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## State News

### Legislators, educators seek \$900 million for new books, materials

By Enrique Rangel | AUSTIN BUREAU  
Tuesday, March 24, 2009

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AUSTIN - Texas school children have not gotten new books or instructional materials in 10 or 12 years and in some subjects, such as English as a second language, as long as 14 years.

A bi-partisan group of legislators and educators said Monday those items can't wait any longer and urged the Texas Legislature to fund the nearly \$900 million to purchase new books and materials.

The money for the books and instructional materials is among the leading items that, when it comes to public education, a good number of legislators and educators see as a priority for the 81st Legislature.

"The future success of our state is dependent on our students in public education," said Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, D-San Antonio, the author of S. B. 982, called the Texas Public Schools Investment Act.

"Texas faces few more urgent challenges than educating our students in order to prepare them for life in a global economy and to do that properly we need to make sure that our schools have the resources they need," Van de Putte said.

Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, who led a news conference, said the money for the books and the instructional material can come from either the money the state is getting from federal stimulus package or from the state budget.

"We care about our children and it is our responsibility as elected officials to make sure that the textbooks and other instructional materials students must have for a quality education do not fall victim to the whims of the stock market," Turner said.

"Using some portion of the federal stimulus education funding to pay for instructional materials such as textbooks and other learning technologies will help ensure that the 'stimulus' funds are not used to permanently grow government or create ongoing obligations for TEA (Texas Education Agency), or Texas schools districts," added Rep. Wayne Christian, R-Center.

"We have our duty and that is something that we, whether we are liberal or conservative, Republican, Democrat, independent - our children are the most important issue we have in the state," Christian added.

The group also released the results of the latest in a recent of opinion polls showing that a convincing majority of Texans want the Legislature to give the schools what they need.

"The public outcry for the state to secure funding for new books and instructional materials is heard loud and clear," said Garnet Coleman, D-Houston. "We cannot leave it to our classroom teachers to bear the responsibility of educating our children with old and outdated materials. We cannot take short-sighted measures and risk allowing the economic conditions to widen our children's achievement gap."

"I have school-aged children and anyone who has tried to do homework with a child knows how good a textbook has to be to be able to learn so that you can teach him," Coleman added.

"And knowing that many of the textbooks that my children and your children and the children of Texas are using are outdated, particularly when taking the test that we all dread so much, the TAKS test, we expect our children to learn all the way through 12th grade it is important that that they have these materials now," he said.

"In Texas we must teach our children not only to succeed but to lead the nation," said Karla

*Texas faces few more urgent challenges than educating our students in order to prepare them for life in a global economy and to do that properly we need to make sure that our schools have the resources they need.*

Sen. Leticia Van de Putte

D-San Antonio

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Christman, president of the Textbook Coordinators Association. "Textbooks must be funded every year not just when we have a surplus."

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