

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. Section 30.021, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a) and (c) and adding Subsection (g) 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 may ~~[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 programs ~~[conduct supplemental]~~, including ~~[such as]~~ summer programs ~~[and student~~

1 ~~exchange programs], to:~~

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

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

9 (g) At the request of a school district or other public or
10 private educational entity, the school may conduct an assessment of
11 a student served by the district or other educational entity. The
12 school may charge a reasonable fee to the district or other
13 educational entity for conducting the assessment.

14 SECTION 2. Section 30.051, Education Code, is amended to
15 read as follows:

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

22 The school shall provide:

23 (1) comprehensive educational services, on a day or
24 residential basis; and

25 (2) short-term programs, including summer programs,
26 [~~services]~~ to:

27 (A) enable students who are deaf or hard of

1 hearing to develop skills so that they can benefit from educational
2 programs offered by the school districts in which the students
3 reside; and

4 (B) prepare students who are deaf or hard of
5 hearing for independent functioning as adults [~~allow a student to~~
6 ~~better achieve educational results from services available in the~~
7 ~~community; and~~

8 [~~(3) services for any student who is deaf or hard of~~
9 ~~hearing and also has an additional disability and who requires a~~
10 ~~specialized support program but does not require a residential~~
11 ~~treatment facility].~~

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

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

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

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

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

1 (5) providing information related to library
2 resources, adapted materials, current research, and technology
3 resources, and teaching, assessment, and transition of students who
4 are deaf or hard of hearing;

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

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

10 (c) At the request of a school district or other public or
11 private educational entity, the school may conduct an assessment of
12 a student served by the district or other educational entity. The
13 school may charge a reasonable fee to the district or other
14 educational entity for conducting the assessment [~~The school shall~~
15 ~~work in partnership with state, regional, and local agencies to~~
16 ~~provide new or improved programs or methods to serve the previously~~
17 ~~unmet or future needs of persons throughout the state who are deaf~~
18 ~~or hard of hearing~~].

19 (d) The school shall cooperate with public and private
20 agencies and organizations serving students and other persons who
21 are deaf or hard of hearing [~~impaired~~] in the planning,
22 development, and implementation of effective educational and
23 rehabilitative service delivery systems associated with educating
24 students who are deaf or hard of hearing. To maximize and make
25 efficient use of state facilities, funding, and resources, the
26 services provided in this area may include conducting a cooperative
27 program with other agencies to serve persons who have graduated

1 from high school and who have identified needs related to
2 vocational training, independent living skills, [~~and~~] social and
3 leisure skills, compensatory skills, or remedial academic skills.

4 (e) The school may not serve students whose needs are
5 appropriately addressed in a home or hospital setting or in a
6 residential treatment facility.

7 SECTION 3. This Act applies beginning with the 2003-2004
8 school year.

9 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
10 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
11 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
12 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
13 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.