



Senate Bill No. 418

Public Act No. 08-133

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE HIRING OF SUPPORT STAFF FOR
TEACHERS OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED.**

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

Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 10-295 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):

(b) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall expend funds for the services made available pursuant to subsection (a) of this section from the educational aid for blind and visually handicapped children account in accordance with the provisions of this subsection. The expense of such services shall be paid by the state in an amount not to exceed six thousand four hundred dollars in any one fiscal year for each child who is blind or visually impaired. The Board of Education and Services for the Blind may adopt such regulations as it deems necessary to carry out the purpose and intent of this subsection.

(1) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall provide, upon written request from any interested school district, the services of teachers of the visually impaired, based on the levels established in the individualized education or service plan. The agency shall also make available its resources, including, but not limited to, the Braille and

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large print library, to all teachers of public and nonpublic school children. The agency may also provide vision-related professional development and training to all school districts and cover the actual cost for paraprofessionals from school districts to participate in agency-sponsored Braille training programs. The agency shall utilize education consultant positions authorized as of July 1, 2001, funded by moneys appropriated from the General Fund, to supplement new staffing that will be made available through the educational aid for the blind and visually handicapped children account, which shall be governed by formal written policies established by the agency.

(2) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall use funds appropriated to said account, first to provide specialized books, materials, equipment, supplies, adaptive technology services and devices, specialist examinations and aids, preschool programs and vision-related independent living services, excluding primary educational placement, for eligible children without regard to a per child statutory maximum.

(3) The Board of Education and Services for the Blind may, within available appropriations, employ certified teachers of the visually impaired in sufficient numbers to meet the requests for services received from school districts. In responding to such requests, the agency shall utilize a formula for determining the number of teachers needed to serve the school districts, crediting six points for each Braille-learning child and one point for each other child, with one full-time certified teacher of the visually impaired assigned for every twenty-five points credited. The agency shall exercise due diligence to employ the needed number of certified teachers of the visually impaired, but shall not be liable for lack of resources. Funds appropriated to said account may also be utilized to employ rehabilitation teachers, rehabilitation technologists and orientation and mobility teachers in numbers sufficient to provide compensatory skills

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evaluations and training to blind and visually impaired children. In addition, up to five per cent of such appropriation may also be utilized to employ special assistants to the blind and other support staff necessary to ensure the efficient operation of service delivery. Not later than October first of each year, the Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall determine the number of teachers needed based on the formula provided in this subdivision. Based on such determination the Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall estimate the funding needed to pay such teachers' salaries, benefits and related expenses.

(4) In any fiscal year, when funds appropriated to cover the combined costs associated with providing the services set forth in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection are projected to be insufficient, the Board of Education and Services for the Blind shall be authorized to collect revenue from all school districts that have requested such services on a per student pro rata basis, in the sums necessary to cover the projected portion of these services for which there are insufficient appropriations.

(5) Remaining funds in said account, not expended to fund the services set forth in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection, shall be used to cover on a pro rata basis, the actual cost with benefits of retaining a teacher of the visually impaired, directly hired or contracted by the school districts which opt to not seek such services from the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, provided such teacher has participated in not less than five hours of professional development training on vision impairment or blindness during the school year. Reimbursement shall occur at the completion of the school year, using the caseload formula denoted in subdivision (3) of this section, with twenty-five points allowed for the maximum reimbursable amount as established by the agency annually.

(6) Remaining funds in such account, not expended to fund the

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services set forth in subdivisions (2), (3) and (5) of this subsection, shall be distributed to the school districts on a pro rata formula basis with a two-to-one credit ratio for Braille-learning students to non-Braille-learning students in the school district based upon the annual child count data provided pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, provided the school district submits an annual progress report in a format prescribed by the agency for each eligible child.

Approved June 5, 2008