

---

## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

---

Hoffmann

HB No. 867

**Abstract:** Provides relative to textbooks and other instructional materials for elementary and secondary schools; shifts responsibility for selecting textbooks from the state to the local level.

Proposed law significantly revises the procedures established in present law for the adoption, procurement, and distribution of textbooks and other instructional materials for use in elementary and secondary schools as follows:

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

Present law requires the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to prescribe and adopt school books and other materials of instruction, which it shall supply free of charge to the children of this state at the elementary and secondary levels out of funds appropriated therefor by the legislature in accordance with the requirements of Article VIII, Section 13(A) of the Constitution of La.

Proposed law deletes the requirement that BESE adopt textbooks and instructional materials for use in the public schools and instead requires BESE to prescribe a process for the review, adoption, procurement, and distribution of free textbooks and other materials of instruction by the governing authority of each public elementary and secondary school, including special schools.

## Role of the state Dept. of Education in preparation of lists and reviews of textbooks

Present law requires the state superintendent of education to prepare the list of free school books and other materials of instruction for BESE adoption.

Proposed law deletes this requirement and instead requires the state superintendent to administer the process prescribed by BESE for the review, adoption, procurement, and distribution of free textbooks and other instructional materials and to prepare lists of state reviewed textbooks and instructional materials.

Proposed law requires BESE to establish a transparent, digital process whereby the state Department of Education (DOE) shall review textbooks and other instructional materials as follows:

- (1) Requires DOE to review textbooks and instructional materials in the core subject areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and determine the degree to which each aligns with state content standards.
- (2) Authorizes the DOE to review textbooks and instructional materials in other subject matter areas as deemed necessary or upon request of a public school governing authority.
- (3) Requires the digital review process for textbooks and other instructional materials submitted to the DOE for review to be conducted entirely online. Provides that every aspect of the digital review process, including the textbooks and instructional materials under review and any and all comments submitted by reviewers, parents and other members of the public, and publishers and other content providers, shall be posted online and readily accessible by all interested parties.
- (4) Provides that the digital review process shall, at a minimum, provide for the following:
  - (a) Guidelines and timelines for the submission, review, comment, and evaluation of textbooks and other instructional materials.
  - (b) Establishment of review panels composed of educators and content experts who have knowledge of curriculum and the subject matter under consideration.
  - (c) Evaluation criteria and procedures to determine the extent to which textbooks and instructional materials submitted for review align with state content standards.
  - (d) Provide the opportunity for parents and the public to view and submit comments on all textbooks and instructional materials under review. Further provides that a read-only copy of all textbooks and instructional materials under review shall be made readily available online for this purpose.
  - (e) Provide the opportunity for publishers and other content providers to submit

comments in response to any review committee evaluation.

- (f) Requires that all comments submitted in relation to a reviewed textbook or instructional material shall be posted online for ready access by any interested party.
  - (g) Requires that all textbooks and instructional materials submitted for review be supplied in an electronic format that meets the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards and can be converted into specialized formats for children with disabilities and from which Braille and large-print textbooks can be produced for blind and visually impaired students.
- (5) Requires DOE to provide the governing authority of each public elementary and secondary school with a list of all textbooks and other instructional materials reviewed by the department which includes information indicating the degree to which each aligns with state content standards. Such list shall also be posted online.
  - (6) Requires that the list of reviewed textbooks and other instructional materials prepared by DOE include textbooks and instructional materials for each core subject at each grade level that are fully aligned with state content standards.

Proposed law authorizes each public school governing authority to purchase textbooks and other instructional materials of their own choosing. Further provides that nothing in proposed law shall be construed as prohibiting a public school or school district from purchasing or otherwise acquiring textbooks and instructional materials that are not included in the list of reviewed textbooks and instructional materials prepared by the Department of Education, provided the use of such textbooks and instructional materials is not prohibited by law or state board regulation.

#### Role and responsibilities of public school governing authorities

Proposed law requires the governing authority of each public school to adopt policies and regulations for the adoption and use of textbooks and other instructional materials that sufficiently support the needs of all students in meeting state content standards as follows:

- (1) Require that the purchase and use of electronic textbooks, instructional materials, and other media or content shall be maximized to the greatest extent possible.
- (2) Provide for the establishment of review committees composed of teachers, educators, parents, and other educational stakeholders who have interest in or knowledge of curriculum and the subject matter under consideration.
- (3) Afford parents and other members of the public the opportunity to review and provide input relative to the textbooks and instructional materials under consideration prior to final adoption. Copies of all textbooks and instructional materials under consideration shall be made available to the public.

- (4) Review committee evaluations and all public comments submitted for each textbook and instructional material under review shall be posted on the school governing authority's website.

Present law requires that textbooks and instructional materials adopted for use in public elementary and secondary schools shall accurately reflect the contributions and achievements of people of differing races and promote an understanding of the history and values of the people of the U.S. and La., including the free enterprise system, private property, constitutional liberties, democratic values, and traditional standards of moral values. Proposed law retains these provisions.

Present law authorizes the governing authority of a public elementary or secondary school may establish the price and sell any textbook or library book no longer in use to any person or entity for private use. Proposed law retains this provision.

Present law authorizes the La. School for Math, Science, and the Arts, the Louis Armstrong High School for the Arts, and the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts the authority to prescribe and select textbooks and instructional materials for the children enrolled in each respective school but directed that, wherever practical, the school's board shall select textbooks and materials of instruction as adopted by BESE. Proposed law deletes the preference for BESE adopted textbooks and materials.

#### Review and inspection of textbooks by the public

Present law requires that textbooks and materials be made available for public inspection at DOE during regular office hours. Provides for textbook review procedures, including citizen participation, the composition of textbook committees, and the placement of proposed textbooks in various public library branches throughout the state.

Proposed law repeals present law but provides that the public shall have the opportunity to view textbooks and instructional materials under review by DOE and school governing authorities and be afforded the opportunity to submit comments during the review process and prior to final adoption for use by a public school governing authority.

#### Purchase of textbooks by public school governing authorities; contracts with publishers

Present law encourages school boards to maximize the availability and accessibility of electronic versions of textbooks and other instructional materials and authorizes their purchase. Prohibits BESE from restricting the amount or percentage of state or local funds a board may expend on them.

Proposed law essentially retains present law and prohibits BESE from restricting the amount or percentage of state or local funds a public school governing authority may expend on the purchase or acquisition of textbooks and instructional materials in general.

Present law requires each contract with a publisher for school books to be awarded on a competitive basis and provides that such contracts contain specific provisions relative to termination rights, price controls and stability. Further requires that at least 80% of the books purchased be printed in La., provided 5,000 or more copies of such book are purchased in a single year.

Proposed law retains the requirement in present law for public bids, but otherwise repeals present law and instead provides as follows:

- (1) Requires DOE to support public school governing authorities in achieving maximum cost efficiencies in the purchase and acquisition of textbooks and other instructional materials by providing for bulk purchasing through state contracts, whenever possible and feasible.
- (2) Provides public school governing authorities may purchase textbooks and other instructional materials through a state contract or may contract directly with a publisher or other content provider.
- (3) Provides that each contract between the state or the governing authority of a public elementary and secondary school and a publisher or other content provider for textbooks and instructional materials shall:
  - (a) Be awarded on a competitive basis in accordance with applicable state law.
  - (b) Provide that the publisher, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer shall not charge the governing authority of a public school a purchase price, rental fee, or other fee for the purchase, lease, or use of a textbook or instructional material that exceeds the lowest price or fee charged to a school governing authority in any other state for the same textbook or instructional material.

### Textbook depository

Present law designates DOE as the state depository for school books and authorizes the state superintendent to administer this function, including the authority to contract with a public or private agency to act as the depository.

Proposed law repeals present law and instead requires DOE to provide for a central depository for textbooks and other instructional materials which are aligned to state content standards to facilitate the purchase and distribution of textbooks and instructional materials.

Requires the depository to provide for the procurement of textbooks and instructional materials in all formats needed to support student learning, including Braille, large print, digital and print. Further provides that the ordering system established for the depository shall include the reviews conducted pursuant to proposed law and any comments submitted by parents, the public, and publishers and other content providers.

### Sale of school books no longer in use

Present law authorizes a school board, with prior BESE approval, to sell any textbook or library book no longer in use to any person or entity for private use at a fee established by the school board. Limits use of funds from such sale to textbook or library book purchases. Proposed law deletes requirement for prior BESE approval and the limitation on the specific use of sale funds.

### Textbooks for home study students

Present law requires BESE to establish rules and procedures for supplying school books and other materials of instruction for children participating in approved home study programs when available. Proposed law specifies that such materials shall be supplied through the local public school governing authority.

### Miscellaneous provisions repealed by proposed law

#### Present law:

- (1) Authorizes local school boards to use state funds to purchase computer hardware.
- (2) Provides relative to the donation and disposal of school books no longer in use.
- (3) Requires BESE to prescribe and adopt and exercise supervision and control over school books and other learning materials for postsecondary and vocational-technical schools and programs.

Proposed law repeals present law in (1) through (3) above.

Proposed law requires BESE to adopt rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement proposed law.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:7(4), 22(2)(e), 1964(D)(9), 1970.4(D)(2)(i), and 1970.24(E)(1)(h); Adds R.S. 17:351.1 and 355; Repeals R.S. 17:8-8.3, 351, 352, and 415.1 and R.S. 36:651(G)(1))