

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5664

AS OF FEBRUARY 25, 1993

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to instruction in Braille.

SPONSORS: Senators McAuliffe, Erwin, Franklin, Moyer, Hargrove, Prentice, Amondson, Fraser, McDonald and Wojahn

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: February 26, 1993

BACKGROUND:

The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (originally enacted in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) requires that states accepting federal funds provide a free and appropriate public education for all handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. The federal law requires that related services be provided if the services are needed to help a handicapped child benefit from special education. Handicapped children in Washington must have the opportunity for an appropriate education under state law, federal law, and the Washington State Constitution.

An individual education program must be developed for all special education students. Instruction in Braille is provided only for visually impaired or blind students if such instruction is required in the student's individual education program.

SUMMARY:

Students may receive instruction in Braille as part of their individual education program. In developing a plan for students, there is a presumption that proficiency in Braille reading and writing is essential for satisfactory educational progress. Instruction in reading and writing Braille cannot be denied solely on the basis that the student has some remaining vision.

When providing instruction in Braille, the individualized education program shall meet the following requirements: (1) how Braille will be implemented as the primary method of learning in the regular classroom; (2) when instruction in Braille will begin; (3) the level of instruction in Braille; and (4) the length of each session of Braille instruction. Reasons for not providing instruction in Braille shall be documented in the individual education plan.

Special education teachers providing instruction to legally blind or visually-impaired students must demonstrate competency in reading and writing Braille. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall adopt procedures to assess competency consistent with standards adopted by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 16, 1993