

HB 2569 with HCA 1 -- SCHOOL INSTRUCTION IN BRAILLE

SPONSOR: Hummel

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues in Education by a vote of 8 to 0.

Currently, state law permits students to receive instruction in Braille as part of their individualized education plans (IEPs). This bill requires a student to receive instruction in Braille reading and writing as part of his or her IEP unless, as a result of an assessment, instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is determined not appropriate for the child.

This bill defines "assessment" as the National Reading Media Assessment or another research-based assessment or series of research-based assessments under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that determines a child's learning media skills.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 1003 (2015).

HCA #1: This amendment requires the research based assessments to also be "standardized." It also removes the definition of "blind persons," changes the definition of "student," and changes the definition of "Braille."

PROPOSERS: Supporters say this bill will provide an accurate tool to assess the reading and writing needs of a nearly or eventually will be blind or vision limited student. Totally blind children are typically taught braille but those who are not totally blind are usually looked over. As they progress through school it is harder for them to keep up because the written material gets more complex and there is more reading to do. Braille is the most vital tool for blind people and they need to have it. We need people in society to be able to read and write. It used to be that hearing and speaking were enough but without the ability to read and write a person isn't truly educated. People without the ability to read and write end up unable to provide for themselves because they will not be able to get a job and live a fulfilling life.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hummel; Shelia Wright, National Federation Of The Blind; and Kathy Hurley.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.