

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1905

By: Staggs, Boyd (Betty),
Blackburn, Braddock,
Deutschendorf, Gilbert,
Langmacher, Tyler,
Wells, Fields and Bryant
of the House

and

Robinson and Brown of
the Senate

An Act relating to schools; creating the Oklahoma Task Force on Braille Instructional Materials; stating purpose; providing for appointments, officers, meetings, quorum, duties, compensation, reimbursement, technical consultants and staff support; providing for noncodification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. A. There is hereby created to continue until December 31, 1998, the Oklahoma Task Force on Braille Instructional Materials. The purpose of the Task Force shall be to assess the state's system and resources for acquiring braille instructional materials for blind preschool, elementary and secondary school students and to prepare recommendations for legislative or other action needed to assure the timely availability of braille instructional materials for all students who need them.

B. The Task Force shall be composed of twenty (20) members as follows:

1. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee;
2. The chair of the State Textbook Committee or designee;
3. The Director of the State Department of Rehabilitation Services or designee;
4. The Superintendent of the Oklahoma School for the Blind or designee;
5. A representative of the textbook publishing industry to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
6. A Director of Special Education in a local school district whose student population regularly includes students with visual impairments, to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
7. Three parents of children who use braille, to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
8. A specialist in education of the visually impaired who is providing outreach services to blind public school students and teachers, to be appointed by the Superintendent of the Oklahoma School for the Blind;

9. A braille production specialist, to be appointed by the Director of the State Department of Rehabilitation Services;

10. A specialist in computer technology for information access by persons with visual impairments, to be appointed by the Director of the State Department of Rehabilitation Services;

11. Five individuals, to be jointly appointed by the Director of the State Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, representing the following groups:

- a. advocates in the field of blindness and visual impairment,
- b. individuals with visual impairments who are users of braille, and
- c. professionals working in programs for the blind or for the education of children with disabilities, including sensory disabilities;

12. The chair of the Education Committee of the House of Representatives or designee;

13. The chair of the Education Committee of the State Senate or designee; and

14. An individual who has demonstrated special interest in improving opportunities for persons with blindness and visual impairment, to be appointed by the Governor.

Required appointments shall be made on or before August 1, 1997.

C. The Task Force shall elect a chair, vice-chair and secretary from among its members.

D. The Director of the State Department of Rehabilitation Services shall convene the first meeting of the Task Force not later than September 15, 1997, with subsequent meetings to be held at the call of the chair. A majority of the members appointed shall constitute a quorum necessary for the transaction of any business.

E. The Task Force on Braille Instructional Materials shall:

1. Identify current and prospective needs for braille instructional materials at preschool and elementary and secondary school levels in the state;

2. Study Oklahoma's existing system and resources for acquiring braille instructional materials for blind and visually impaired students, and assess the capacity of the system to meet current and future needs for braille materials;

3. Survey developing technology for production of braille instructional materials;

4. Review methods used by other states to supply braille instructional materials needed by blind and visually impaired students;

5. Study the feasibility of establishing a state clearinghouse to coordinate acquisition, production and distribution of braille instructional materials needed by blind and visually impaired preschool and elementary and secondary school students in the state;

6. On or before December 31, 1997, submit to the Governor, Legislature and appropriate agencies a progress report including findings and recommendations of the Task Force as of that date; and

7. On or before December 31, 1998, issue a final report of findings and recommendations to the Governor, Legislature and appropriate state agencies.

F. Members of the Task Force shall receive no compensation for serving on the Task Force, but shall receive travel reimbursement as follows:

1. Legislative members of the Task Force shall be reimbursed by the legislative body in which they serve for necessary travel

expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with Section 456 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

2. State agency employees who are members of the Task Force shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties by their respective agencies in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act, Section 500.1 et seq. of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes; and

3. All other Task Force members shall be reimbursed by their appointing authority for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties on the Task Force, in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act. The cost of travel reimbursement for Task Force members jointly appointed by the State Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall be shared equally by the appointing authorities according to procedures agreed to by both.

G. As necessary to carry out its charge, the Task Force may seek technical assistance from specialists in the field of education of the blind and braille production. Individuals providing technical consultation to the Task Force shall be reimbursed for their related travel expenses in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act by the State Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Department of Education, in accordance with procedures for approval and cost sharing agreed to by both agencies.

H. The State Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Department of Education shall jointly provide such staff support as is required by the Task Force.

SECTION 2. NONCODIFICATION The provisions of Section 1 of this act shall not be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes.

SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 1997.

SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the House of Representatives the 5th day of May, 1997.

Speaker of the House of
Representatives

Passed the Senate the 6th day of May, 1997.

President of the Senate