

By: Kolkhorst

S.B. No. 915

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the establishment and administration by the Texas
3 Higher Education Coordinating Board of a textbook affordability
4 pilot program at a public institution of higher education.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 61.0667 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 61.0667. TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY PILOT PROGRAM.

9 (a) In this section:

10 (1) "College bookstore" means a bookstore that is:

11 (A) operated by an institution of higher
12 education; or

13 (B) in a contractual relationship or otherwise
14 affiliated with an institution of higher education.

15 (2) "Electronic textbook" means a textbook accessed
16 through computer software, interactive videodisc, magnetic media,
17 CD-ROM, computer courseware, online services, an electronic
18 medium, or other means of conveying information to the student or
19 otherwise contributing to the learning process through electronic
20 means, including an open-source textbook.

21 (3) "Eligible institution" means an institution of
22 higher education that has:

23 (A) a total undergraduate student enrollment of
24 more than 18,000; and

1 (B) a college bookstore.

2 (4) "Open-source textbook" means an electronic
3 textbook that is available for downloading from the Internet at no
4 charge to a student and without requiring the purchase of an unlock
5 code, membership, or other access or use charge, except for a charge
6 to order an optional printed copy of all or part of the textbook.

7 (b) The board shall establish and administer a pilot program
8 to encourage the use of affordable textbooks at institutions of
9 higher education. The board shall select one eligible institution
10 to participate in the pilot program.

11 (c) The board by rule shall establish the application
12 process and selection criteria for participation in the pilot
13 program. If no eligible institutions apply, the board may select
14 any eligible institution to participate in the pilot program.

15 (d) The board shall designate one academic department of the
16 selected eligible institution to implement the pilot program. The
17 designated department shall:

18 (1) to the greatest extent possible, use electronic or
19 open-source textbooks, open educational resources, public domain
20 material, or other free or low-cost textbooks or textbook
21 alternatives for each course offered through the department;

22 (2) notify the institution's college bookstore of each
23 textbook or textbook alternative that has been adopted for use in a
24 course offered through the department and that will be distributed
25 through the bookstore; and

26 (3) maintain records of the cost of textbooks and
27 textbook alternatives for each course offered through the

1 department for the duration of the pilot program.

2 (e) On receipt of notice from the designated department
3 under Subsection (d)(2), the selected eligible institution's
4 college bookstore shall notify the designated department of the
5 anticipated cost to a student of each textbook or textbook
6 alternative that has been adopted for use in a course offered
7 through the department and that will be distributed through the
8 bookstore.

9 (f) Not later than December 1, 2018, the board shall submit
10 to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of
11 representatives, and presiding officer of each standing
12 legislative committee with primary jurisdiction over higher
13 education a report on the success of the pilot program under this
14 section and any recommendations for legislative or other action.
15 The report must include a comparison of the average cost of
16 textbooks for courses offered through the department designated
17 under Subsection (d) to implement the pilot program and for courses
18 offered through departments at other institutions of higher
19 education that have implemented a similar textbook affordability
20 program.

21 (g) On request by the board, the eligible institution
22 selected to participate in the pilot program shall assist in
23 preparing the report required under Subsection (f).

24 (h) The board may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
25 donations from any public or private source to prepare the report
26 and develop recommendations as required by Subsection (f).

27 (i) The board shall adopt rules as necessary to implement

1 this section.

2 (j) This section expires September 1, 2019.

3 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
4 shall implement the pilot program required under Section 61.0667,
5 Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2015-2016
6 academic year.

7 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.