

SENATE FILE 2220
BY KINLEY

Passed Senate, Date _____ Passed House, Date _____
Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____ Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____
Approved _____

A BILL FOR

1 An Act expanding the definition of children requiring special
2 education to include children who are functionally blind, and
3 providing for teacher licensure to teach braille to
4 functionally blind students, and providing for related
5 matters.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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SF 2220

1 Section 1. Section 256.7, Code Supplement 1991, is amended
2 by adding the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 22. Include children who are functionally
4 blind within the definition of children requiring special
5 education pursuant to section 281.2, subsection 1. Rules
6 adopted pursuant to this subsection shall include, but are not
7 limited to, the following:

8 a. Determination of criteria for a student to be
9 classified as functionally blind. Children who retain some
10 sight but who have a medically diagnosed expectation of visual
11 deterioration by adolescence or early adulthood shall be
12 included in the functionally blind classification and may
13 qualify for braille reading and writing instruction.

14 b. A presumption that proficiency in braille reading and
15 writing is essential for the functionally blind student's
16 satisfactory educational progress. A functionally blind
17 student is entitled to braille reading and writing instruction
18 that is sufficient to enable the student to communicate with
19 the same level of proficiency as other students of comparable
20 ability who are at the same grade level.

21 c. Braille instruction may be used in combination with
22 other special education services appropriate to the student's
23 educational needs.

24 d. Provision for an annual reevaluation, performed under
25 the guidelines for selection of an appropriate learning
26 medium, appendix E to the guidelines for programs serving
27 students with visual impairments, published by the bureau of
28 special education of the department of education, and for
29 reclassification at any time, of a child who has a medically
30 diagnosed expectation of visual deterioration by adolescence
31 or early adulthood. The annual reevaluation under this
32 paragraph shall include documentation of the student's
33 strengths and weaknesses in literacy skills, and the results
34 from the reevaluation shall be attached each year to the
35 student's individualized education program.

1 e. Provision for a child to begin instruction in the new
2 learning medium before it is the only medium the student can
3 efficiently use.

4 f. A provision that a functionally blind student's
5 individualized education program include documentation of the
6 student's strengths and weaknesses in braille skills, specify
7 the appropriate learning medium based on the assessment
8 report, and ensure that instruction in braille be provided by
9 a teacher licensed to teach students with visual impairments
10 pursuant to section 260.2, subsection 15.

11 Sec. 2. Section 260.2, Code 1991, is amended by adding the
12 following new subsection:

13 NEW SUBSECTION. 15. Establish standards for licensure of
14 teachers to teach braille reading and writing skills to
15 functionally blind students. The board shall develop and
16 establish or approve a braille proficiency examination to be
17 administered to teachers applying for licensure to teach
18 functionally blind students. Rules adopted pursuant to this
19 subsection shall provide that an applicant for licensure under
20 this subsection supply proof of their successful performance
21 on a braille proficiency examination administered by the board
22 or proof of certification by a nationally recognized authority
23 in braille standards.

24 Sec. 3. Section 301.10, Code 1991, is amended by striking
25 the section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

26 301.10 TEXTBOOK SUPPLIERS.

27 A person or firm desiring to furnish books or supplies
28 under this chapter shall do the following:

29 1. At or before the time of filing a bid, make available
30 samples of all textbooks included in the bid, accompanied with
31 lists giving the lowest wholesale and contract prices for the
32 textbooks.

33 2. If requested by the department of education, submit a
34 machine-readable version of any textbook purchased by a school
35 district in Iowa to the department in the American standard

1 code for information interchange format, from which braille
2 versions of the textbook can be produced.

3 Sec. 4. The department of education shall prepare and
4 distribute information describing the benefits of braille
5 instruction to a person assisting in the development of an
6 individualized education program of a functionally blind
7 student. In addition, the department shall distribute a copy
8 of the guidelines of an appropriate learning medium, appendix
9 E to the guidelines for programs serving students with visual
10 impairments published by the bureau of special education of
11 the department of education, to a person assisting in the
12 development of an individualized education program of a
13 student whose learning medium will change due to a
14 deteriorating eye condition.

15 EXPLANATION

16 This bill directs the state board of education to include
17 functionally blind children within the definition of children
18 requiring special education. The rules adopted by the board
19 under this bill are to include a presumption that proficiency
20 in braille reading and writing is essential for the
21 educational progress of a functionally blind student; a
22 determination of criteria for a child to be classified as
23 functionally blind; annual reevaluation and reclassification
24 for children who have a medically diagnosed expectation of
25 visual deterioration; and provision for that child to begin
26 instruction in the new learning medium before it is the only
27 medium the student can use.

28 The bill includes a provision that instruction in braille
29 be provided by a teacher certified to teach functionally blind
30 students, and it directs the board of educational examiners to
31 develop and establish a braille proficiency examination to be
32 administered to teachers applying for licensure to teach
33 functionally blind students. The board of educational
34 examiners is also directed to develop standards for licensure
35 of teachers to teach braille reading and writing skills to

1 functionally blind students.

2 The bill requires a textbook supplier, at the request of
3 the department of education, to provide a machine-readable
4 version, from which braille versions can be made, of any
5 textbook purchased by a school district in Iowa.

6 This bill may include a state mandate as defined in section
7 25B.3.

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