eastern Iowa Community Colleges
Supporting day one access and cost transparency across campuses and high schools.