

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1877

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM (86).

Read 1st time January 28, 2008 and copies ordered printed.

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

3963L.01I

AN ACT

To repeal section 162.961, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to special education resolution sessions.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Section 162.961, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 162.961, to read as follows:

162.961. 1. A parent, guardian or the responsible educational agency may request a due process hearing by the state board of education with respect to any matter relating to identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education of the child. Such request shall include the child's name, address, school, issue, and suggested resolution of dispute if known. Except as provided in subsection 4 of this section, the board or its delegated representative shall within fifteen days after receiving notice empower a hearing panel of three persons who are not directly connected with the original decision and who are not employees of the board to which the appeal has been made. All of the panel members shall have some knowledge or training involving children with disabilities, none shall have a personal or professional interest which would conflict with his or her objectivity in the hearing, and all shall meet the department of elementary and secondary education's training and assessment requirements pursuant to state regulations and federal law and regulation requirements of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. One person shall be chosen by the local school district board or its delegated representative or the responsible educational agency, and one person shall be chosen at the recommendation of the parent or guardian. If

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

16 either party has not chosen a panel member ten days after the receipt by the department of
17 elementary and secondary education of the request for a due process hearing, such panel member
18 shall be chosen instead by the department of elementary and secondary education. Each of these
19 two panel members shall be compensated pursuant to a rate set by the department of elementary
20 and secondary education. The third person shall be appointed by the state board of education and
21 shall serve as the chairperson of the panel. The chairperson shall be an attorney licensed to
22 practice law in this state. During the pendency of any three-member panel hearing, or prior to
23 the empowerment of the panel, the parties may, by mutual agreement, submit their dispute to a
24 mediator pursuant to section 162.959.

25 2. The parent or guardian, school official, and other persons affected by the action in
26 question shall present to the hearing panel all pertinent evidence relative to the matter under
27 appeal. All rights and privileges as described in section 162.963 shall be permitted.

28 3. After review of all evidence presented and a proper deliberation, the hearing panel,
29 within the time lines required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C.
30 Section 1415 and any amendments thereto, shall by majority vote determine its findings,
31 conclusions, and decision in the matter in question and forward the written decision to the
32 parents or guardian of the child and to the president of the appropriate local board of education
33 or responsible educational agency and to the department of elementary and secondary education.
34 A specific extension of the time line may be made by the chairman at the request of either party,
35 except in the case of an expedited hearing as provided in subsection 4 of this section.

36 4. An expedited due process hearing by the state board of education may be requested
37 by a parent to challenge a disciplinary change of placement or to challenge a manifestation
38 determination in connection with a disciplinary change of placement or by a responsible
39 educational agency to seek a forty-five school day alternative educational placement for a
40 dangerous or violent student. The board or its delegated representative shall appoint a hearing
41 officer to hear the case and render a decision within the time line required by federal law and
42 state regulations implementing federal law. The hearing officer shall be an attorney licensed to
43 practice law in this state. The hearing officer shall have some knowledge or training involving
44 children with disabilities, shall not have a personal or professional interest which would conflict
45 with his or her objectivity in the hearing, and shall meet the department of elementary and
46 secondary education's training and assessment requirements pursuant to state regulations and
47 federal law and regulation requirements of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. A
48 specific extension of the time line is only permissible to the extent consistent with federal law
49 and pursuant to state regulations.

50 5. If the responsible public agency requests a due process hearing to seek a forty-five
51 school day alternative educational placement for a dangerous or violent student, the agency shall

52 show by substantial evidence that there is a substantial likelihood the student will injure himself
53 or others and that the agency made reasonable efforts to minimize that risk, and shall show that
54 the forty-five school day alternative educational placement will provide a free appropriate public
55 education which includes services and modifications to address the behavior so that it does not
56 reoccur, and continue to allow progress in the general education curriculum.

57 6. Any due process hearing request and responses to the request shall conform to the
58 requirements of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Determination of the
59 sufficiency shall be made by the chairperson of the three-member hearing panel, or in the case
60 of an expedited due process hearing, by the hearing officer. The chairperson or hearing officer
61 shall implement the process and procedures, including time lines, required by the IDEA, related
62 to sufficiency of notice, response to notice, determination of sufficiency dispute, and
63 amendments of the notice.

64 7. A preliminary meeting, known as a resolution session, shall be convened by the
65 responsible public agency, under the requirements of the IDEA. The process and procedures
66 required by the IDEA in connection to the resolution session and any resulting written settlement
67 agreement shall be implemented. **The responsible public agency or its designee shall sign the**
68 **agreement. The designee identified by the responsible public agency shall have the**
69 **authority to bind the agency. A local board of education, as a responsible public agency,**
70 **shall identify a designee with authority to bind the school district.**

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