

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 589

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the purposes of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Texas School for the Deaf.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subsections (a) and (c), Section 30.021, Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is a state agency established to serve as a special school in the continuum of statewide ~~[alternative]~~ placements for students who are 21 years of age or younger on September 1 of any school year and who have a visual impairment and who may have one or more other disabilities. The school shall provide comprehensive educational services to ~~[is intended to serve]~~ students who require specialized or intensive educational or related services related to the visual impairment. The school is not intended to serve:

(1) students whose needs are appropriately addressed in a home or hospital setting or in a residential treatment facility; or

(2) students whose primary, ongoing needs are related to a severe or profound emotional, behavioral, or cognitive deficit.

(c) The school shall provide short-term ~~[conduct supplemental]~~ programs, such as summer programs ~~[and student exchange programs]~~, to:

1           (1) enable students who have a visual impairment to  
2 develop skills so that they can benefit from educational programs  
3 offered by the school districts in which the students reside; and

4           (2) prepare students who have a visual impairment for  
5 independent functioning as adults [~~and shall consider information~~  
6 ~~from sources throughout the state regarding the nature of those~~  
7 ~~programs and students to be served~~].

8           SECTION 2. Section 30.051, Education Code, is amended to  
9 read as follows:

10           Sec. 30.051. PURPOSE OF TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF. (a) The  
11 Texas School for the Deaf is a state agency established to serve as  
12 a special school in the continuum of statewide placements for  
13 students [~~provide educational services to persons~~] who are 21 years  
14 of age or younger on September 1 of any school year and who are deaf  
15 or hard of hearing and who may have one or more other disabilities.  
16 The following provisions apply to the school [~~shall provide~~]:

17                   (1) the school shall provide comprehensive  
18 educational services, on a day or residential basis;

19                   (2) the school shall provide short-term programs,  
20 including summer programs, [~~services~~] to:

21                           (A) enable students who are deaf or hard of  
22 hearing to develop skills so that they can benefit from educational  
23 programs offered by the school districts in which the students  
24 reside; and

25                           (B) prepare students who are deaf or hard of  
26 hearing for independent functioning as adults [~~allow a student to~~  
27 ~~better achieve educational results from services available in the~~

community]; and

(3) the school is not intended to serve students whose needs are appropriately addressed in a residential treatment facility, a hospital, or in the student's home, for a student needing homebound services ~~[for any student who is deaf or hard of hearing and also has an additional disability and who requires a specialized support program but does not require a residential treatment facility]~~.

(b) The school shall serve as a primary statewide resource center promoting excellence in education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing through research, training, and demonstration projects by providing services such as:

(1) developing and providing local, regional, and statewide training for parents of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and professionals who work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing;

(2) providing consultation and technical assistance to parents and professionals related to special education and related services for students;

(3) supporting the needs of students, parents, and families through videoconferencing and distance learning;

(4) developing and disseminating reference materials, including materials in the areas of curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology;

(5) providing information related to library resources, adapted materials, current research, and technology resources, and the teaching, assessment, and transition of students

1 who are deaf or hard of hearing;

2 (6) operating programs for lending educational and  
3 technological materials to school districts, regional education  
4 service centers, and parents; and

5 (7) facilitating the preparation of teachers for  
6 students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

7 (c) ~~[The school shall work in partnership with state,~~  
8 ~~regional, and local agencies to provide new or improved programs or~~  
9 ~~methods to serve the previously unmet or future needs of persons~~  
10 ~~throughout the state who are deaf or hard of hearing.~~

11 ~~[(d)]~~ The school shall cooperate with public and private  
12 agencies and organizations serving students and other persons who  
13 are deaf or hard of hearing ~~[impaired]~~ in the planning,  
14 development, and implementation of effective educational and  
15 rehabilitative service delivery systems associated with educating  
16 students who are deaf or hard of hearing. To maximize and make  
17 efficient use of state facilities, funding, and resources, the  
18 services provided in this area may include conducting a cooperative  
19 program with other agencies to serve persons who have graduated  
20 from high school and who have identified needs related to  
21 vocational training, independent living skills, ~~and~~ social and  
22 leisure skills, compensatory skills, or remedial academic skills.

23 SECTION 3. This Act applies beginning with the 2003-2004  
24 school year.

25 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
26 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
27 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this

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- 1 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
- 2 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.