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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Cheryl Serrett.

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DIGEST

SB 176 Original

2022 Regular Session

Fields

Present law provides for the Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act, includes definitions, requires written individualized education plans, specifies that the required assessment for each blind student shall include a braille skills inventory, and provides that braille instruction and use are not required if other special education services are appropriate to the student's educational needs. Further provides that the provisions of other appropriate services shall not preclude braille use or instruction.

Proposed law amends present law definition of a blind student to mean a student who is identified by a functional vision assessment as having vision loss which significantly interferes with the ability to perform academically and which requires the use of specialized textbooks, techniques, materials, or equipment to access the same academic content as the student's sighted peers or who has one of the following:

- (1) A visual acuity of 20/70 or less, near acuity in the better eye with correcting lenses, or both, or has a limited field of vision such that the widest diameter subtends an angular distance of no greater than twenty degrees.
- (2) A progressive loss of vision which may in the future affect the student's ability to learn.
- (3) Other blindness resulting from a medically documented condition that could include bilateral dysfunction of the optic radiations, the visual cortex, or both. This may coexist with ocular and ocular motor disorders and may be the result of perinatal brain dysfunction or trauma.

Proposed law amends present law to provide that each blind student has the right to individualized assessments, planning, and supports. Further provides that such assessments, plans, and supports shall be provided through professionals and teachers with the appropriate credentials and certifications required for working with the blind.

Proposed law adds the following additional required assessments:

- (1) A research based learning media assessment to determine the most appropriate reading medium for the student's current and future needs.
- (2) A low vision assessment centered on how the student uses his vision on a daily basis to determine if the student will benefit from optical devices, such as monocular telescopes or magnifiers. At a minimum, visual acuity, visual fields, and color vision shall be assessed.

Proposed law requires that, based on the assessment findings, an individualized education plan be developed and include specialized supports for education and daily living activities which are

appropriate based on the needs of the student.

Proposed law provides that the appropriate specialized supports may include the following:

- (1) Assistive technology skills.
- (2) Career education skills.
- (3) Compensatory skills.
- (4) Independent living skills.
- (5) Orientation and mobility skills.
- (6) Recreation and leisure skills.
- (7) Self-determination skills.
- (8) Sensory efficiency skills.
- (9) Social interaction skills.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:1982(1) and (3) and 1983)