

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 39
By: Zaffirini
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Students with visual impairments are required to be provided with specialized instruction specific to blindness. Interested parties contend that the law does not recognize recent developments with regard to that instruction, including some that are critical to the education of a child who is blind, and that the law does not include the term "expanded core curriculum," which has contributed to a lack of uniformity in teaching students with visual impairments. S.B. 39 seeks to address issues relating to the evaluation and instruction of public school students with visual impairments.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 39 amends the Education Code to remove provisions requiring that the comprehensive statewide plan for the education of children with visual impairments include methods to ensure that children with such impairments receiving special education services in school districts receive certain training and vocational or career counseling before being placed in a classroom setting or within a reasonable time after placement and to instead require that the children receive, within that same time frame, evaluation of the visual impairment and instruction in an expanded core curriculum, including certain elements similar to the training and counseling removed by the bill. The bill's provisions apply beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.