
SENATE BILL 5687

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By Senators Long, Rasmussen, Johnson, Bauer, Kohl, Finkbeiner, Fairley, C. Anderson, Hochstatter, Gaspard, Pelz, Prince and Winsley

Read first time 01/31/95. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the instruction in Braille reading and writing
2 to blind students; and adding new sections to chapter 28A.155 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Unless the context clearly requires
5 otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout sections 2
6 through 4 of this act.

7 (1) "Legally blind" means:

8 (a) Having a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with
9 conventional correction or having a limited field of vision such that
10 the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance
11 not greater than twenty degrees;

12 (b) Having a physical condition with a medical expectation of
13 visual deterioration; or

14 (c) Being unable to read printed material at a competitive rate
15 with facility due to lack of visual acuity or other visual impairment.

16 (2) "Braille" means the system of reading and writing through touch
17 commonly known as standard English Braille.

18 (3) "Student" means any student who is legally blind or any student
19 eligible for special education services for the visually impaired as

1 defined in the individuals with disabilities education act, 20 U.S.C.
2 Sec. 1400 et seq.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Students may receive instruction in
4 Braille reading and writing as part of their individualized education
5 program. In the development of this program, there shall be a
6 presumption that proficiency in Braille reading and writing is
7 essential for satisfactory educational progress.

8 (2) Each student who is blind shall be assessed to determine the
9 most appropriate learning media, including but not limited to Braille.

10 (3) No student may be denied the opportunity for instruction in
11 Braille reading and writing solely because the student has some
12 remaining vision.

13 (4) Nothing in this section requires the exclusive use of Braille
14 if other special education services are appropriate to meet the
15 student's educational needs. The provision of other appropriate
16 services does not preclude Braille use or instruction.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Instruction in Braille reading and writing
18 shall be sufficient to enable each student to communicate effectively
19 and efficiently at a level commensurate with such student's sighted
20 peers of comparable grade level and ability. The individualized
21 education program shall specify:

22 (1) How Braille will be implemented as the primary mode for
23 learning through integration with normal classroom activities. If
24 Braille will not be provided to a child who is legally blind, the
25 reason for not incorporating it in the individualized education program
26 shall be documented;

27 (2) The date on which Braille instruction will commence;

28 (3) The level of competency in Braille reading and writing to be
29 achieved by the end of the period covered by the individualized
30 education program; and

31 (4) The duration of each session of Braille instruction.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The state board of education shall require
33 that special education teachers responsible for the education of
34 legally blind and visually impaired children demonstrate competency in
35 reading and writing Braille.

1 The state board of education shall set the teacher preparation
2 standards for those teachers responsible for instructing students who
3 are blind including those students using Braille.

4 A committee shall be formed to assist the state board of education
5 in determining teacher competencies in the instruction of Braille.
6 This committee shall be composed of, but not limited to, a
7 representative of each of the following: National federation of the
8 blind of Washington, Washington council of the blind, and the
9 association for education and rehabilitation of the blind and visually
10 impaired of Washington.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act are each
12 added to chapter 28A.155 RCW.

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