

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Version: As introduced

Authors: Westrom and others

Subject: Establishing a preference for educational materials in an alternative format

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Overview

Directs school districts and the education department to: give preferential procurement status to publishers who make their educational materials available in alternative formats appropriate for K-12 students with visual disabilities; and where feasible, to require publishers to furnish a comparable electronic version of educational materials that is comparable with Braille translation and speech synthesis software and that students can successfully navigate.

Section

1 Disabled students' access to appropriate textbooks and instructional materials in alternative formats.

Subd. 1. Definitions. (a) Makes the definitions in this subdivision applicable to the section.

(b) Defines student to mean a K-12 student with a visual disability that affects reading.

(c) Defines alternative format to mean a medium or format for educational materials that a visually disabled student needs for a reading accommodation.

(d) Defines Braille to mean the standard English Braille.

Section

(e) Defines comparable version to mean that all elements of the print version are contained in the electronic version.

(f) Defines legacy materials to mean images and graphics that require a release and permission from a source.

Subd. 2. Access to textbooks and instructional materials. Requires a visually disabled student to have access to required educational materials in appropriate alternative formats.

Subd. 3. Preferential procurement status. Directs school districts and the education department to give preferential procurement status to publishers who make their educational materials available in alternative formats. Allows the department to establish other preferences to ensure students' access to appropriate alternative formats.

Subd. 4. Digital files required. Directs school districts and the department, where feasible, to require publishers to furnish a comparable electronic version of educational materials that is compatible with Braille translation and speech synthesis software and that students can navigate within and between in order to benefit from the materials in a way that is comparable to the benefit that the materials afford nondisabled students. Requires file formats to allow a comparable version that meets the requirements of this subdivision. Requires publishers to provide school districts and the department with files in a clear, readily usable format that is comparable with the printed version. Allows the department to further define digital file requirements.

Subd. 5. Digital file copies for specialized formats. Requires the department to direct publishers to make digital files and print copies available upon request to the American Printing House for the Blind to produce accessible materials and to the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic or other authorized entity to produce accessible specialized formats.

Subd. 6. Continuing obligation to provide Braille instruction. States that this section does not reduce school districts' other statutory obligations to provide Braille instruction.

Makes this section effective for the 2006 - 2007 school year.