



Special Legislative Commission

To Study the Purchase and
Use of Textbooks in Public Schools

**Report Submitted to the
Rhode Island General Assembly**

November 2011

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**Special Legislative Commission
to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools**

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Senator Edward J. O'Neill

Co-Chair

I-Dist. 17, Lincoln, North Providence, Pawtucket

Senator Hanna M. Gallo

D-Dist. 27, Cranston

Senator Harold M. Metts

D-Dist. 06, Providence

Representative Joy Hearn

Co-Chair

D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence

Representative Mary Duffy Messier

D-Dist. 62, East Providence, Pawtucket

Representative Daniel Gordon, Jr.

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Rhode Island School Superintendents' Association

Raymond Pouliot (designee)

National Education Association of Rhode Island

Leo Plouffe

Public Member

Distinguished Member of Texas Instruments Technical Staff - Retired

David Fontaine

Public Member

National Board Certified Teacher

Seth Hamilton

Public Member

Communications Consultant

Patti Vivari (designee)

Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals

Library Media Specialist



LETTER TO RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On behalf of the Commission, we are proud to present these findings and recommendations of the Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools to the Rhode Island General Assembly. This report represents the best thinking of a distinguished and dedicated commission.

Over the course of several hearings, Commission members heard information from various presenters, representing public and private organizations, pilot programs and out-of-state existing programs. The collective success of these programs, especially the Maine Learning Technology Initiative created by Maine's former Governor Angus King, inspired this Commission to reach for goals beyond what may have been initially thought possible. The Commission recognized this as an innovative opportunity to realize cost savings, efficiencies and shared best practices utilizing technology in education.

Advances in technology have made it possible for students to access the most current information available. Unfortunately, schools are teaching students from textbooks that once in print can become almost immediately outdated. Many publishers recognize the problems that this presents and are developing e-textbooks that allows for content to be updated on an ongoing basis.

This Commission seeks to ensure that every student has access to the best technology available so that they can learn and achieve at the highest level possible. By continuing to work together and partnering with public and private entities, and learning from best practices used in other states, Rhode Island can create and expand teaching and learning opportunities for all students far beyond what currently exists.

We are grateful to every member of the Commission for their willingness and dedication to participate in this process. In addition, we appreciate the contributions of many experts who travelled at their own expense and took time to appear before this Commission and share their knowledge, ideas and experiences. Thank you to everyone for making this Commission a success and for dedication in making a positive impact on the educational experience of Rhode Island public school students.

Sincerely,

Senator Edward J. O'Neill

Co-Chair

I-Dist. 17, Lincoln, North Providence, Pawtucket

Representative Joy Hearn

Co-Chair

D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence

Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools

BACKGROUND

The special legislative study commission created by resolution No. 375 passed by the Senate at its January session, A.D. 2010, and approved June 25, 2010, entitled “Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools.” On June 29, 2011, the Governor signed Resolution 415 that extended the reporting date of the Commission to October 1, 2011 and expiration date of the Commission to December 31, 2011.

The fifteen-member Commission, chaired by Senator Edward J. O’Neill (District-17, Lincoln, North Providence, Pawtucket) and Representative Joy Hearn (District- 66 Barrington, East Providence) were authorized to make a comprehensive study of the use of textbooks in the public schools, and in the use and exploitation of electronic media in the classroom, to explore the possible advantages and disadvantages of the “paperless classroom”, and the possible cost savings arising there from.

The Commission consisted of Senators and Representatives from the General Assembly, representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Rhode Island Association of School Committees, Rhode Island School Superintendents’ Association, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals and the National Education Association of Rhode Island along with four (4) public members.

Each member of the Commission, along with others who provided testimony, presentations, opinions, and assistance to the Commission, has been instrumental in preparing this document throughout the commission meetings.

The Commission met eight times over the past six months: May 2, 2011; May 16, 2011; June 6, 2011; June 27, 2011; August 1, 2011; September 6, 2011; September 19, 2011 and October 12, 2011.

The Commission decided to post all minutes and related articles on a specific Facebook site.

(<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Joint-Legislative-Commission-to-Study-the-Use-of-E-Textbooks/162793173779542>) so all members and interested parties could have access to our work. The State of Rhode Island web site is not capable of accepting embedded videos contained in many of the articles posted. This use of Facebook was of no cost to our taxpayers and Commission members updated postings regularly.

This Joint Commission was also charged with presenting its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. This document represents the Phase I final report of the Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools.

Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

Reduce the cost incurred in the use of textbooks and improve the quality and timeliness of educational information available to RI public school students.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce obsolescence and distribution cost of printed textbooks.
- Provide students multi-functional devices that will provide access to information, resources and tools in all subject areas.
- Eliminate the 40 pound backpack filled with books that students carry.
- Conserve natural resources used to print and distribute textbooks.

STRATEGIES

- Form a team of knowledgeable teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders dedicated to researching and understanding available options for the Rhode Island education community.
- Invite subject matter experts to testify and inform the Commission on lessons learned in their endeavors.
- Take testimony from commercial e-book application vendors.
- Apply lessons learned by other states/cities that have deployed the use of multi-functional devices, e-books and the use of online resources.
- Propose the launch of a pilot program with embedded strategies for scaling to statewide implementation.

Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools

TIMELINE

- **May 2, 2011 – Senate Lounge, State House**
 - Organizational meeting – elected co-chairpersons
 - Presentation of **current textbook status by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** to understand what is currently in place.
 - Speakers: Dr. Lynch - Director of the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum, Ms. Holly Walsh - Instructional Technology and E-learning, and Ms. Kristen Cole- Finance Office, expenditures on textbooks and funding program
 - Presentation of pilot implementation of **one-to-one netbook project at Fredrick Middle School** to understand what other schools and states are doing.
 - Speaker: Ms. Deb Socia, Principal, Boston/Dorchester, Frederick Middle School: *“How to support children and parents who don’t have technology or Internet access at home”*.
- **May 16, 2011–Senate Lounge, State House**
 - Presentation of **Millis Public Schools’ - 1 to 1 Personalized Learning** via the 8th Grade I-Pad Pilot Program to understand what other schools and states are doing.
 - Speaker: Ms. Grace Magley, Technology Director for Millis Public School System and Ms. Nancy Gustafson, Millis Schools Superintendent
- **June 6, 2011 – Senate Lounge, State House**
 - Presentation of **McGraw Hill Company’s** available electronic texts, integrated curriculum and online tools to understand products commercially available.
 - Speaker: Mr. Jason Barnes, District Manager, for McGraw Hill Company
- **June 27, 2011 – State House**
 - Presentation of **CK-12 Foundation’s open-content, web based collaborative model termed the ‘Flexbook’** that is intended to pioneer the generation and distribution of high quality educational content. This serves as a core text and an adaptive environment for learning. This presentation explored the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement and the concept of no-cost online resources.
 - Speaker: Ms. Neeru Khosla-Co Founder and Executive Director of CK- 12 Foundation, San Jose Ca.
 - Presentation on the **State of Technology in Rhode Island Schools**, e-learning tools and deployment plans. This presentation supported the Commission’s understanding of the current efforts and Race to the Top investments.
 - Speaker: Ms. Holly Walsh- E Learning and Instructional Technology Specialist with Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

- **August 1, 2011 – Senate Lounge, State House**
 - Presentation on **Maine Learning Technology Initiative one-to-one laptop solution** for middle and high school students. The presentation described their process of implementing an initiative that provided portable Apple laptop computers to every seventh and eighth grade student in Maine. Additional information included an explanation of how this program has expanded and explored innovative strategies for addressing financial and logistical barriers to implementing a large scale one-to-one program.
 - Speaker: Mr. Jeff Mao- Learning Technology Policy Director for the State of Maine. Video introduction by former Maine Governor Angus King
- **September 6, 2011 – Room 211, State House**
 - Work session assessed resource adequacies, internal capabilities and final strategic mission for facilitating access to online resources, electronic content and alignment with the common core curriculum for Rhode Island students.
- **September 19, 2011 – Room 211, State House**
 - Work session aligned the Commission’s strategic objective and RIDE’s objectives related to access to electronic resources, content and curriculum.
- **October 12, 2011 – Senate Lounge, State House**
 - Discussion of the process for developing and funding a pilot one-to one program allowing students to access technology, online resources and software, as well as provide teacher professional development.
 - With a quorum present, commission members voted to proceed with Phase I and Phase II plan. There were no objections

Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools

FINDINGS

The Commission was formed with the following assumptions:

1. There is a rapid acceleration of the cost of textbooks.

Finding:

Due to recent implementation of the Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCoA) system we are only presently able to determine an accurate account of textbook expenditures. In FY2010 Public School Textbook Expenditures = \$3.9 million.

2. There is an increased use and access to computers suggesting that a paperless/no textbook school may be the possibility in the near future, and models exist in other states.

Finding:

There are approximately 140,000 RI students and there are 40,000 computing devices available to those students. The current number of computing devices available limits the possibility of a paperless/no textbook school without innovative solutions addressing access.

3. Priorities should be set in determining the starting point for initiating innovative delivery of educational content.

Finding:

The Commission's comprehensive study determined that a pilot one-to-one learning environment where each student has access to a computing device is necessary in order to set priorities that support statewide scalability. Lessons learned from this pilot project will reveal implementation barriers and determine policy, financial, and instructional best practices.

The Commission was convened to make a comprehensive study of the use of textbooks in the public schools and in particular address the following:

1. What are the possible advantages of use of electronic media, specifically the idea of a "paperless classroom?"

Finding:

The advantages of properly implemented technology in the classroom/schools:

- Saves money including reduction in paperwork, copy machine expenses, and instructional materials
- Improves student engagement therefore student persistence to graduate
- Improves student productivity and achievement
- Improves implementation of instructional and behavioral interventions
- Improves access to data informing instructional decision making
- Increases student access to information, resources and 21st century tools

Daily use of technology, as opposed to occasional use, results in the best return on investment impacting discipline rates, daily attendance and college attendance.

Knowledge is fluid and constantly changing and expanding. In contrast, printed textbooks are static and outdated the moment they are printed. One answer to this problem is e-textbooks.

The access to and the use of E-textbooks and online resources are a beginning step in the integration of 21st century technology tools and best practices in education. Some other essential elements for successful integration include:

- Technology integration into the core curriculum and every class period;
- School leadership providing time for teacher professional development and collaboration at least monthly if not, more frequently; and
- Student use technology daily for online collaboration.

Open Educational Resources (OER) provide access to academic content and tools at no cost. However, there is an assumption that the end user has access to the Internet. OERs can be manipulated, modified and reorganized to align with current curriculum.

2. What are the current barriers for implementing a paperless classroom?

Finding:

The current number of computing devices available to students and educators limits the possibility of a paperless / no textbook school without innovative solutions addressing access.

Current strategies for supporting and purchasing technology hardware and infrastructure need review for possible efficiencies. Innovative collaborative purchasing strategies as demonstrated in the Maine Learning Technology Initiative one-to-one laptop solution highlight the potential for significant cost saving opportunities in Rhode Island.

3. What textbooks are in use in public schools and should the list be expanded to cover all subjects and/or grade levels?

Finding:

The current textbooks in use in public schools can be found on the RIDE web site at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/ride/SchoolDirectory/DOCS/TEXTBOOK_INVENTORY/Data/2010/2010TextbookInventory.pdf . The list covers fields of mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, English/language arts and history/social studies to all students in grades K-12.

4. What is the potential rationale for centralizing the procurement process and distribution of textbooks?

Finding:

Innovative collaborative purchasing strategies as demonstrated in the Maine Learning Technology Initiative one-to-one laptop solution highlight the potential for significant cost saving opportunities in Rhode Island that reaches well beyond textbook procurement.

Special Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recognized that budgetary constraints would prohibit a kindergarten through twelfth grade implementation of electronic textbooks due to the additional costs of providing student access to digital devices and infrastructure. Through examination of Maine’s initiative, however, the Commission agreed that the development of a one-to-one pilot program would be an approach that could be resourced and could provide information for a much larger implementation.

The Commission learned that the Rhode Island Department of Education hopes to move rapidly to put state policies in place to support digital learning and virtual schools. They are actively pursuing grant opportunities that would support their plan to select one school that will adopt a comprehensive plan to use technology in new ways, to create a virtual-learning environment for innovative instruction, and to serve as a “proof point” for scaling to a statewide solution.

1. The Commission recommends fully supporting the implementation of Rhode Island One-to-One Model School

The project school will be supported to develop policy that will promote and guide innovative uses of technology for teaching and learning. This local policy, in addition to state developed policy, would enable movement forward with innovative programs that can bring blended learning and access to digital content into all schools.

RIDE plans to release a grant application inviting all public schools and charter schools to serve as the model school laying the foundation for a statewide initiative. The application will be open to elementary, middle and high schools and will require a commitment to significantly redesign itself by examining closely items such as the length of the school day, scheduling opportunities, and structure of delivery of education.

It is anticipated that this grant application will be posted in January 2012. RIDE will organize a conference in February 2012 bringing in special guests from various national organizations. Keynote speakers will share the creative and innovative ways that technology is increasing access and improving learning opportunities for all students.

The pilot school strategies, best practice and the associated policy work will serve as a statewide model as we scale up to the grander vision of 1:1 access and incorporation of virtual learning for all students across Rhode Island. This virtual-learning initiative will be a tremendous opportunity for all of us to create and expand teaching and learning possibilities for our students and for our teachers!

It is understood that implementation is a process and will take time to be done well. There will be lessons learned and adjustments made to the initial plan as the school community incorporates policy and practice during the first “Development Phase” year of implementation. It is expected that the school community will be more accustomed to the substantial changes, adjustments will have been made and policies will be adopted and in place during the second, or “Implementation Phase” year.

Data gathered during all phases of the implementation will inform RIDE and the Commission. This project will provide the opportunity to thoroughly examine our current instructional practices and to investigate new and innovative education strategies that will engage, motivate and excite students and teachers alike.

Timeline

January 2012 –Grant application released to the field

February 2012 – Statewide virtual learning conference

March 2012 – Selection of model school

March 2012 to September 2012 – This time frame will focus on the following: Stakeholder engagement; review and development of state and district policies; purchasing necessary infrastructure and hardware; participation in intensive professional development program and site visits; development of final implementation plan; and preparation for implementation.

September 2012 – May 2013 – Implementation: *Development Phase* – restructuring of current learning environment; continuation of policy review and adoption including contractual agreements that generate the open-space needed for innovative approaches; establishment of metrics and gathering of baseline data; deployment of necessary instructional and learning tools; and document implementation.

June 2013 - May 2014 – Implementation: *Implementation Phase* - full integration of transformative model; participation in ongoing learning communities; collection and analysis of data on effectiveness of implementation; meeting RIDE accountability requirements; documentation of implementation process for sharing and possible publication; and presenting at statewide and/or national educational conferences.

2. The Commission recommends that the Commission’s expiration date be extended from December 31, 2011 to December 31, 2014 to fully monitor and review the implementation of this pilot program.

ADDENDUM 1: Senate Resolutions

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LC02410
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2010

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE PURCHASE AND USE OF TEXTBOOKS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Senators E O'Neill, Gallo, Cote, Maher, and Jabour

Date Introduced: April 29, 2010

Referred To: Senate Constitutional & Regulatory Issues

WHEREAS, The purchase of textbooks is a cost which has been rapidly accelerating; and

WHEREAS, The increased use and accessibility of computers suggest that a paperless/no
textbook school may be a possibility in the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, It will be important to determine in what disciplines and in what ways this
trend should be encouraged; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission to be known as the "Special
Legislative Commission to Study the Purchase and Use of Textbooks in Public Schools," be and
the same is hereby created consisting of fifteen (15) members: three (3) of whom shall be
members of the House of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to
be appointed by the Speaker of the House; three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not
more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;

one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the RI Association of School Superintendents, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the RI Association of School Committees, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the National Education Association (RI), or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the American Federation of Teachers (RI), or designee; and four (4) of whom shall be citizens of Rhode Island two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Senate.

In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which is entitled to the appointment consent to the member of the general public.

The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study of the use of textbooks in the public schools, and in particular the following:

(1) The use and exploitation of electronic media in the classroom, and specifically to explore the possible advantages and disadvantages of the “paperless classroom”, so-called, and the possible cost savings arising therefrom.

(2) The list of textbooks in use in the public schools as published by the commissioner of education, and whether that list should be expanded to cover all subjects and should specify a limited number of options per grade.

(3) The procurement process, and whether the procurement and distribution of textbooks should be a centralized function under the department of education.

Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson from among the legislators. Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

All departments and agencies of the state, shall furnish such advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly no later than March 5, 2011, and said commission shall expire on May 5, 2011.

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LC00426
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

JOINT RESOLUTION

EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES OF THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE PURCHASE AND USE OF TEXTBOOKS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Senators E O'Neill, Sheehan, Gallo, Metts, and Shibley

Date Introduced: January 27, 2011

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

RESOLVED, That the special legislative study commission created by resolution No. 375 passed by the Senate at its January session, A.D. 2010, and approved June 25, 2010, entitled "Special Legislative Commission To Study The Purchase And Use Of Textbooks In Public Schools" is hereby authorized to continue its study and make a report to the General Assembly on or before October 1, 2011, and said commission shall expire on December 31, 2011; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the time for reporting authorized by Resolution No. 375, passed by the General Assembly at its January session, AD. 2010, and approved June 25, 2010, be and the same is hereby rescinded.