

By: Stucky

H.B. No. 2177

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing a digital textbook and learning materials  
subscription pilot program.

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

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

Sec. 61.0667. DIGITAL TEXTBOOK AND LEARNING MATERIALS  
SUBSCRIPTION PILOT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Digital textbook and learning materials  
subscription program" means a subscription program to a platform  
that includes unrestricted access to digital textbooks, study  
tools, online homework platforms, and other educational resources  
used to improve student outcomes.

(2) "Lower-division institution of higher education"  
means a public junior college, public state college, or public  
technical institute.

(b) The board shall establish a pilot program under which  
the board awards grants to participating lower-division  
institutions of higher education to provide financial assistance to  
eligible students for the cost of subscribing to the digital  
textbook and learning materials subscription program selected by  
the board under Subsection (e).

(c) The board shall select lower-division institutions of  
higher education to participate in the pilot program. In selecting

1 institutions, the board shall, to the extent possible:

2 (1) select institutions in both rural and urban areas  
3 of this state; and

4 (2) prioritize institutions with large socially and  
5 economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented  
6 student populations.

7 (d) A participating lower-division institution of higher  
8 education must use grant funds awarded under this section to  
9 provide financial assistance to eligible students for all or part  
10 of the cost of subscribing to the digital textbook and learning  
11 materials subscription program selected by the board under  
12 Subsection (e). The participating institution shall determine the  
13 eligibility criteria for a student to receive financial assistance  
14 under the pilot program and must prioritize providing financial  
15 assistance to economically disadvantaged students.

16 (e) The board shall engage in a competitive bidding process  
17 to select the digital textbook and learning materials subscription  
18 to be used in the pilot program. The subscription selected by the  
19 board must provide 24-hour technical support services to  
20 subscribers.

21 (f) Not later than September 1, 2026, the board shall  
22 prepare and deliver to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the  
23 speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officer  
24 of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction  
25 over higher education a report that evaluates the effectiveness of  
26 the pilot program in improving student outcomes. The report must  
27 include a recommendation regarding whether the pilot program should

1 be continued, expanded, or terminated.

2 (g) This section expires September 1, 2027.

3 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating  
4 Board shall adopt rules to administer the pilot program established  
5 under Section 61.0667, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon  
6 as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

7 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and  
8 participating lower-division institutions of higher education  
9 shall award initial grants under Section 61.0667, Education Code,  
10 as added by this Act, beginning with the 2024 spring semester.

11 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
12 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
13 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
14 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
15 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.