



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

1901 S Bragaw St, Suite 300
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
Main: 907.274.4692 / 907.276.7474
TTY/TDD: 711 for Alaska Relay
Fax: 907.278-8588

RESOLUTION 2024-02

Encouraging Improvements to Visually Impaired Student Individualized Education Programs

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights is the State of Alaska's civil rights enforcement agency; and,

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights enforces the Alaska Human Rights Act, AS 18.80 *et seq.*; and,

WHEREAS, AS 18.80.255(3) makes it unlawful for any local, state, or federal services, privileges, or advantages to be denied to an individual on the basis of a physical or mental disability; and,

WHEREAS, AS 14.30.278 requires Alaska schools to establish individualized education programs (IEPs) to suit the specific needs of disabled students in line with federal regulations, with the stated end goal of this education being gainful employment; and,

WHEREAS, 20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(3)(B)(iii) requires that IEPs for children with visual impairments include Braille education, unless determined to be inappropriate for a child's specific needs; and,

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court has held since the decision in *Board of Education v. Rowley*, 458 U.S. 176 (1982), that these IEPs provide a "free appropriate public education;" and,

WHEREAS, the Perkins School for the Blind found that while people with visual impairments face much higher rates of unemployment, upwards of 80% of visually impaired people with gainful employment are Braille literate; and,

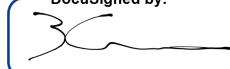
WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind's Jernigan Institute observed a nationwide decrease in Braille literacy, Braille teaching certifications, and visually impaired employment rates.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights calls on the Alaska State Board of Education and the Alaska Legislature to adopt regulations and statutes empowering Alaskan schools to increase literacy rates and employment readiness for

visually impaired students. The Commission suggests achieving this goal by funding Braille certification programs for educators, requiring visually impaired IEP literacy benchmarks to be on par with grade-level peers, and encouraging the integration of accessible assistive technologies into everyday education.

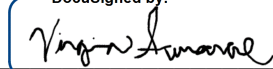
Copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Alaska Legislature and the Alaska State Board of Education.

ADOPTED in Anchorage, Alaska, this 7th day of June, 2024.

DocuSigned by:


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Zackary Gottshall
Chairperson
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution 2024-02 is a true and accurate copy of the language adopted by the Commission on June 7, 2024.

DocuSigned by:


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Gina Aumavae
Secretary
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights