

(KEYWORD, SUMMARY, AND DIGEST as amended by Senate committee amendments)

TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS: Provides relative to textbooks and other instructional materials for elementary and secondary schools

DIGEST

Proposed law provides for the creation of the Task Force on Textbooks and Instructional Materials within the Department of Education as follows:

1. Provides that the purpose of the task force is to undertake a thorough review and analysis of the processes utilized in the selection and approval of textbooks and other instructional materials for use in the state's elementary and secondary schools and to make recommendations for any revisions necessary to the laws and policies which govern these processes to ensure that the students enrolled in Louisiana's elementary and secondary schools have texts and instructional materials that are both grade appropriate and aligned with state content standards.
2. Provides that the task force shall be composed of seventeen members:
 - (a) The state superintendent of education, or his designee, who shall serve as chairman.
 - (b) A member of the staff of the state Department of Education with a working knowledge of the processes utilized in the review, selection, and approval of textbooks and other instructional materials.
 - (c) One member appointed by the Louisiana School Boards Association.
 - (d) One member appointed by the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents.
 - (e) One member appointed by the Louisiana Association of School Executives.
 - (f) One member appointed by the Louisiana Association of Principals.
 - (g) One member appointed by the Louisiana Federation of Teachers.
 - (h) One member appointed by the Louisiana Association of Educators.
 - (i) One member appointed by the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana.
 - (j) Three classroom teachers, appointed by the state superintendent of education.
 - (k) Three parents of students enrolled in an elementary or secondary school, appointed by the state superintendent of education.
 - (l) A member of the Louisiana Senate, appointed by the president of the Senate.
 - (m) A member of the Louisiana House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.
3. Members shall serve without compensation, but may receive any per diem or reimbursement for travel and expenses as allowed and provided by the appointing authority.

4. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner of original appointment.
5. Requires the state superintendent to convene the first meeting of the task force not later than September 1, 2013, and to designate staff to assist the task force in performing its duties and responsibilities.
6. Requires the task force to consider the following when making its recommendations:
 - (a) The optimal balance of authority and responsibility between the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Education, and local schools and school systems for the review, selection, and purchase of texts and instructional materials, including internet content, for use in elementary and secondary schools.
 - (b) Strategies to increase the use of electronic texts and other instructional materials and address the costs of providing necessary related hardware and internet access to students and schools.
 - (c) Strategies to revise the processes utilized in the review, selection, and purchase of texts and other instructional materials to provide maximum flexibility for schools to take advantage of the best available educational instructional materials, while ensuring that every student is provided with texts and instructional materials that are as current as practicable and that are aligned with the state content standards prescribed for the appropriate grade level.
 - (d) A process to facilitate the purchase and delivery of texts and instructional materials at the lowest possible cost and in a timely manner, either through state contracts with publishers and other educational content providers or another mechanism that allows schools and school systems to conveniently and efficiently combine their purchases.
7. Requires the task force to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations for related policy and statutory changes to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education not later than February 1, 2014.

Provides that the task force will terminate on June 30, 2014.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:8.3 and R.S. 36:651(G)(1))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill.

1. Adds a provision prohibiting BESE from requiring textbooks or other instructional materials to meet certain standards.
2. Instead of making the requirement that the state Dept. of Education (DOE) offer a service to review textbooks subject to the availability of funds, requires DOE to offer the review service while authorizing it to limit reviews in accordance with funds available for such purpose.
3. Adds a provision requiring public school governing authorities to adopt rules relative to the screening and review of textbooks and instructional materials.

4. Adds that the purchase of textbooks and instructional materials by school governing authorities is exempt from present law relative to procurement and public bidding.
5. Adds proposed law provisions relative to contracts with publishers and textbook depositories.

House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill.

1. Adds a requirement that BESE adopt a list of recommended textbooks that align with state content standards in certain specified subjects; specifically authorizes public school governing authorities to purchase textbooks that have not been recommended by BESE.
2. Relative to proposed law requirement that the state Dept. of Education (DOE) offer a review service of textbooks for alignment to state content standards, limits the requirement to review for alignment with standards in specified subjects; deletes the authority granted to DOE to limit the number of reviews in accordance with available funds.
3. Authorizes these BESE recommendations and DOE reviews relative to content standards in other subjects, subject to the availability of funds.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the reengrossed bill

1. Deletes provisions contained in reengrossed bill and instead creates and provides with respect to the Task Force on Textbooks and Instructional Materials within the Department of Education.