

Department of Planning and Budget

2017 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** SB1477

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed
Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. **Patron:** McClellan

3. **Committee:** Education and Health

4. **Title:** Students with blindness or visual impairments.

5. **Summary:** Makes several changes to provisions relating to students with blindness or visual impairments, including (i) requiring a learning media assessment (LMA) to be administered as part of the initial evaluation and each reevaluation of each student with blindness or visual impairments or more frequently, if such student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team so determines and requiring instruction in Braille reading and writing and accommodations for materials in Braille to be included in the IEP of a student with blindness or visual impairments commensurate with his IEP team's determination of his needs based upon the results of such LMA and (ii) requiring the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired to assist the Board of Education and each local school board with ongoing professional development for teachers of students with blindness or visual impairments, including knowledge of and instruction in Braille and the administration and evaluation of LMAs.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes, Items 132 and 356.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary. See Item 8 for additional information.

Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2018	\$157,000	1.00	0100
2019	\$132,000	1.00	0100
2020	\$132,000	1.00	0100
2021	\$132,000	1.00	0100
2022	\$132,000	1.00	0100
2023	\$132,000	1.00	0100

8. **Fiscal Implications:** SB 1477 requires the Department of Education (DOE) to have a more active role in establishing, maintaining, and operating special education for students with blindness or visual impairments, as well as ongoing professional development for teachers of students with blindness or visual impairments. To provide these additional services to local school boards and other stakeholders, DOE anticipates the need to hire a pay band level five position at an estimated cost of \$132,000 for salary, benefits, technology, and support costs.

Additionally, this bill tasks the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) with assisting DOE and each local school board with ongoing professional development for teachers of students with blindness or visual impairments. It is assumed that DBVI will be required only to provide assistance to DOE, the Board of Education, and local school boards, and DBVI will not have any direct responsibility for learning media assessments (LMA). In this role, DBVI anticipates the need to build additional technical expertise that does not currently exist within the agency. The estimated one-time cost of additional training and research is estimated at \$25,000.

This bill requires local school divisions to use LMAs as part of the initial evaluation and each reevaluation of each student with blindness or visual impairments, or more frequently if such student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team so determines. DOE notes that some LMAs are available at no cost, while others can cost as much as \$140 each. Additionally, DOE estimates that professional development for teachers would cost approximately \$565 per teacher. If the intent of this bill is that the state will fund the additional costs of LMAs and professional development, additional funding will be necessary; otherwise, local school divisions will be responsible for these costs. DBVI estimates that there are at least 1,461 students in the Commonwealth with vision impairments who should be assessed or reassessed in accordance with this legislation. Further, there are more than 130 teachers of the vision impaired, special education directors, and other school personnel who will require training.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Education, Board of Education, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, local school divisions

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: This bill is similar to HB 2205. HB 2205 specifically names the Division of Special Education and Student Services of the Department of Education, while SB 1477 names the Department of Education.