



General Assembly

January Session, 2003

Raised Bill No. 6420

LCO No. 3074

Referred to Committee on Program Review and Investigations

Introduced by:
(PRI)

**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) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) The Board of Education
2 and Services for the Blind may enter into contractual agreements with
3 local and regional school districts to provide, for a fee, (1) the services
4 of teachers of the visually impaired and other persons who provide
5 educational and rehabilitative services that are employed by said
6 board for children who reside in the school district and are blind or
7 visually impaired, and (2) related professional development and
8 training.

9 (b) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall establish
10 a schedule of fees for each school year for the provision of educational
11 services pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Such fees shall be
12 adequate to cover the costs of providing such services.

13 (c) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall establish

14 and distribute to local and regional school districts written guidelines
15 concerning its policies and procedures for the provision of services and
16 the establishment of fees.

17 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) There is established a vision
18 education services account for the Board of Education and Services for
19 the Blind which shall be a separate nonlapsing account within the
20 General Fund for the purpose of aiding children who are blind or
21 visually impaired by providing educational services to such children.
22 Any money received by the board from local or regional school
23 districts pursuant to section 1 of this act shall be deposited in the
24 General Fund and credited to the account. Payments shall be made
25 from the account for expenses relative to the provision of educational
26 services to children who are blind or visually impaired in accordance
27 with contractual agreements pursuant to section 1 of this act. Such
28 payments shall be made by order of the Comptroller against the
29 account in the manner provided by law for the payment of all claims
30 against the state. At the end of each fiscal year, any surplus in the fund
31 shall be credited to the local or regional school district that remitted
32 the funds to be applied toward services provided in the following
33 school year.

34 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) On and after July 1, 2005,
35 there shall be a vision education account within the General Fund to be
36 administered by the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.
37 Funds in the account shall be used in accordance with subsection (b) of
38 this section to (1) assist local and regional school districts in the
39 provision of specialized educational services and materials to children
40 who are blind or visually impaired, and (2) support early intervention
41 and case management services for children under three years of age
42 who have vision-related disabilities. Such account shall be funded each
43 fiscal year by an appropriation in an amount equal to six thousand
44 four hundred dollars for each child who resides within the state and is
45 blind or visually impaired.

46 (b) Funds in the account shall be used first to provide specialized
47 instructional materials, including Braille and large print books and
48 adaptive equipment and technology and related training necessary for
49 accessing educational programs that are required by eligible students
50 who are blind or visually impaired and to provide vision-related
51 materials and services for children under six years of age who are
52 blind or visually impaired. If there are any remaining funds, they shall
53 be used to pay, on a proportional basis, local and regional school
54 districts for any expenses associated with consultation and
55 instructional services provided by teachers of the visually impaired
56 and other services related to the provision of the expanded core
57 curriculum to blind or visually impaired students including, but not
58 limited to, orientation and mobility training and independent living
59 skills.

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

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

74 Sec. 4. Section 10-295 of the general statutes is repealed and the
75 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

76 (a) All residents of this state, regardless of age, who, because of
77 blindness or impaired vision, require [special] educational programs,

78 specialized equipment or specialized support and services, on the
79 signed recommendation of the director of the Board of Education and
80 Services for the Blind, shall be entitled to receive, within available
81 appropriations and from funds received from other sources, such
82 instruction, [and] equipment, support and services for such length of
83 time as is deemed expedient by said director. The director shall
84 annually submit to the board the list of names of persons so
85 recommended. [Upon the petition of any parent or guardian of a blind
86 educable child or a child with impaired vision, a local board of
87 education may provide such instruction within the town or it may
88 provide for such instruction by agreement with other towns as
89 provided in subsection (d) of section 10-76d. The expense of such
90 instruction shall be paid by the state to an amount not exceeding six
91 thousand four hundred dollars for each of such persons in any one
92 state fiscal year. When the parents or guardians of any such blind
93 person or person with impaired vision are not able to provide clothing
94 for such person, an additional sum not to exceed one hundred dollars
95 per year may be allowed for such expenses. Where a local or regional
96 board of education reimburses parents or legal guardians of a blind or
97 visually impaired child for transportation to and from a specialized
98 residential facility serving the blind, such board shall be reimbursed by
99 the state for such validated actual cost up to a maximum of three
100 hundred dollars per pupil per school year. Determination of
101 reimbursable transportation costs and payment therefor shall be the
102 responsibility of the State Board of Education and Services for the
103 Blind. All educational privileges prescribed in part V of chapter 164,
104 not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter, shall apply to the
105 pupils covered by this subsection. The Board of Education and
106 Services for the Blind may provide any of the educational services
107 described in this section to a child whose vision may be greater than as
108 defined in section 10-294a upon written referral by the local or regional
109 board of education responsible for providing special education and
110 related services pursuant to section 10-76d. A request from a local or
111 regional board of education for reimbursement of such expenses to the

112 Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall not be eligible for
113 such reimbursement unless such request is received by the first of June
114 for such expenses incurred during the preceding first of July through
115 the thirty-first of December and by the first of December for expenses
116 incurred during the preceding first of January through the thirtieth of
117 June.

118 (b) Said board may expend funds up to eleven thousand dollars per
119 fiscal year per child for the purpose of sending children who are both
120 blind or visually impaired and deaf, or blind or visually impaired with
121 other severe physical handicaps, to specialized facilities within or
122 outside the state furnishing proper facilities for education of such
123 children; provided blind children or children with visual impairment
124 who are mentally retarded or emotionally maladjusted who can
125 reasonably profit by special training, facilities and services may be
126 included in the provisions of this section. Such funds may be spent
127 outside the state for room, board, tuition and other items necessarily
128 relevant to the education of such children. Said board may determine if
129 such children should be sent to such out-of-state places and may
130 promulgate such regulations as it deems necessary to carry out the
131 purpose and intent of this subsection. To be eligible for aid under this
132 subsection, the child and either of such child's parents or guardian
133 shall be bona fide residents of this state.]

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

139 [(d)] (c) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind may
140 expend up to ten thousand dollars per fiscal year per person twenty-
141 one years of age or over who is both blind or visually impaired and
142 deaf for the purpose of [sending such person to a specialized public or
143 private facility within the state furnishing programs] directly or

144 indirectly providing specialized support and services from which such
145 person can profit. Said board may determine the criteria by which a
146 person is [sent to a specialized public or private facility] eligible to
147 receive specialized support and services and may adopt regulations
148 necessary to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

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

155 Sec. 5. Section 10-76g of the general statutes is amended by adding
156 subsection (d) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2003*):

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

168 Sec. 6. (*Effective July 1, 2005*) Section 10-296 of the general statutes is
169 repealed.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2005</i>
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2005</i>
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2005</i>
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2005</i>

