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**Schools Would Pay More and Get Inadequate Textbooks Under House Bill**

(April 25, 2007- AUSTIN) -- A bill approved by the House Public Education Committee Tuesday to overhaul the state's textbook system would shortchange schools on funding and shortchange students on learning, according to educators and textbook publishers.

Currently, the state provides school districts with a textbook for every student. Instead of state-provided textbooks, the bill, HB 3419, would give school districts an annual allotment of \$75 per student to purchase instructional materials.

The provision that has drawn the most criticism is one that requires textbooks to cover only 25 percent of the state's required curriculum.

"Teachers must teach 100 percent of the required curriculum and students are tested on their mastery of the entire curriculum. If textbooks only cover one-fourth of the required course material, it will seriously jeopardize every student's right to have an opportunity to learn all of the standards that have been set by the state," said Jay Diskey, Executive Director of the Association of American Publishers' School Division.

In a letter to committee members, the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Association of School Administrators said "the current system is not broken" and the per student allotment will not keep pace with future cost increases. The letter is posted on [www.texastextbooks.org](http://www.texastextbooks.org).

"This allotment will soon become an unfunded mandate," their letter states, citing the fact that the transportation allotment districts receive from the state has not increased since 1984 when gasoline was \$1.21 per gallon.

In addition, the school groups said decentralizing textbook purchasing would reduce the state's buying power "resulting in higher textbook prices and fewer materials customized to the state's curriculum standards."

The Texas Association of Supervisors of Mathematics also oppose the bill because it will result in "watered-down textbooks" that cover only 25 percent of state's curriculum standards.

The bill has been sent to the House Calendars Committee to be scheduled for debate before the full House of Representatives.