DIGEST

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Hoffmann HB No. 580

Abstract: Provides relative to textbooks and other instructional materials for elementary and secondary schools; shifts responsibility for selecting textbooks from BESE to the local school board or other governing authority. Authorizes BESE to recommend textbooks.

Proposed law makes changes to terminology throughout present law to refer to the governing authority of a public elementary or secondary school rather than a city, parish, or other local public school board.

BESE's general role in the textbook selection and distribution process

Present law requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to prescribe and adopt and exercise control and supervision over the distribution and use of free school books and other materials of instruction for use in elementary and secondary schools and special schools. Proposed law instead requires BESE to prescribe through rules and regulations the recommendation, distribution, and use of such books and materials. Further requires BESE to require that all such books and materials adhere to curriculum standards adopted by BESE (also known as grade-level expectations or GLEs).

Funding of textbooks and other instructional materials

Present law prohibits BESE from restricting the amount or percentage of state or local funds a board may expend for electronic versions of textbooks and materials. Proposed law broadens the application of this prohibition to provide that there shall be no such restriction with respect to the purchase of electronic or printed textbooks or instructional materials, regardless of whether they are on the state list of recommended textbooks and materials.

Review and inspection of textbooks

Present law requires that textbooks and materials be made available for public inspection at the state Dept. of Education during regular office hours. Proposed law adds as an alternative that they be made available for inspection online.

Present law provides for textbook review procedures, including citizen participation, the composition of textbook review committees (not less than 1/3 of membership shall be teachers, and not less than 1/3 of membership shall be parents who are not public educators), and the placement of proposed textbooks in various public library branches throughout the state.

Proposed law retains present law but provides that copies are only required to be placed throughout the state when electronic versions are not available online. Relative to the textbook review committee, proposed law requires that parents have a child in public school or have had a child in public school in the past 10 years.

Miscellaneous provisions

Present law:

(1) Requires BESE to establish rules and procedures for supplying school books and other materials of instruction for children participating in approved home study programs.

(2) Provides relative to contracts with publishers for school books and for the state Dept. of Education's service as the state depository for school books.

(3) Encourages school boards to maximize the availability and accessibility of electronic versions of textbooks and other instructional materials and authorizes a school board to purchase them as it deems necessary and appropriate.

(4) Requires public school boards that disburse school library books, textbooks, and other instructional materials to nonpublic school students to submit to the state superintendent of education documentation to verify the administrative costs incurred and provides that such verified costs shall be paid by the state.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law:

(1) Provides relative to the disposition of school books no longer in use, including provisions dealing with their sale, donation, and disposal.

(2) Requires BESE to prescribe and adopt and exercise supervision and control over the distribution and use of school books and other learning materials, supplies, and equipment for postsecondary and vocational-technical schools and programs.

Proposed law deletes present law.

(Adds R.S. 17:8.3, 8.4, and 3996(B)(13); Repeals R.S. 17:8-8.2, 351-353, and 415.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Specifies that the prohibition against BESE's restriction of the amount or percentage of funds that a public school governing authority may expend on textbooks or

instructional materials shall be applicable whether or not they are on the state list of recommended textbooks or other instructional materials.

2. Deletes proposed law provision authorizing BESE to disapprove of the use of textbooks not on the state list of recommended textbooks.

3. Reinstates present law deleted in the original bill that provides relative to the following:

   (a) The composition of committees or groups responsible for screening, reviewing, and evaluating textbooks and instructional materials.

   (b) The required placement of copies of textbooks in various library branches throughout the state. (Proposed law further provides that such placement shall not be required if electronic copies are available for online inspection and review).

   (c) Contracts with publishers, including the requirement that the state Dept. of Education encourage publishers to provide electronic versions of products.

   (d) The state Dept. of Education's service as the state depository for school books.

House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill.

1. Specifies, relative to the composition of textbook review committees, that parents serving on such committees, in addition to not being public educators, shall have a child in public school either currently or within the past 10 years.