



SPONSOR: Sen. Lawson & Sen. Lopez & Sen. Hall-Long & Sen. Poore & Sen. McBride
Sens. Bonini, Cloutier, Hocker, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola, Townsend; Reps. Baumbach, Briggs King, Carson, Gray, Heffernan, Hensley, Hudson, Q. Johnson, Kenton, Matthews, Miro, Mitchell, Outten, Potter, Ramone, D. Short, Spiegelman, Wilson, Bolden, Jaques, K. Williams

DELAWARE STATE SENATE

148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2
AS AMENDED BY
SENATE AMENDMENT NO. 1

CREATING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND STATEWIDE PROGRAMS FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED.

WHEREAS, students who are blind or visually impaired have complex learning needs and require specific interventions and instruction from specialized teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs), certified orientation & mobility instructors, and other related service providers; and

WHEREAS, students who are blind or visually impaired require appropriate accommodations, modifications of materials to facilitate access to information, and adaptations designed to address their unique educational needs; and

WHEREAS, students who are blind or visually impaired require systematic and regular instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum from certified teachers and other specialists and technicians who are properly trained to teach such specialized and unique skills, including but not limited to, technology and computer proficiency, braille literacy, safe and independent mobility, age-appropriate career education, independent living skills, and social interaction skills; and

WHEREAS, the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) currently provides academic and life skills instructions to 260 individuals from birth to age 21 who are deemed eligible to receive such services; and

WHEREAS, DVI has surpassed its legislatively mandated student teacher ratio of 28:1 for the delivery of educational services; and

WHEREAS, the educational resources for students who are blind or visually impaired are constrained by the division of responsibility and authority between two state agencies, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, The IEP Improvement Task Force, established by Senate Concurrent Resolution 63 to examine means to improve the IEP process, determined that the unique educational needs of students with visual impairments are not being met through the existing IEP process and recommended establishment of a separate task force assigned to specifically address the needs of students who are blind and visually impaired.

NOW THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 148th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the Blind and Visually Impaired Education Task Force is hereby created by the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the Blind and Visually Impaired Education Task Force shall be as follows:

1. Two members of the State Senate, a member of the majority party appointed by the Senate President Pro Tem and a member of the minority party appointed by the Senate Minority Leader;
2. Two members of the Delaware House of Representatives, a member of the majority party appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and a member of the minority party appointed by the House Minority Leader;
3. A representative from the Governor's office;
4. The Secretary of Education or the Secretary's designee;
5. The Secretary of Health and Social Services or the Secretary's designee;
6. Two parents of students who are visually impaired, from a variety of age groups and geographic areas, one to be appointed by the Chair of the Senate Education Committee and one to be appointed by the Chair of the House Education Committee;
7. Two parents of students who are blind, from a variety of age groups and geographic areas, one to be appointed by the Chair of the Senate Education Committee and one to be appointed by the Chair of the House Education Committee;
8. Two individuals who are blind or visually impaired, one to be appointed by the Senate President Pro Tem and one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House;
9. The Director of the Division for the Visually Impaired;

10. Two Teachers for the Visually Impaired, one Orientation and Mobility Specialist, and one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who are certified and actively working with blind and visually impaired students in the State of Delaware where preschool, elementary, middle, and high school educational service areas are each represented, to be appointed by the Director of the Division for the Visually Impaired;

11. The Executive Director of the Delaware Association of the Blind or the Executive Director's designee;

12. The Executive Director of the Delaware Parent Information Center or the Executive Director's designee;

13. The Chair of the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind or the Chair's designee;

14. The Director of the Delaware Birth to Three Early Intervention System or the Director's designee;

15. A member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, appointed by the Chair of the Council;

16. An assistive technology specialist trained with blindness and visual impairment technology assessments, evaluations, and use in educational settings, to be appointed by the Director of the Division for the Visually Impaired;

17. Two local education agency special education directors, to be appointed by the Secretary of Education;

18. The President of the Delaware State Education Association or the President's designee;

19. An ophthalmologist and a low-vision optometrist appointed by the Secretary of Health and Social Services;

20. Two persons who teach special education in Delaware public schools, to be appointed by the Secretary of Education.

21. A member of the Delaware Association of School Psychologists, appointed by the President of the Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall convene its first meeting no later than 30 days after enactment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the member of the Delaware State Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem shall serve as the chair of the Task Force, and shall convene the first and subsequent meetings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall report to the General Assembly and Governor by June 1, 2015 on the following topics:

1. The administrative structure and authority of the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) in regards to education;

i. Existing Teachers for the Visually Impaired and other vision service providers;

ii. Compensation and benefits for teaching staff;

iii. Development of quality standards for teachers and related professionals serving blind and visually impaired students.

2. DVI's funding sources designated for use in educating students in the State of Delaware;
3. Appropriate educational services delivery model;
4. The disposition of the Resource Rooms in New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties;
5. Assistive technology provisions;
6. Individual Education Plans (IEP) for the blind and visually impaired;
7. Post-secondary transition planning and programming.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that staff support for the Task Force shall be provided by the Delaware Department of Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that suitable copies be delivered to each appointee and appointing authority.