By Senator Crist

12-547-07

1	A bill to be entitled
2	An act relating to literacy education for blind
3	persons; amending s. 1003.55, F.S.; requiring
4	that instruction in braille be part of the
5	individualized education program for a child
6	who is blind or visually impaired; providing
7	exceptions and conditions to that requirement;
8	providing standards for such instruction and
9	specifying contents of the individualized
10	education program; providing an effective date.
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12	Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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14	Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 1003.55, Florida
15	Statutes, is amended to read:
16	1003.55 Instructional programs for blind or visually
17	impaired students and deaf or hard-of-hearing students
18	(4) In developing an individualized written
19	education program for each blind student, the presumption
20	shall be that blind students can communicate effectively and
21	efficiently with the same level of proficiency expected of the
22	students' peers of comparable ability and grade level.
23	Accordingly, in developing the individualized education
24	program for a child who is blind or visually impaired,
25	provision must be made for instruction in braille and the use
26	of braille unless the team developing the individualized
27	education program unanimously agrees, after an evaluation of
28	the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate
29	reading and writing media, including, but not limited to, an
30	evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in
31	braille or the use of braille, that such instruction or use is

1	not appropriate for the child proficiency in reading and
2	writing braille shall be considered during the individualized
3	planning and assessment processes in this context. This
4	section does not require the exclusive use of braille if other
5	special education services are appropriate to the child's
6	educational needs. The provision of appropriate services must
7	not preclude braille use or instruction.
8	(b) Instruction in braille reading and writing must be
9	sufficient to enable each blind or visually impaired child to
10	communicate effectively and efficiently with the same level of
11	proficiency expected of the child's peers of comparable
12	ability and grade level. The child's individualized education
13	program must specify:
14	1. The results obtained from the evaluations required
15	under paragraph (a);
16	2. How braille will be implemented as the primary mode
17	for learning through integration with other classroom
18	activities;
19	3. The date on which braille instruction will
20	commence;
21	4. The length of the period of instruction and the
22	frequency and duration of each instructional session;
23	5. The level of competency in braille reading and
24	writing to be achieved by the end of the period and the
25	objective assessment measures to be used; and
26	6. If a decision has been made under paragraph (a)
27	that braille instruction or use is not required for the child:
28	a. That the decision was reached after a review of
29	pertinent literature describing the educational benefits of
30	braille instruction and use; and
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1	b. The evidence used to determine that the child's
2	ability to read and write effectively without special
3	education services is not impaired.
4	Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.
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7	SENATE SUMMARY
8	Provides that instruction in braille must be part of the
9	individualized education program for a child who is blind or visually impaired. Provides exceptions and conditions
10 instruction and speci	to that requirement. Provides standards for such instruction and specifies contents of the individualized
11	education program.
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