



**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE RELATIVE TO THE FUNDING OF EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY
IMPAIRED.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (a) The Board of Education and Services for the
2 Blind may enter into contractual agreements with local and regional
3 school districts to provide, for a fee, (1) the services of teachers of the
4 visually impaired and other persons who provide educational and
5 rehabilitative services that are employed by said board for children
6 who are blind or visually impaired, and (2) related professional
7 development and training.

8 (b) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall establish
9 a schedule of fees for each school year for the provision of educational
10 services to children who are blind or visually impaired. Such fees shall
11 be adequate to cover the costs of providing such services.

12 (c) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall establish
13 and distribute to local and regional school districts written guidelines
14 concerning its policies and procedures for the provision of services and
15 the establishment of fees.

16 Sec. 2. (NEW) The vision education services account for the Board of

17 Education and Services for the Blind shall be established as a separate
18 account within the General Fund for the purpose of aiding children
19 who are blind or visually impaired by providing educational services
20 to such children. Any money received by said board from local or
21 regional school districts shall be deposited in the General Fund and
22 credited to the account. Payments shall be made from the account for
23 expenses relative to the provision of educational services to children
24 who are blind or visually impaired. Bills contracted by the Board of
25 Education and Services for the Blind for the purposes specified in this
26 section shall be paid by order of the Comptroller against the account in
27 the manner provided by law for the payment of all claims against the
28 state. At the end of each fiscal year, any surplus as of June thirtieth
29 shall be credited to the local or regional school district that remitted
30 the funds to be applied toward services provided in the following year.

31 Sec. 3. (NEW) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, and for
32 each fiscal year thereafter, the Board of Education and Services for the
33 Blind shall administer a vision education account to (1) assist local and
34 regional school districts in the provision of specialized educational
35 services and materials to children who are blind or visually impaired,
36 and (2) support early intervention and case management services for
37 children under the age of three years who have vision-related
38 disabilities. Such account shall be funded in an amount equal to six
39 thousand four hundred dollars for each child who resides within the
40 state and is blind or visually impaired.

41 (b) Funds in such account shall be used first to provide specialized
42 instructional materials, including Braille and large print books and
43 adaptive equipment and technology and related training necessary for
44 accessing educational programs that are required by eligible students
45 who are blind or visually impaired and to provide vision-related
46 materials and services for children under the age of six years who are
47 blind or visually impaired. If there are any remaining funds, they shall
48 be used to pay, on a proportional basis, local and regional school
49 districts for any expenses associated with consultation and
50 instructional services provided by teachers of the visually impaired

51 and other services related to the provision of the expanded core
52 curriculum to blind or visually impaired students including, but not
53 limited to, orientation and mobility training and independent living
54 skills.

55 (c) To be eligible for payments from such account, a local or regional
56 school district shall annually submit to the Board of Education and
57 Services for the Blind a financial statement of expenditures in such
58 form and at such time as the board prescribes. If the Board of
59 Education and Services for the Blind finds that any local or regional
60 school district uses funds provided under this section for purposes
61 other than those which are in conformity with the purposes of this
62 section, said board may require repayment of such funds to the state.

63 (d) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind, in
64 consultation with the Department of Education, shall adopt
65 regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the
66 general statutes that specify requirements and a formula for the
67 distribution of funds and the types of expenses eligible for the
68 expenditure of funds under this section.

69 Sec. 4. Section 10-295 of the general statutes is repealed and the
70 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

71 (a) All residents of this state, regardless of age, who, because of
72 blindness or impaired vision, require [special] educational programs,
73 specialized equipment or specialized support and services, on the
74 signed recommendation of the director of the Board of Education and
75 Services for the Blind, shall be entitled to receive, within available
76 appropriations and from funds received from other sources, such
77 instruction, [and] equipment, support and services for such length of
78 time as is deemed expedient by said director. The director shall
79 annually submit to the board the list of names of persons so
80 recommended. [Upon the petition of any parent or guardian of a blind
81 educable child or a child with impaired vision, a local board of
82 education may provide such instruction within the town or it may

83 provide for such instruction by agreement with other towns as
84 provided in subsection (d) of section 10-76d. The expense of such
85 instruction shall be paid by the state to an amount not exceeding six
86 thousand four hundred dollars for each of such persons in any one
87 state fiscal year. When the parents or guardians of any such blind
88 person or person with impaired vision are not able to provide clothing
89 for such person, an additional sum not to exceed one hundred dollars
90 per year may be allowed for such expenses. Where a local or regional
91 board of education reimburses parents or legal guardians of a blind or
92 visually impaired child for transportation to and from a specialized
93 residential facility serving the blind, such board shall be reimbursed by
94 the state for such validated actual cost up to a maximum of three
95 hundred dollars per pupil per school year. Determination of
96 reimbursable transportation costs and payment therefor shall be the
97 responsibility of the State Board of Education and Services for the
98 Blind. All educational privileges prescribed in part V of chapter 164,
99 not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter, shall apply to the
100 pupils covered by this subsection. The Board of Education and
101 Services for the Blind may provide any of the educational services
102 described in this section to a child whose vision may be greater than as
103 defined in section 10-294a upon written referral by the local or regional
104 board of education responsible for providing special education and
105 related services pursuant to section 10-76d. A request from a local or
106 regional board of education for reimbursement of such expenses to the
107 Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall not be eligible for
108 such reimbursement unless such request is received by the first of June
109 for such expenses incurred during the preceding first of July through
110 the thirty-first of December and by the first of December for expenses
111 incurred during the preceding first of January through the thirtieth of
112 June.]

113 [(b) Said board may expend funds up to eleven thousand dollars per
114 fiscal year per child for the purpose of sending children who are both
115 blind or visually impaired and deaf, or blind or visually impaired with
116 other severe physical handicaps, to specialized facilities within or

117 outside the state furnishing proper facilities for education of such
118 children; provided blind children or children with visual impairment
119 who are mentally retarded or emotionally maladjusted who can
120 reasonably profit by special training, facilities and services may be
121 included in the provisions of this section. Such funds may be spent
122 outside the state for room, board, tuition and other items necessarily
123 relevant to the education of such children. Said board may determine if
124 such children should be sent to such out-of-state places and may
125 promulgate such regulations as it deems necessary to carry out the
126 purpose and intent of this subsection. To be eligible for aid under this
127 subsection, the child and either of such child's parents or guardian
128 shall be bona fide residents of this state.]

129 [(c)] (b) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind may
130 provide for the instruction of the adult blind in their homes or at other
131 sites, expending annually for this purpose [such sums as the General
132 Assembly may appropriate] funds appropriated by the General
133 Assembly and funds received from other sources.

134 [(d)] (c) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind may
135 expend up to ten thousand dollars per fiscal year per person twenty-
136 one years of age or over who is both blind or visually impaired and
137 deaf for the purpose of [sending such person to a specialized public or
138 private facility within the state furnishing programs] directly or
139 indirectly providing specialized support and services from which such
140 person can profit. Said board may determine the criteria by which a
141 person is [sent to a specialized public or private facility] eligible to
142 receive specialized support and services and may adopt regulations
143 necessary to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

144 [(e)] (d) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind may,
145 within available appropriations and from funds received from other
146 sources, purchase adaptive equipment for persons receiving services
147 pursuant to this chapter. [The cost of such purchases shall not exceed,
148 and shall be included in, the maximum amount authorized for
149 instructional expenses under subsection (a) of this section.]

150 Sec. 5. Section 10-76g of the general statutes is amended by adding
151 subsection (d) as follows:

152 (NEW) (d) The Department of Education shall provide, within
153 available appropriations, grants to local and regional boards of
154 education for the use of audiotape textbooks in the classroom by
155 students with disabilities such as blindness and dyslexia. Local and
156 regional boards of education may use grant funds for (1) the training
157 of special education teachers in the use of audiotape textbooks in the
158 classroom for such students, (2) the borrowing of audiotape textbooks,
159 and (3) the purchase of equipment related to the use of such textbooks.
160 Local and regional boards of education shall apply for such grants at
161 such time and in such manner as the Commissioner of Education
162 prescribes.

163 Sec. 6. Section 10-296 of the general statutes is repealed.

164 Sec. 7. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001, except that sections 1
165 and 2 shall take effect October 1, 2001, and sections 3, 4 and 6 shall take
166 effect July 1, 2003.

PRI	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	HS
HS	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	APP