National Federation of the Blind of Delaware

Resolution 2024-05

Regarding Braille Proficiency of Educators of Blind Students

WHEREAS, Braille is the primary tool by which blind people are literate; and

WHEREAS, despite the fact that some conditions that cause vision loss are progressive, approximately 90 percent of students are not taught Braille, notwithstanding the difficulty a student may have reading print, even in large fonts or with magnification; and

WHEREAS, according to research conducted by Casey Robertson of Louisiana Tech University and presented at the 2024 convention of the National Federation of the Blind, this lack of Braille education is largely due to the lack of proficiency in the Braille code among the people tasked with teaching blind and low-vision students; and

WHEREAS, in most districts, teachers of the visually impaired (TVI's) are itinerant, having students in multiple schools across the district; and

WHEREAS, this leaves the production of accessible materials for an individual blind student to the paraprofessional who is in the school assigned to that student; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of paraprofessionals do not know Braille, requiring the student to wait for the material to be produced by the TVI when he/she returns to the student's school (assuming that the TVI knows Braille) or work with the paraprofessional and the classroom teachers to make it accessible electronically; and

WHEREAS, this creates an undue burden on students and a delay on the production of accessible classroom materials that make the academic environment difficult if not impossible for a student to work in: Now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Delaware in Convention assembled this 26th day of October 2024 in the city of Middletown that this organization affirms that Braille is literacy for blind people and should be taught to every student for whom it is objectively determined by the IEP team to be the reading medium; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization urges the Delaware Department of Education and local school districts develop a policy of conpensating TVI's and paraprofessionals who are proficient in the Braille code in a way that reflects their additional skill set; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization urges the Delaware General Assembly and the Department of Education to codify a requirement for teachers of the visually impaired and paraprofessionals in Delaware to demonstrate proficiency in the Braille code so that blind and low-vision students in Delaware can have full and equal access to education.