
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the
2 Hawaii Braille Literacy Education Act.

3 SECTION 2. The legislature finds that literacy skills are
4 fundamental to success in education, employment, and life for
5 all members of society. Braille is widely understood as an
6 essential literacy tool for low vision and blind individuals. A
7 2018 study from the Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research
8 found that individuals who were braille readers since childhood
9 reported higher levels of life-satisfaction, self-esteem, and
10 job satisfaction than individuals who had not used braille as
11 their primary reading medium during childhood.

12 The legislature further finds that braille literacy skills
13 are essential for low vision and blind students to learn, seek
14 and maintain remunerative employment, and access the
15 opportunities in life open to all regardless of disability.
16 Although one hundred sixty students in Hawaii are registered
17 with the American Printing House for the Blind to receive



1 special education materials, only seventeen students have
2 braille services in their special education programs. The
3 legislature believes that it is in the interest of the State to
4 promote braille instruction and ensure timely access to braille
5 instructional materials for low vision and blind students, their
6 parents and teachers, and other school personnel to ensure all
7 of Hawaii's students have access to appropriate educational
8 services.

9 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 10 (1) Require the department of education to include the
11 instruction of braille and provision of braille
12 instructional materials under certain circumstances;
- 13 (2) Require the department of education to establish and
14 maintain a braille literacy resource center; and
- 15 (3) Appropriate funds.

16 SECTION 3. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and
18 to read as follows:

19 **"PART**

20 **BRaille SERVICES**



1 **§302A-A Policy.** It is the policy of the State to promote
2 braille literacy and support the provision of braille
3 educational services needed for eligible blind students to fully
4 participate in school and prepare for life after school ends.

5 **§302A-B Definitions.** For the purposes of this part:

6 "Braille" means the system of reading and writing through
7 touch commonly known as standard English braille.

8 "Braille educational services" means:

- 9 (1) Instruction in reading and writing in braille; and
10 (2) The provision of braille instructional materials.

11 "Braille instructional materials" means print instructional
12 materials, as defined in section 302A-442.5, that are printed in
13 braille.

14 "Eligible blind student" means an elementary or secondary
15 school student who:

- 16 (1) Is eligible for services under the Individuals with
17 Disabilities Education Act, as amended;
18 (2) Is approved as an eligible person, as defined in
19 section 121(d)(3) of the Copyright Act of 1976 (17
20 U.S.C. 121(d)(3)), as amended; and



1 (3) Attends a department school, a private school under
2 chapter 302C, a public charter school under chapter
3 302D, or an approved alternative education program
4 under section 302A-1132(a)(5),
5 and is blind or visually handicapped.

6 "Individualized education program" and "individualized
7 education program team" have the same meanings as in section
8 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20
9 U.S.C. section 1414(d)), as amended.

10 "Section 504 plan" and "section 504 plan team" mean a
11 formal plan for how a school will ensure equal educational
12 opportunity is provided to a student with a disability as
13 required under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29
14 U.S.C. section 791), as amended.

15 **§302A-C Braille educational services; eligible blind**
16 **students; braille instructional materials.** (a) The
17 individualized education program or section 504 plan for an
18 eligible blind student shall include instruction in braille and
19 provision of braille instructional materials unless the
20 individualized education program team or section 504 plan team



1 determines that the instruction or materials are not necessary
2 for the student.

3 (b) Every individualized education program or section 504
4 plan for an eligible blind student shall include an assessment
5 of an eligible blind student's reading and writing ability and
6 needs for braille educational services, including the student's
7 current and future needs for instruction in braille or the use
8 of braille.

9 (c) If braille instruction is included in the eligible
10 blind student's individualized education program, the
11 individualized education program shall:

12 (1) Document:

13 (A) The results of current braille reading and
14 writing assessments of the student, if any;

15 (B) The date on which braille literacy instruction
16 will commence;

17 (C) The length of the period of instruction and the
18 frequency and duration of each instructional
19 session;

20 (D) Performance goals for the end of the period and
21 the objective assessment measures to be used; and



1 (E) The braille instructional materials used and
2 whether the materials were provided at the same
3 time as the corresponding print materials were
4 provided to other students; and

5 (2) Summarize how use of acquired braille skills and
6 braille instructional materials will be incorporated
7 into the student's general education program and daily
8 activities.

9 (c) If the individualized education program team decides
10 that braille literacy instruction is not necessary for an
11 eligible blind student in accordance with subsection (b), the
12 student's individualized education program shall:

13 (1) Document the student's:

14 (A) Visual condition, including cause, visual acuity,
15 field of vision, visual functioning over time,
16 stability of the condition, and prognosis; and

17 (B) Ability to achieve at least grade level reading
18 and writing proficiency without regard to the use
19 of braille, as expected of the student's peers of
20 comparable ability to learn and progress from
21 grade to grade in school;



- 1 (2) Identify the literacy assessment tools and methods
- 2 used;
- 3 (3) Evaluate the student's current and future needs for
- 4 braille instruction and braille instructional
- 5 materials; and
- 6 (4) Provide the date of the student's next literacy
- 7 assessment, if one is to be conducted, not to exceed
- 8 twelve months from the previous assessment."

9 SECTION 4. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
 10 amended by adding a new section to part II, subpart C to be
 11 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

12 "§302A-D Braille literacy resource center; establishment;
 13 duties; rules. (a) The department shall establish and maintain
 14 a braille literacy resource center that shall:

- 15 (1) Advocate for braille literacy and the provision of
- 16 braille educational services to eligible blind
- 17 students;
- 18 (2) Obtain instructional materials in braille as needed;
- 19 (3) Acquire, maintain, and make available studies,
- 20 reports, and other authoritative information about the



- 1 efficacy of instruction in braille and braille
2 instructional materials;
- 3 (4) Ensure that each eligible blind student is registered
4 with the department of human services pursuant to
5 section 347-6;
- 6 (5) For each student registered pursuant to paragraph (4),
7 provide the parent or legal guardian and, as
8 appropriate, the student with comprehensive
9 information about braille literacy instruction,
10 braille instructional materials, assistive technology
11 devices, and assistive technology services, including
12 tools and options available to assess the student's
13 braille literacy needs; and
- 14 (6) When requested by a member of an individualized
15 education program team, section 504 plan team or, as
16 appropriate, an eligible blind student, participate in
17 the development of the student's individualized
18 education program or section 504 plan.
- 19 (b) The department shall designate an individual from the
20 braille literacy resource center to serve as the ex officio
21 member of the board of trustees of the American Printing House



1 for the Blind pursuant to the federal Act to Promote the
2 Education of the Blind title 20 United States Code 101 et seq.,
3 as amended.

4 (c) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
5 to carry out the purposes of this section.

6 (d) For purposes of this section:

7 "Assistive technology device", "assistive technology
8 service", and "braille" have the same meaning as defined in
9 section 302A-442.5.

10 "Braille educational services" has the same meaning as in
11 section 302A-B.

12 "Braille instructional materials" has the same meaning as
13 in section 302A-B.

14 "Eligible blind student" has the same meaning as in section
15 302A-B.

16 "Individualized education program" has the same meaning as
17 in section 302A-B.

18 "Individualized education program team" has the same
19 meaning as in section 302A-B."

20 "Section 504 plan" has the same meaning as in section 302A-
21 B.



1 "Section 504 plan team" has the same meaning as in section
2 302A-B."

3 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
5 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
6 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
7 year 2026-2027 to establish and operate the braille literacy
8 resource center established by this Act.

9 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
10 of education for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 6. In codifying the new sections added by sections
12 3 and 4 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute
13 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating
14 the new sections in this Act.

15 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

16

INTRODUCED BY: _____



JAN 17 2025



H.B. NO. 620

Report Title:

DOE; Braille Literacy Instruction; Braille Literacy Materials; Braille Literacy Resource Center; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes state policy to promote braille literacy for eligible blind students. Requires the individualized education programs and section 504 plans of eligible blind students to include the assessment and evaluation of eligible blind students' reading and writing abilities, instruction of braille, and provision of braille instructional materials under certain circumstances. Requires the Department of Education to establish a Braille Literacy Resource Center. Appropriates funds.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

