
SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5687

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1996 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Long, Rasmussen, Johnson, Bauer, Kohl, Finkbeiner, Fairley, C. Anderson, Hochstatter, Gaspard, Pelz, Prince and Winsley)

Read first time 1/18/96.

1 AN ACT Relating to the instruction in Braille reading and writing
2 to blind students; adding new sections to chapter 28A.155 RCW; adding
3 a new section to chapter 28A.405 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It is the goal of the legislature to
6 encourage persons who are blind or visually impaired to participate
7 fully in the social and economic life of the state and to engage in
8 remunerative employment. The legislature finds that literacy is
9 essential to the achievement of this goal. Furthermore, the
10 legislature finds that literacy for most persons who are blind or
11 visually impaired means the ability to read and write Braille with
12 proficiency. The legislature sets as a further goal that students who
13 are legally blind or visually impaired shall be given the opportunity
14 to learn Braille in order to communicate effectively and efficiently.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.155
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in
18 this section apply in section 3 of this act.

1 (1) "Student" means a student who:

2 (a) Has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with
3 conventional correction or having a limited field of vision such that
4 the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance
5 not greater than twenty degrees;

6 (b) Is unable to read printed material at a competitive rate with
7 facility due to functional visual impairment or lack of visual acuity;
8 or

9 (c) Has a physical condition with a medical prognosis of a
10 significant visual deterioration to the extent that (a) or (b) of this
11 subsection could apply.

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

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.155
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) Each student shall be assessed individually to determine the
17 appropriate learning media for the student including but not limited to
18 Braille.

19 (2) No student may be denied the opportunity for instruction in
20 Braille reading and writing solely because the student has some
21 remaining vision.

22 (3) This section does not require the exclusive use of Braille if
23 there are other special education services to meet the student's
24 educational needs. The provision of special education or other
25 services does not preclude Braille use or instruction.

26 (4) If a student's individualized learning media assessment
27 indicates that Braille is an appropriate learning medium, instruction
28 in Braille shall be provided as a part of such student's educational
29 curriculum and if such student has an individualized education program,
30 such instruction shall be provided as part of that program.

31 (5) If Braille will not be provided to a student, the reason for
32 not incorporating it in the student's individualized education program
33 shall be documented in such plan. If no individualized education
34 program exists, such documentation, signed by the parent or guardian,
35 shall be placed in the student's file.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.405
37 RCW to read as follows:

1 Teachers of visually impaired students shall be qualified according
2 to rules adopted by the state board of education.

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