SYNOPSIS

Requires institutions of higher education to develop plan to offer open textbooks to students.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.
AN ACT concerning certain textbooks and supplementing chapter 3B of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. As used in this act:
   “Open educational resource” means an educational resource that is licensed under an open license and made freely available online to the public.
   “Open license” means a world-wide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable copyright license granting the public permission to access, reproduce, publicly perform, publicly display, adapt, distribute, and otherwise use the work and adaptations of the work for any purpose, conditioned only on the requirement that attribution be given to authors as designated.
   “Open textbook” means an open educational resource or set of open educational resources that either is a textbook or can be used in place of a textbook for a postsecondary course at an institution of higher education.

2. a. Within 180 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a public or independent institution of higher education, after consultation with faculty members at the institution, shall submit a plan to the Secretary of Higher Education to expand the use of open textbooks and commercial digital learning materials in order to achieve savings for students enrolled in the institution.
   b. The secretary shall review the plan submitted by an institution to ensure that the plan has the potential to:
      (1) achieve the highest level of savings for students through the sustainable expanded use of open textbooks for courses offered by the institution;
      (2) produce the highest quality open textbooks;
      (3) ensure that the full and complete digital content of each open textbook is made available to students:
         (a) on the institution’s college bookstore website in an easily accessible location; and
         (b) in a machine readable, digital format that a student can download; and
      (4) ensure that open textbooks are available to students by July 1, 2020.

3. The Secretary of Higher Education shall submit a report by June 30 of each academic year to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), that details the open textbook models being offered at each public and independent institution of higher education and the impact of
the open textbook programs on reducing student costs. The secretary shall post the report in a prominent location on the website of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education so that the information on successful open textbook models is accessible for replication by other institutions of higher education.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill provides that within 180 days of the bill’s effective date, each public and independent institution of higher education, after consultation with faculty members, must submit a plan to the Secretary of Higher Education to expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students enrolled in the institution. An open textbook is an educational resource that is licensed under an open license and made freely available online to the public.

Under the bill, the secretary will review the plan to ensure that the plan has the potential to: 1) achieve the highest level of savings for students through the expanded use of open textbooks in courses offered by the institution; 2) produce the highest quality open textbooks; 3) ensure that the full and complete digital content of each open textbook is made available to students enrolled in the institution; and 4) ensure that open textbooks are available to students by July 1, 2020.

The bill directs the secretary to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature that details the open textbook models being offered by each public and independent institution and the impact of the open textbook programs on reducing student costs.