

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE
Fiscal Note**



Fiscal Note On: **SB 176** SLS 22RS 379
 Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**
 Opp. Chamb. Action:
 Proposed Amd.:
 Sub. Bill For.:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Date: March 21, 2022 1:07 PM | Author: FIELDS |
| Dept./Agy.: Education | |
| Subject: Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education | Analyst: Garrett Ordner |

SPECIAL EDUCATION OR SEE FISC NOTE LF EX Page 1 of 2
 Amends the Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act. (gov sig)

Proposed legislation amends the Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act. Proposed legislation expands the definition of "blind student", expands the number and scope of assessments conducted for blind students, requires an individualized education plan (IEP) be developed for each blind student, and provides for specialized supports that may be included in a blind student's IEP. Effective upon governor's signature.

| EXPENDITURES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 5 -YEAR TOTAL |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| State Gen. Fd. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Agy. Self-Gen. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Ded./Other | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Federal Funds | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Local Funds | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Annual Total | | | | | | |
| REVENUES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 5 -YEAR TOTAL |
| State Gen. Fd. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Agy. Self-Gen. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Ded./Other | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Federal Funds | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Local Funds | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$0</u> | \$0 |
| Annual Total | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

There may be costs to local school districts to the extent that they choose to contract with a Low Vision Specialist to perform low vision assessments as required by the proposed legislation, rather than having them performed at no cost to the district by the Special School District (SSD). The SSD reports that the cost of these assessments when performed by a Low Vision Specialist is \$275 per student; however, the total cost to school districts is indeterminable.

The proposed legislation updates the definition of "blind student" in state law to include individuals with corrected vision of 20/70 or less, a progressive loss of vision which may in the future affect the student's ability to learn, or other blindness resulting from a medically documented condition. This change aligns the definition of blind student in current law with the criteria for "visual impairment" in the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) Bulletin 1508.

The proposed legislation updates the required braille skills inventory provided to blind students to an assessment of the student's future need for braille; however, BESE Bulletin 1508 currently includes this provision in its braille skills inventory requirements. The proposed legislation also requires the administration of a learning media assessment to determine the most appropriate reading medium for the student's current and future needs as well as a low vision assessment centered on how the student uses their vision on a daily basis. The learning media assessment is currently provided for in BESE Bulletin 1508; however, the low vision assessment currently appears to be limited in its application: Bulletin 1508 states, "when the data indicate a severe visual impairment, the evaluation coordinator should consider referring the student to the Statewide Assessment Center for Students with Visual Impairments for assistance in conducting specialized aspects of the evaluation."

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO

REVENUE EXPLANATION

There is no anticipated direct material effect on governmental revenues as a result of this measure.

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| <u>Senate</u> | <u>Dual Referral Rules</u> | <u>House</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H} | | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S} |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H} | | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S} |

Evan Brasseaux
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 Interim Deputy Fiscal Officer



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CONTINUED EXPLANATION from page one:

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

The Statewide Assessment Center for Students with Visual Impairments, operated by the Special School District (SSD), will perform the low vision assessment at no cost to the local school districts or other public schools. Alternatively, the SSD reports a district may contract with a Low Vision Specialist at a rate of \$275 per student. Districts will incur these costs to the extent that they choose to contract with a Low Vision Specialist rather than having the assessment performed by the SSD.

The specialized supports listed in the proposed legislation are the components of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), a set of concepts and skills that often require specialized instruction with students who are blind or visually impaired in order to compensate for decreased opportunities to learn incidentally by observing others.

The supports outlined in the ECC are designed to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which currently requires a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to contain goals designed to "meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum," and "meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability."

Federal law and BESE policy currently require each district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with exceptionalities. BESE Bulletin 1706 currently states that "each [district] is responsible for making available a free appropriate public education to each eligible student with an exceptionality, 3 through 21 years of age, who resides within its jurisdiction except those students enrolled by their parents in a private school program." Therefore, schools are already required any of the listed specialized supports as needed to children with visual impairments. The proposed legislation may result in costs to the extent the assessment prompts the need for additional supports; however, these costs are indeterminable.

Senate
Dual Referral Rules
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

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