

ACT No. 617

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 315

BY REPRESENTATIVES TURNER AND EDMONSTON

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:1960.1, relative to students with disabilities; relative to public school
3 governing authorities; relative to certain publicly funded programs; to create the
4 Blind and Visually Impaired Child's Bill of Rights; and to provide for related
5 matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 17:1960.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §1960.1. The Blind and Visually Impaired Child's Bill of Rights; legislative
9 recognition

10 A. The legislature recognizes that children who are blind, visually impaired,
11 or deaf-blind who utilize alternative methods of communication have the same
12 inalienable right to become as independent and self-actualizing as children who are
13 not blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind. To realize this potential, the legislature
14 recognizes the Blind and Visually Impaired Child's Bill of Rights.

15 B. Public schools and all publicly funded programs, including early
16 education intervention programs, that serve children with blindness, visual
17 impairments, and deaf-blindness shall:

18 (1) Provide children who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind,
19 including those with multiple disabilities, appropriate screening and assessment of
20 functional vision and learning media to determine appropriate services needed
21 following the initial clinical eye exam.

1 (2) Inform, teach, and assess children who are blind, visually impaired, or
2 deaf-blind relative to the body of knowledge and skills unique to students with
3 blindness, visual impairment, and deaf-blindness including but not limited to the
4 following:

5 (a) Compensatory skills.

6 (b) Access to reading and writing in the form of braille, large print, and
7 tactile graphics or symbols.

8 (c) Orientation and mobility skills.

9 (d) Social interaction skills.

10 (e) Independent living skills.

11 (f) Recreation and leisure skills.

12 (g) Career education.

13 (h) Assistive technology.

14 (i) Sensory efficiency skills.

15 (j) Self-determination.

16 (3) Provide instruction by teachers qualified to teach blind students and
17 access to braille materials and textbooks and assistive technology.

18 (4) Teach orientation and mobility skills at the earliest possible age to blind,
19 visually impaired, or deaf-blind students and continuously throughout their
20 education.

21 (5) Inform the parents or legal guardians of students who are blind, visually
22 impaired, or deaf-blind of all State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
23 policies and regulations relative to placement considerations and options available
24 to them and provide opportunities to parents and legal guardians to fully participate
25 in the development and implementation of their child's Individualized Education
26 Program and Section 504 Plan.

27 (6) Ensure each Individualized Education Program team:

28 (a) Provides for braille instruction and assistive technologies for students
29 who qualify for such resources.

1 **(b) Includes a communication plan in the Individualized Education Program**
2 **for each student that incorporates the student and his parents or legal guardians.**

3 **(c) Includes a communication plan in each Individual Accommodation Plan.**

4 **(7) Employ and train qualified resource personnel who are able to**
5 **communicate effectively and proficiently with each student in his modes of**
6 **communication.**

7 **(8) Provide full support services by qualified professionals. The state**
8 **Department of Education shall collaborate with public school governing authorities**
9 **and education programs to ensure that braille materials and technical assistance are**
10 **available to support schools and programs in meeting the needs of students who are**
11 **blind, visually impaired, and deaf-blind.**

12 **(9) Provide students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind full**
13 **access to all programs in their educational settings.**

14 **(10) Place students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind in a**
15 **classroom setting that is best suited to each student's individual needs, including but**
16 **not limited to social, emotional, and cultural needs, with consideration for the**
17 **student's degree and type of vision and hearing loss, academic level, modes of**
18 **communication, and learning style.**

19 **(11) Provide students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind with**
20 **free, appropriate education across a full spectrum of educational programs and**
21 **activities.**

22 **(12) Provide students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind with**
23 **comprehensive academics, opportunities, and activities to meet and associate with**
24 **their peers in the school environment and during school-sponsored activities and**
25 **events to achieve a well-rounded education.**

26 **(13) Treat blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind students as equal, active,**
27 **and contributing members of their communities, classrooms, and schools or**
28 **programs.**

1 C. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to create a right of action that
2 is not currently provided for in present law on behalf of an individual student or a
3 class of students for the failure of a particular public school or publicly funded
4 program to comply with any provision of this Section or to prevent the parent or
5 legal guardian of a student from filing a complaint as provided for by law.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____