

# AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

For the Fiscal Years 2007-2011 Period

by

*Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired*

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Terms Expire</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Frankie Swift, President	2007	Nacogdoches
Deborah Louder, Vice President	2005	San Angelo
Otilio Galindo	2005	San Angelo
Mary Sue Welch	2005	Dallas
Jesus Bautista	2007	El Paso
Dr. Gene Brooks	2009	Austin
Donna Clopton	2009	Weatherford
Jamie Wheeler	2009	North Richland Hills
Position Vacant	2007	-----

July 1, 2006

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent)

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Board President)

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## **Governor Rick Perry's Vision for Texas \***

Working together, I know we can accomplish our mission and address the priorities of the people of Texas. My Administration is dedicated to creating greater opportunity and prosperity for our citizens, and to accomplish that mission, I am focused on the following critical priorities.

- \* Assuring open access to an educational system that not only guarantees the basic core knowledge necessary for productive citizens, but also emphasizes excellence and accountability in all academic and intellectual undertakings;
- \* Creating and retaining job opportunities and building a stronger economy that will lead to more prosperity for our people and a stable source of funding for core priorities;
- \* Protecting and preserving the health, safety and well-being of our citizens by ensuring healthcare is accessible and affordable and by safeguarding our neighborhoods and communities from those who intend us harm; and
- \* Providing disciplined, principled government that invests funds wisely and efficiently.

### ***The Mission of Texas State Government \****

Texas State Government must be limited, efficient, and completely accountable. It should foster opportunity and economic prosperity, focus on critical priorities, and support the creation of strong family environments for our children. The stewards of the public trust must be men and women who administer state government in a fair, just, and responsible manner. To honor the public trust, state officials must seek new and innovative ways to meet state government priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

Aim High...We Are Not Here to Achieve Inconsequential Things!

### ***The Philosophy of Texas State Government \****

The task before all state public servants is to govern in a manner worthy of this great state. We are a great enterprise, and as an enterprise we will promote the following core principles.

- First and foremost, Texas matters most. This is the overarching, guiding principle by which we will make decisions. Our state, and its future, is more important than party, politics or individual recognition.
- Government should be limited in size and mission, but it must be highly effective in performing the tasks it undertakes.
- Decisions affecting individual Texans, in most instances, are best made by those individuals, their families, and the local governments closest to their communities.
- Competition is the greatest incentive for achievement and excellence. It inspires ingenuity and requires individuals to set their sights high. And just as competition inspires excellence, a sense of personal responsibility drives individual citizens to do more for their future, and the future of those they love.
- Public administration must be open and honest, pursuing the high road rather than the expedient course. We must be accountable to taxpayers for our actions.

\* From *Pathway to Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government*, March 2006 developed by Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

- State government has a responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars by eliminating waste and abuse, and providing efficient and honest government.
- Finally, state government should be humble, recognizing that all its power and authority is granted to it by the people of Texas, and those who make decisions wielding the power of the state should exercise their authority cautiously and fairly.

### ***State Government Goal and Benchmarks Relevant to TSBVI***

**State Government Priority Goal for Education in Public Schools  
- Academic Students -**

To ensure that all students in the public education system acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsible and independent Texans by:

- Ensuring students graduate from high school and are ready for college, a two-year institution, other post-secondary training, or the workforce;
- Continuing to develop reading, math, and science skills at appropriate grade level through graduation; and
- Demonstrate exemplary performance in foundation subjects.

\* From Pathway to Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government, March 2006, developed by Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

### ***State Education Benchmarks for Public Schools Adapted by TSBVI***

- \* Percent of students who achieve moderate or higher progress in the foundation subjects of reading-language arts, math, social studies, science, and the expanded core curriculum for visually impaired learners: independent living, orientation and mobility, social skills, vocational skills, and technology
- \* Percent of students who demonstrate satisfactory performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the State-Developed Alternative Assessment, or the Locally Determined Alternative Assessment
- \* Percent of students from third grade forward who achieve moderate or higher progress in reading and math, and other general curriculum subjects that might be included in each student's individualized education program (IEP)
- \* High school graduation rate
- \* Percent of high school graduates employed or receiving other post-secondary training

## ***VISION OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED***

All blind and visually impaired students in Texas, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, will have the skills and knowledge to enjoy fulfilling and satisfying lives.

## ***MISSION OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED***

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) will be a leading center of educational expertise in Texas for students with visual impairments their families and the local and regional service providers who work with them. TSBVI will provide opportunities for children and youth who are visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness to develop the skills necessary to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying and productive lives.

## ***PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED***

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) believes that every blind and visually impaired person in Texas, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness:

- ❖ should have the opportunity to be equal and the right to be different.
- ❖ are provided the best assurance for educational success through a comprehensive assessment, sound educational planning, and an appropriate placement.
- ❖ learn best when their teachers and other staff are highly trained and know how to address the unique needs of these students.
- ❖ will have access to the on- and off-campus services of TSBVI.
- ❖ must have instruction in all areas of the expanded core curriculum.
- ❖ must have educational services equal to services provided to sighted students.
- ❖ must have parents who are informed about the educational needs of their children, and who are equal participants in the educational process.

## ***EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT***

### ***Overview of Agency Scope and Functions***

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been established as part of the public education system to serve as a special school in the continuum of statewide alternative placements for students who have a visual impairment. The School is expected to conduct supplemental educational programs such as summer sessions and short term programs for visually impaired students attending their local schools. It is also established to be a statewide resource to professionals and parents who serve these children.

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has adopted these Strategic Goals to accomplish its legislatively assigned mission:

**STRATEGIC GOALS:** TSBVI will be a leader in providing statewide services and resources so that:

- A. All students with visual impairments have equal access to quality education based on appropriate assessment, curriculum and instruction.

- B. All students with visual impairments demonstrate knowledge and skills to lead vocationally, personally and socially satisfying lives.
- C. All students with visual impairments receive a quality education from qualified professionals and trained staff.
- D. All parents of blind and visually impaired students have a thorough understanding of the impact of vision loss on their child and the instruction needed to minimize the effects of vision loss on learning.
- E. Partnerships are developed so that all students with visual impairments have appropriate available quality services.

### **☞☞ Statutory Basis**

#### TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.021 - 30.024

These sections of code establish the purposes of the School, its governance by a nine-member board, and specific provisions related to the School's superintendent and its employees.

#### TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.025

This section establishes the funding sources for the School, including funds appropriated by the Legislature, allocated by the Texas Education Agency, contracts, gifts, and the Foundation School Program.

#### TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.003

This section requires each school district that has students enrolled in the regular school year at the School to share in the cost of the students' education based on each district's total student enrollment and its maintenance and debt service taxes.

#### TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.004

Local school districts are required to provide information about the services available from the School to the families of students who are blind or seriously visually disabled.

#### INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (I.D.E.A.): 20 U.S.C. §1400 ff; 34 C.F.R. §300 ff

This federal law and its accompanying regulations require the provision of a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to all children with disabilities in accord with a written "Individual Education Plan" for each student. It also provides for parent participation in this process and guarantees certain due process rights to the student and to the family of a student with a disability.

#### NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The School is required to meet the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act. This law emphasizes student achievement, assures that teachers are highly qualified, and promotes parent involvement in their child's education. The School is a Title I-eligible "school district" under the provisions of this law.

#### 19 TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE - EDUCATION. T.A.C. §89.240

This particular section of Administrative Code - Education (State Bd. of Education Rules) specifies the functions and admission procedures of the School.

## ***Historical Perspective***

- 1856 The School was established by the Texas Legislature as the Blind Asylum. The first classes met at the residence of Mr. W. L. Hill who leased the premises for the purpose of establishing a school for the blind.
- 1858 The School moved to the present day "Little Campus" in the current day Nowotny Building of the University of Texas - Austin. The School was later renamed the "Texas Institution for the Blind".
- 1865 The School closed for one year because of political upheaval. General Custer and his men occupied the campus facilities during this time.
- 1887 The Institute for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Colored Youth was established on Bull Creek Road in Austin.
- 1915 The School's name was changed to the Texas School for the Blind.
- 1917 The School moved to its present 45-acre campus on West 45th Street in Austin.
- 1965 The Texas Blind, Deaf & Orphan School for Afro-American students was integrated into the Texas School for the Blind.
- 1972 A special program for deafblind children was initiated in response to the needs of children affected by rubella syndrome. The program was begun at a separate campus, formerly the Confederate Widows' Mansion, on West 38th in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Austin.
- 1975 The Texas Legislature enacted H.B. 1673 adding statewide responsibilities to the School's enabling statutes and mission. Governance of the School was transferred from the Texas Education Agency to a subcommittee of the Texas State Board of Education.
- U.S. Congress enacted the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, significantly impacting the provision of special education services to children, guaranteeing a free, appropriate public education to all handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. One effect on the School was an increase in the number of children with multiple disabilities requesting the services of this school.
- 1981 The governance of the school was transferred to a separate nine-member school board whose members are appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate.
- 1982 The Deafblind program moved onto the main campus of the School.
- 1989 The School was given its current name, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in order to reflect more accurately the population it serves.
- 1990 The School consolidated and expanded its outreach services into a separate division.
- 1994 Summer school programs were expanded to include multiple sessions with varying focuses and durations in response to needs expressed by the parents and educators of visually impaired children in public schools.

- 2000 The School initiated a series of new short-term programs during the regular school year. Students who attend their local public school came to TSBVI for week-long and weekend programs to acquire skills in living independently and using specialized computer technology.
- 2002 A post-secondary program for graduates of public schools was initiated in collaboration with the Texas Commission for the Blind (now the Division of Blind Services within the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services). The program focused on preparation for independent living, work, and higher education.
- 2005 A new program called “Experiences in Transition” (EXIT) was established for students over the age of 18 who were referred by the local district for an educational programming consisting primarily of non-academic learning experiences preparing them for adult life.
- 2006 A teacher preparation program in collaboration with Texas Tech University was established in which future teachers of blind and visually impaired students take courses taught by a Texas Tech professor housed at TSBVI.

### ***Affected Populations***

- \* Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind children and youth of school age who are Texas residents;
- \* Secondary and elementary school teachers and other professionals throughout Texas in either regular or special education who serve students with blindness and severe visual impairment;
- \* Parents of children with a visual impairment, including children with additional disabilities;
- \* State and local agencies serving children with a visual impairment. (Examples: Local school districts and special education cooperatives, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Regional Education Service Centers).

### ***Main Functions: Direct and Outreach Services***

- \* To provide a free, appropriate public education that addresses the intense or specialized needs of visually impaired children and youth, including those with additional disabilities when the local school district and parents agree that such services are not available in a local program.
- \* To conduct supplemental programs, such as summer and other short-term programs.
- \* To provide statewide services to parents of students with visual impairments, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies. These services include training, consultation, technical assistance, and developing and disseminating materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology.
- \* To provide information about instructional resources and materials, including educational technology, related to teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments.
- \* To lend educational and technological materials for student use to school districts and regional education service centers.

- \* To partner with Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin University in preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired.
- \* To cooperate with public and private agencies and organizations serving students and other persons with visual impairments in the planning, development, and implementation of effective educational and rehabilitative service delivery systems.
- \* To serve as leaders in the use of distance learning for teachers, parents, and students.

### ***Public's Perception***

*To the state's educational system, we are:*

- \* a valuable educational resource for direct services to children with blindness and visual impairment;
- \* a partner with local school districts and regional education service centers;
- \* a center of information and training for the education of students with visual impairments;
- \* a leader in the use of technology, distance learning, and curriculum development; including the use of Web-based information systems for data collection, analysis, and dissemination;
- \* through publications and a website, a source of expert information for all teachers, administrators, and parents in the state;
- \* a source of expert consultation regarding the educational needs of individual children;
- \* a significant option within the legally required array of services for blind students;
- \* an opportunity for student teachers and interns to acquire the skills necessary to become effective teachers, therapists, social workers, orientation and mobility instructors, and other professionals knowledgeable in the field of visual impairment and blindness.

*To blind and visually impaired youth, we are:*

- \* a school staffed and equipped to meet their specific needs related to their visual impairment;
- \* an opportunity to learn the intellectual, social, independent living, and vocational skills necessary to become independent and effective citizens.
- \* a source for expertise in learning for all students statewide.

*To parents of blind children and youth, we are:*

- \* a source of information about the impact of vision loss on learning, and the potential educational needs of students because of vision loss;
- \* a source of assistance and training in how to enhance the life opportunities for their children;

- \* a safe and caring environment which provides their children with their best chance for acquiring the skills necessary to live as full a life as possible.
- \* a source for training in how to advocate for their children.

*To the general public, we are:*

- \* a source of information on blindness and teaching children with visual disabilities;
- \* a source of information on where to obtain services related to visual loss;
- \* a source of information about the capabilities and needs of blind and visually impaired persons;
- \* a well-established campus which does "good things" for blind children in a caring and non-institutional way; a good neighbor.

## ***Organizational Aspects***

### ***Size and Composition of Workforce***

The staff of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is comprised of 413 budgeted full- and part-time positions, totaling 360.46 FTEs. Of the 413 positions, 314 are classified and one, the Superintendent, is line item exempt. The remaining are teachers, principals, counselors, and other educational positions that, by statute (Texas Education Code 30.024(b)(1)), are paid in accordance with Austin Independent School District pay scales for comparable positions.

Among the classified positions, the single largest staff group (146 positions) consists of residential instructors. Classified as Resident Specialists, these are the staff that provide care, instruction, and supervision of students in their non-school hours. Other classified positions range from nurses to maintenance mechanics, from accountants to technology specialists. The campus-based workforce is a small community with nearly every occupational field represented.

The ethnic composition of the regular staff is as follows: White –75.8%; Black – 10.6%; Hispanic – 12.6%; and other minorities – less than 1%. Women are 68% of the work force.

### ***Organizational Structure and Processes***

**Governance.** The School is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Board is composed of three members who are blind or visually impaired, at least one of whom has received educational services related to the blindness or visual impairment; three members who are working or have worked as professionals in the field of delivering services to persons who are blind or visually impaired; and three members, each of whom is the parent of a child who is blind or visually impaired, and at least one of whom is the parent of a child who, at the time of the parent's appointment, is receiving educational services related to the blindness or visual impairment.

**Executive Administration.** The Board of Trustees appoints the Superintendent as the chief administrative officer of the School. The Superintendent administers the School's direct service programs

through one Principal for Comprehensive Programs, one Principal for Special Programs, a Director of Outreach Services, and a Director of School and Student Services.

**Instructional Administration.** The Principal for Comprehensive Programs supervises the instructional and residential programs for students enrolled in the regular school year program. This program contains six components:

Academics – for students who are functioning within two years of their grade level;

Elementary Concepts – for students 6-12 years of age who may have additional impairments;

Practical Academics – for students 12 years of age and older who are functioning more than two years below their chronological age, with at least kindergarten equivalent reading, writing and math skills;

Basic Skills – for students ages 6-22 who have visual impairment combined with other disabilities, who have difficulty generalizing skills to new situations, and who learn best with the support of consistent routines and meaningful, functional activities;

EXIT (Experiences in Transition) – for Practical Academic students ages 18-22 who need programming that focuses on transitioning young adults from school to adulthood, in an environment that more closely replicates the adult environment in which they will be living;

Post Secondary – for students who have graduated from public school after completing the state's regular curriculum and are in need of additional academic, independent living and work-related skills.

The Principal for Special Programs supervises all summer programs and develops and provides short-term programs during the school year for blind and visually impaired children enrolled in Texas public schools.

**Outreach Administration.** The Director of Outreach coordinates statewide services that are provided to parents and professionals through training, consultation, and technical assistance.

**Central Administration.** The School and Student Services Department provides a variety of educational support functions such as school planning, admissions, records, health services, grant application and management. In the area of administrative support functions, the Superintendent supervises the Administrator for Business, Operations and Technology who is responsible for managing fiscal resources, the physical plant, and administrative technology. The Director of Human Resources oversees personnel issues and agency-wide staff development.

**Management Style.** The management style of the School is most accurately characterized as participative. The School has adopted a "site-based decision making" model for planning, implementing, and evaluating its strategic planning and continuous improvement. All stakeholders are involved in this process through the school wide Instructional Planning Council, annual surveys, ongoing contacts with regional education service centers and related agencies, and various consumer and advisory councils, including a student council. Additionally, the Superintendent, Principals and Directors maintain an open-door policy for all staff.

**Policy-Making.** The School is also assisted in its policy-making activities by an educational policy service provided through the Texas Association of School Boards. This service allows the School to consider the applicability of legally based and model school policies as developed by legal and educational policy experts, then adapt and adopt those that are appropriate.

## ***Geographical Location of Agency and Service Populations***

The School has a single location in Austin but serves students from throughout Texas. Student enrollment in regular year programs, special programs and summer programs represents the entire geography of Texas. About one-half of TSBVI's students are referred from the larger metropolitan areas along the IH-35 and IH-10 corridors; the others are referred from smaller school districts throughout the State.

Outreach services are provided on a statewide basis by linking with the regional Education Service Centers. In this way TSBVI provides services that match regional needs identified through the Educational Service Centers, including the specific needs of Texas counties in east Texas and along the upper and lower Rio Grande valleys.

## ***Human Resources Strengths and Weaknesses***

**Staff Quality.** We continue to believe that our greatest human resource strength is a staff that is deeply committed to a high quality, individualized education for visually impaired students. The professional staff of the School represents an unparalleled concentration of knowledge, skill, and expertise in the field of education of the visually impaired. Although special education teachers in general and teachers of the visually impaired in particular are in great demand, TSBVI has been relatively successful in attracting professional staff, in part, we believe, because of the reputation of existing staff. Our strength in attracting qualified staff is more important than ever due to the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act that students receive instruction from "highly qualified" teachers.

**Highly Qualified Teachers.** We have also been successful in meeting the challenge of employing adequate numbers of teachers certified in the education of visually impaired (VI) students by building strong relationships with the universities in the state that prepare students to become teachers of the visually impaired.

**Human Resource Development.** We have both strengths and weaknesses in the area of human resource development (HRD). We are continuing to provide regular training in basic and required areas such as new employee orientation, EEO, CPR, defensive driving, first aid, blood-borne pathogens, and other safety areas.

A special focus of HRD efforts at TSBVI is in the area of behavior management. Our direct care staff receive two full days of relational, conceptual, and technical training in behavior management at or near the beginning of their employment and annually have a full day of review. We have also distilled the statewide training (Texas Behavior Support Initiative) into a two and one-half hour training that is applicable to our population of students.

We are also continuing to provide a yearlong training program on visual impairment for paraprofessional and professional staff who are not certified teachers of the visually impaired.

School wide staff development activities are augmented by regular, specialized training for groups of staff at the departmental level. An example of this, also related to positive behavior support, would be Effective Teaching, which is a 24-hour training program for teachers of basic skills-level students. The instructional and residential programs provide staff development training throughout the school year related to curriculum, instructional methods, and other topics directed at improving instruction and learning.

The School's most significant limitation in the area of human resource development is the fact that we have only one full-time position assigned to this function, and that position is also responsible for a variety of staff and community involvement activities. It is often necessary to call on the skills of staff who are not primarily trainers in order to expand the offerings of human resource development.

We are continuing to explore ways to use technology in HRD, such as web-based training, interactive videoconferencing, and satellite downlink. We are using intranet-based training for the two-year refresher training on EEO and sexual harassment, but most of the School's high tech training options are available through our Outreach program to educators around the state rather than being aimed at our own staff. We would benefit from having the resources to make the initial investment necessary to eventually expand the scope of our training through technology.

**Workforce Diversity.** Attracting a culturally diverse workforce at professional and administrative levels continues to be a challenge for TSBVI. A major difficulty in this area is that the largest subgroup of our professional staff is made up of teachers of the visually impaired. The VI teaching certification is also the credential required for most of the high level administrative positions, yet it is known that there is a very small number of minorities in Texas who hold this credential. As noted above, we are actively involved in partnerships with the universities in Texas that offer the VI teaching credential, which will have the affect of making VI certification accessible to a larger and more diverse segment of the population. Additionally the following proactive efforts are being made to attract a more ethnically diverse population to the profession: Attendance at job fairs at universities and Education Service Centers; production of a recruitment video; a presentation and a booth at the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators annual conference; availability of speakers to make presentations in college classes; meeting with the University of Texas chapter of Minorities in Education.

**Compensation.** Despite budgetary constraints, we do responsibility for administering salary matters in the most equitable way possible. To that end, we have given budgetary priority to continuing to fund previously established career progression programs. Also, after three years of being unable to award merit salary increases, we were able to reinstate merit raises on a limited basis this fiscal year. Currently, an interdepartmental task force is exploring ways to further improve compensation, including further development of career ladders and using both merit raises and equity adjustments (according to rules for doing so) to elevate salaries within pay groups.

**Turnover, Retirement, and Succession Planning.** During the 2005 fiscal year, our turnover rate as reported by the State Auditor's Office was 14.4%, including interagency transfers, compared to 16.6% turnover statewide, excluding interagency transfers. TSBVI's prior years' rates were 16% for FY 2004 and 12.8% in FY 2003. The data presented in the State Auditor's Office annual report of turnover is based on full-time, classified staff only, which omits two significant segments of the TSBVI workforce. First, and most important, as noted above, nearly a quarter of our staff are categorized as "unclassified" because they are teachers and other educators paid in accordance with the local school district salary scales; therefore, including only classified staff in turnover data omits our core professional staff. Secondly, due to the 24-hour nature of our school, we employ many part-time workers to cover a variety of shift patterns. We consider part-time employees to be an integral part of our workforce and believe it is important to examine turnover in a manner that includes them. Including all unclassified professionals and part-time classified workers along with full-time classified staff, our turnover in FY 2005 was 12.9%

Figures from the first half of FY 06 reveal that retirements have slowed down considerably with the end of the retirement incentive that was available during the previous biennium. During FY 05 we had 22 retirements while thus far in 06 we have had three, with only approximately three more expected for the rest of the year. Nevertheless, retirement-related attrition is still a concern because many of our retirees

have returned to work but will terminate permanently in the next five to ten years. As result, succession planning and documentation of institutional knowledge remain high priorities. These issues are discussed more thoroughly in Appendix E., Agency Workforce Plan.

**Strength of Policy.** TSBVI is fortunate to have as a resource the policy reference service provided by the Texas Association of School Boards. The material from this service provides the framework of human resources policies applicable in a school setting. The HR Director and the School's attorney are then able to customize the policies by adding applicable provisions for state employees and provisions reflecting the decisions of TSBVI's board and administration. In a human resources audit conducted in the summer of 2005, the internal auditor made the following finding: "Comparison of the TSBVI policies to federal and state laws regarding human resources indicated the TSBVI policies are in compliance with and cover all required topics."

### ***Capital Asset Strengths, Weaknesses and Budgetary Needs***

#### Facilities, Furniture, and Equipment

The TSBVI campus consists of sixty-six structures located on approximately forty-five acres of land owned and maintained by the School. The buildings range in size from 80 square feet to 65,960 square feet for a total of 331,187 square feet. There are classrooms, student housing, independent living facilities, gymnasiums, a natatorium, an auditorium, a library, a health center, administrative offices, food preparation, cafeteria facilities, maintenance building, two warehouses and small storage buildings.

The greatest weakness of the School's facilities is the age of the buildings. In collaboration with the Texas legislature, TSBVI embarked upon a plan for the gradual renovation or replacement of its aging facilities, beginning with three of the original large student residences. The renovation of the first student residence was completed in May 2000. Two additional residences were renovated in February 2001. In the fall of 2003, construction began on five new dormitories, an elevator to provide wheelchair access to the second story of two dormitories, and a warehouse. Additionally, four aged and unusable buildings were sold and moved or demolished. By August 2004 the five dormitories and the elevator were completed and in use by students.

The 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature appropriated \$36,452,000 in construction funds from general obligation bonds for FY2006. The appropriation funded the replacement of elementary dormitories and natatorium, the renovation or replacement of the recreation center; renovation of three major dormitories, renovation of the homemaking facility and main instructional building. The legislature also funded the construction of a new four-unit studio apartment, playground, and physical education-therapy building. The architect has developed a school Master Facilities Plan for the continued renovation, repair or replacement of facilities. The approved projects are incorporated into the Master Facilities Plan and will be under contract by August 31, 2007.

The new Master Facilities Plan will guide the School's requests to the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature for additional facility improvement projects.

#### Vehicles

TSBVI owns, operates, and maintains 27 vehicles. Twenty-five are used to transport students for the educational and residential programs. The other two vehicles are used by maintenance, the warehouse, and food services. The School has a long-range plan for the replacement of vehicles that complies with the guidelines of the State Fleet Management Program.

The School's vans and school busses accrue high mileage due to transporting students to and from their homes on weekends and holidays, and to and from students' work and learning sites in the community. For the FYs 2008 and 2009, eight replacement vans and one school bus will be needed for student transportation.

### Instructional Technology and Equipment

Students need access to electronic and other adapted technology designed specifically for people with visual impairments so that they can succeed at school and on the job, and enjoy the same access to information as their sighted peers and family members. The School must continue to acquire new computers, software, and electronic devices to ensure that students have access to instructional materials, the internet, auditory and braille media, and general information. Examples include portable electronic braille devices with speech and computer output; communication devices for children with multiple disabilities, deaf blindness, speech impairments, and other mental or physical disabilities; and closed-circuit television (CCTV) setups that enable low vision students to view regular print, pictures, and other items enlarged on a video monitor.

The School possesses a broad array of specialized equipment and electronic technologies to assist students to acquire knowledge and skills. Often children are referred to the School in order to benefit from instruction in the use of this specialized equipment. The School maintains a loan program to provide electronic technology and software to students in local schools as part of the "Technology Loan Program" operated by TSBVI. The 77th Legislature appropriated funds for instructional technology needed by blind and visually impaired students. The funds for this purpose were reduced as part of budget cutting activities.

Computer technology in the students' living quarters has expanded over the past two years. Each residential dormitory has at least two computers dedicated to student use and one computer for staff. Additional adaptive equipment in the living quarters includes closed circuit television, braille embossers, and speech-enabled computers. These devices provide students the opportunity to apply their technology skills from the classroom to homework assignments, research, and recreation.

There is a need to replace outdated equipment and to procure current adaptive technology. Past budget reductions have severely curtailed the School's ability to procure current technology for student use. The School is at risk of losing its reputation in Texas as the center for "state-of-the-art" technology for blind and visually impaired students.

### Technology Staff Development and Distance Education

In FY 1999 a federal Technology Integration in Education (TIE) grant was received to provide extensive training for instructional staff in the use of electronic hardware, software, and adapted devices. Staff development in the applications of instructional technology has continued. As basic computer skills are acquired, the need for staff training continues to be a major emphasis to address specific skill areas that staff require to employ adaptive technology in classroom and residential instruction. Resources are also needed to ensure that there is adequate training for administrative, and support staff in the use of technology.

Another component of the TIE grant established a distance learning facility to serve TSBVI clients throughout the state by way of videoconferencing, web-based training, and other distance education technologies. These capabilities allow the School to enhance the learning of children with visual impairments throughout Texas. The technology allows the School to provide valuable information about

curriculum, materials, technology, teaching strategies, and training to professionals, parents, and to other interested individuals, school districts, and agencies. The Outreach department continues to exploit every means possible to educate professionals and provide services to support the local district instructional program. Such technology can provide information, training and follow-up, and also reduce the time and cost of travel.

Distance education for students enrolled at TSBVI and in local schools is cost effective. It can be used to provide learning opportunities otherwise not available for blind students in Texas. The same can be said for instructing teachers, service providers, and parents. The School needs new and additional technology to be a leader in distance education.

### Infrastructure Technology

The school has a robust fiber optic network infrastructure in all areas of the 45-acre campus. Network access and related capabilities such as electronic mail and web access for staff and students have proven valuable to coordinate program components and to integrate service delivery between departments. Standardization of wiring and installation has provided increased network reliability.

New software is required to support the various functions of the staff and administration in conducting school business. The requirements of state government for electronic documents related to school data, accounting, budgeting, and grant applications require the continual upgrade of equipment, the technical environment, and software applications. The School currently lacks the programming capacity to develop and deploy software that supports these functions and is accessible to visually impaired staff.

Additional hardware and software are needed to meet the projected demand for more server capacity, i.e. memory upgrades, processor upgrades, server systems software, and back-up media.

The school's PBX was installed in June 1995. This system is scheduled for replacement in 2006 through the E-Rate discount program. It will be necessary to identify funding for a campuswide intercom system as a component of the phone system. This is necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff in accord with federal and state requirements for emergency preparedness.

TSBVI needs to continue expansion and development of the TSBVI web-site. The school's Web site, [www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu), has been tremendously successful and is considered one of the best resources for the education of the visually impaired. The web site receives more than two million "hits" annually. Many departments, particularly Outreach and Curriculum, use the Web site as a critical element of service delivery. Continued development of the Web site is indicated with expansion of web features to provide information interchange with consumers. Currently in progress is a redesign of the web site to improve usability is needed as the site has grown and information has become difficult to locate in the present design.

### ***Agency Use of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs)***

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been making good faith efforts to award purchase contracts to certified HUBs. We are using the automated HUB directory provided by the Texas Building and Procurement Commission as the primary reference list to identify minority and women-owned businesses. On each purchase order over \$5,000 the School requests at least one bid from a minority-owned business and at least one bid from a woman-owned business. For purchase orders in amounts less than \$5,000, purchases will be made from HUBs, provided that they are able to provide the goods or services required and they provide the best value for the State.

## ***Key Organizational Events and Areas of Change and Impact on Organization***

**TSBVI as a Center.** The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has evolved into a statewide center of services and expertise for all blind and visually impaired children in the state. It is now time to strengthen the concept of “partnership” with local school districts. The child needs to have available to him both the services of the local district and those available at TSBVI. It must be possible for the child and her parents to move back and forth between these two major sources of education, depending on the current needs of the child.

As the population of Texas continues to grow, local school districts find themselves with more blind and visually impaired students. These same districts find themselves seeking ways to include these students in the general curriculum when possible, implementing special functional or life skills curriculum when inclusion is not completely possible, and striving to meet the needs of these students specific to their blindness and visual impairment. Increasingly many of these same students present multiple disabilities and behavioral challenges. When local districts are unable to meet the needs of these challenging students, they refer them to our school.

**TSBVI as a Partner.** To meet these increasing demands for specialized services and expertise, and to meet the increasing requirements for accountability, the public schools look to the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired as a resource and as a partner in the education of their students. Formal and informal planning sessions and conversations with public school and regional professionals have confirmed the need for TSBVI to embark upon a more comprehensive array of services based on an ongoing strategic planning process. We continue to benefit from this process.

TSBVI has developed the following strategic goals:

TSBVI will be a leader in providing statewide services and resources so that:

- A. All students with visual impairments have equal access to quality education based on appropriate assessment, curriculum and instruction.
- B. All students with visual impairments demonstrate knowledge and skills to lead vocationally, personally and socially satisfying lives.
- C. All students with visual impairments receive a quality education from qualified professionals and trained staff.
- D. All parents of blind and visually impaired students have a thorough understanding of the impact of vision loss on their child and the instruction needed to minimize the effects of vision loss on learning.
- E. Partnerships are developed so that all students with visual impairments have appropriate available quality services.

TSBVI’s Strategic Plan continues to focus on the following major directions:

- Increased student learning, including a clearly defined commitment to the Expanded Core Curriculum of skills specific to blind and visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities.

- Expansion of career education, including employment for students on- and off-campus.
- A vocational program designed specifically for students at the functional academic level.
- Programs designed for populations with specific needs, such as daily living skills, orientation and mobility, social skills, and remedial braille.
- Expansion of services for families with preschool blind and visually impaired children.
- Increased emphasis on assisting local school districts to examine and improve the quality of services they provide children who are visually impaired.
- Enhancement of the visibility of TSBVI by celebrating the achievements of our students in their own communities through local media.

These are ongoing strategies that will be continued in the next biennium. Added to these are the provision for short-term programs during the academic year, a post high-school program, long-term facilities construction and renovation, additions to summer programs in specific skill-building, and continued expansion of outreach services.

There is further evidence of the roles of TSBVI as a partner to local schools and as a center for resources. We provide an Instructional Materials Center for the entire state; we manage the Statewide Registry of Blind and Visually Impaired Students, we operate a Technology Loan Program for visually impaired students in public schools, we complete the census of deafblind children in Texas, we provide technology assistance for all teachers and parents of visually impaired children in Texas, and we operate a website assisting professionals and parents throughout Texas, the nation, and the world. Our most recent expansion is to assume a major role in the preparation of teachers for visually impaired students. We are working in collaboration with Stephen F. Austin University and Texas Tech University on a project whose goal is to alleviate the shortage of teachers for blind and visually impaired students in Texas.

### ***Use and Anticipated Use of Consultants***

**Outreach Services.** Consultants are retained to provide specific training and technical assistance to support Outreach services to local school districts and parents. An example might be the use of a consulting occupational therapist to conduct training for parents and professionals to teach eating and dressing skills to blind children with additional disabilities. Most of these consultants are paid with federal funds specifically earmarked for outreach purposes. The level of consultant use will remain the same as in the current year.

**Curriculum Development.** Infrequently, the Curriculum Department might hire a consultant to help develop instructional methods and materials in a very specialized area of education for blind children. At the present time, no consultant usage is planned. The School will strive to use its own staff for curriculum development, using released time or stipends when possible.

**Quality Programs for Visually Impaired (QPVI).** The School is planning on using a consultant to lead the regular school year programs through a continuous improvement process based on benchmarks established for the education of blind and visually impaired children, including those with additional disabilities. We anticipate use of a consultant on a limited basis for the next two years.

# Fiscal Aspects

## Size of Budget and Method of Finance – Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

<b>FY 2006 Appn Alloc.</b>	<b>A.1.1</b>	<b>A.1.2</b>	<b>A.1.3</b>	<b>A.1.4</b>	<b>B.1.1</b>	<b>C.1.1</b>	<b>D.1.1</b>	<b>D.1.2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>METHOD OF FINANCE</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Summer &amp;</b>	<b>Related &amp;</b>	<b>Technical</b>	<b>Educ. Prof.</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Short Term</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Assistance</b>	<b>Salary Incr.</b>	<b>Admin.</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>
<b>Gen. Rev. Operating</b>									
Regular Appropriation	2,957,852	2,884,206	830,567	2,495,729	466,912	94,949	979,081	1,407,584	12,116,880
<b>Total, Gen. Rev. Oper.</b>	<b>2,957,852</b>	<b>2,884,206</b>	<b>830,567</b>	<b>2,495,729</b>	<b>466,912</b>	<b>94,949</b>	<b>979,081</b>	<b>1,407,584</b>	<b>12,116,880</b>
<b>G.R. - Capital Budget</b>									
Technology Upgrade								30,000	30,000
Instructional Materials	40,000	15,000		15,000					70,000
School Transportation				151,201					151,201
<b>Total, GR - Capital Budget</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>166,201</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>251,201</b>
<b>TOTAL, GENERAL REV.</b>	<b>2,997,852</b>	<b>2,899,206</b>	<b>830,567</b>	<b>2,661,930</b>	<b>466,912</b>	<b>94,949</b>	<b>979,081</b>	<b>1,437,584</b>	<b>12,368,081</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>									
USDA - Lunch & Breakfast				80,000					80,000
Medicaid (SHARS)				100,000					100,000
Medicaid Admin. Claims				60,000					60,000
IDEA-B Formula					71,893				71,893
Region XI - Statewide Serv.					323,000				323,000
IDEA-D Deafblind					575,216				575,216
IDEA-B Capacity					855				855
Title I - Improving Basic Prog.	37,245								37,245
Title I-D Evaluation Tech Pilot	1,005								1,005
Title III-A Improv. Teachers	6,155								6,155
Title V-A Innovative Ed Prog	444								444
Fund 148 - Teacher Prep					900,000				900,000
Fund 148 - Outreach Teacher					48,447				48,447
Fund 148 - Short Term Prog.			84,000						84,000
<b>Total, Federal Funds</b>	<b>44,849</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>240,000</b>	<b>1,919,411</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,288,260</b>
<b>Appropriated Receipts</b>									
Meal Ticket Sales				15,000					15,000
Conference Registrations					67,425				67,425
Per Capita & LEA Payments	500,000								500,000
Housing Receipts								6,000	6,000
Student Rents - Post Secd	2,000								2,000
Surplus & Salvage								400	400
Curriculum Sales				216,000	9,900				225,900
Student Store Sales	500								500
Vending Receipts								5,000	5,000
E-Rate Reimbursements								30,000	30,000
Third Party Reimbursements			700		33,210				33,910
Weekends Closing Reimb.				30,000					30,000
<b>Total, Appr. Receipts</b>	<b>502,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>261,000</b>	<b>110,535</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41,400</b>	<b>916,135</b>
<b>Interagency Contracts</b>									
TEA-SSVI Discretionary			35,587		79,790				115,377
TCB - SWEAT			30,000						30,000
TCB-Post-Secondary Progr.	29,000								29,000
<b>Total, IAC Receipts</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65,587</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>79,790</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>174,377</b>
<b>Bond Proceeds - Gen Obl</b>									
See Detail on Page 2				36,452,000					36,452,000
<b>Total, Bond Proceeds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36,452,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36,452,000</b>
<b>Total, M.O.F. - FY 2006</b>	<b>3,574,201</b>	<b>2,899,206</b>	<b>980,854</b>	<b>39,614,930</b>	<b>2,576,648</b>	<b>94,949</b>	<b>979,081</b>	<b>1,478,984</b>	<b>52,198,853</b>

**FY 2006 Appn Alloc.**

<b>METHOD OF FINANCE</b>	<b>A.1.1</b>	<b>A.1.2</b>	<b>A.1.3</b>	<b>A.1.4</b>	<b>B.1.1</b>	<b>C.1.1</b>	<b>D.1.1</b>	<b>D.1.2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>DETAIL OF BOND</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Summer &amp;</b>	<b>Related &amp;</b>	<b>Technical</b>	<b>Educ. Prof.</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>PROCEEDS</b>	<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Short Term</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Assistance</b>	<b>Salary Incr.</b>	<b>Admin.</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>
<b>a. Construction of Buildings and Facilities</b>									
(1) Replace Elementary Residential Complex				4,173,499					4,173,499
(2) Replace Indoor Swimming Pool and Replace or Renovate Recreation Center				4,859,268					4,859,268
(3) Construct Duplex Independent Living Facility				1,282,919					1,282,919
(4) Construct Four-Unit Studio Apartment				963,142					963,142
(5) Construct Playground				388,928					388,928
(6) Construct Elementary Physical Education/ Therapy Building				979,120					979,120
Total, Construction of Buildings and Facilities				<u>12,646,876</u>					<u>12,646,876</u>
<b>b. Repair or Rehabilitation of Buildings and Facilities</b>									
(1) Deferred Maintenance, Masterplan Study and Covered Walkway				2,593,172					2,593,172
(2) Renovate Campus Buildings 501, 502, & 503				5,919,311					5,919,311
(3) Renovate Homemaking Facility				1,944,206					1,944,206
(4) Renovate & Expand Main Instructional Building				13,348,435					13,348,435
Total, Repair or Rehabilitation of Buildings & Facilities				<u>23,805,124</u>					<u>23,805,124</u>
<b>TOTAL- Bond Proceeds - General Obligation Bonds</b>				<u>36,452,000</u>					<u>36,452,000</u>

**FY 2007 Appn Alloc.**

<b>METHOD OF FINANCE</b>	<b>A.1.1 Classroom Instruction</b>	<b>A.1.2 Residential Program</b>	<b>A.1.3 Summer &amp; Short Term</b>	<b>A.1.4 Related &amp; Support</b>	<b>B.1.1 Technical Assistance</b>	<b>C.1.1 Educ. Prof. Salary Incr.</b>	<b>D.1.1 Central Admin.</b>	<b>D.1.2 Other Support</b>	<b>TOTAL FY 2007</b>
<b>Gen. Rev. Operating</b>									
Regular Appropriation	2,980,322	2,903,815	824,685	2,319,581	466,911	194,647	992,483	1,409,757	12,092,201
<b>Total, Gen. Rev. Oper.</b>	<b>2,980,322</b>	<b>2,903,815</b>	<b>824,685</b>	<b>2,319,581</b>	<b>466,911</b>	<b>194,647</b>	<b>992,483</b>	<b>1,409,757</b>	<b>12,092,201</b>
<b>G.R. - Capital Budget</b>									
Technology Upgrade								30,000	30,000
Instructional Materials	40,000	15,000		15,000					70,000
School Transportation									0
<b>Total, GR - Capital Budget</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
<b>TOTAL, GENERAL REV.</b>	<b>3,020,322</b>	<b>2,918,815</b>	<b>824,685</b>	<b>2,334,581</b>	<b>466,911</b>	<b>194,647</b>	<b>992,483</b>	<b>1,439,757</b>	<b>12,192,201</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>									
USDA - Lunch & Breakfast				80,000					80,000
Medicaid (SHARS)				100,000					100,000
Medicaid Admin. Claims				60,000					60,000
IDEA-B Formula					71,893				71,893
Region XI - Statewide Serv.					323,000				323,000
IDEA-D Deafblind					575,216				575,216
IDEA-B Capacity					855				855
Title I - Improving Basic Prog.	37,245								37,245
Title I-D Evaluation Tech Pilot	1,005								1,005
Title III-A Improv. Teachers	6,155								6,155
Title V-A Innovative Ed Prog	444								444
Fund 148 - Teacher Prep					900,000				900,000
Fund 148 - Outreach Teacher					48,447				48,447
Fund 148 - Short Term Prog.			84,000						84,000
<b>Total, Federal Funds</b>	<b>44,849</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>240,000</b>	<b>1,919,411</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,288,260</b>
<b>Appropriated Receipts</b>									
Meal Ticket Sales				15,000					15,000
Conference Registrations					67,425				67,425
Per Capita & LEA Payments	500,000								500,000
Housing Receipts							6,000		6,000
Student Rents - Post Secd	2,000								2,000
Surplus & Salvage							400		400
Curriculum Sales				216,000	9,900				225,900
Student Store Sales	500								500
Vending Receipts								5,000	5,000
E-Rate Reimbursements								30,000	30,000
Third Party Reimbursements			700		33,210				33,910
Weekends Closing Reimb.				30,000					30,000
<b>Total, Appr. Receipts</b>	<b>502,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>261,000</b>	<b>110,535</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41,400</b>	<b>916,135</b>
<b>Interagency Contracts</b>									
TEA-SSVI Discretionary			35,587		79,790				115,377
TCB - SWEAT			30,000						30,000
TCB-Post-Secondary Progr.	29,000								29,000
<b>Total, IAC Receipts</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65,587</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>79,790</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>174,377</b>
<b>Bond Proceeds - Gen Obl</b>									
Only UB per Article IX									0
<b>Total, Bond Proceeds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total, M.O.F. - FY 2007</b>	<b>3,596,671</b>	<b>2,918,815</b>	<b>974,972</b>	<b>2,835,581</b>	<b>2,576,647</b>	<b>194,647</b>	<b>992,483</b>	<b>1,481,157</b>	<b>15,570,973</b>

## ***Per Capita and Other States' Comparisons***

TSBVI remains committed to providing an education to blind and visually impaired students with a wide spectrum of ability levels. Most schools for the blind in other states have evolved into either serving only academic students or only students with multiple disabilities. As a consequence TSBVI has neither the highest cost per pupil nor the lowest. It provides resources to children in direct proportion to the needs of each individual student when compared to other forms of special education programming, including schools for the blind in other states. To simply divide the budget for TSBVI by the number of students enrolled in the regular academic programs provides spurious information. Cost per pupil at each school for the blind in the United States is determined by a variety of factors:

- The characteristics of students served. TSBVI has accepted as part of its mission the provision of educational services to very challenging visually impaired students with additional disabilities. Consequently, the School serves a disproportionately large number of these students (c. 74% of enrollment). These students require extensive human and material resources and a low staff to student ratio. We emphasize that this commitment to complex children with serious additional disabilities has dramatically changed the funding needs of TSBVI.
- Economic factors of the community. The teacher salary scheduled is linked by law to that of the Austin ISD so as to ensure that the School is competitive in recruiting and retaining teachers. Austin-area school districts have a moderately high salary structure compared to many parts of the State, requiring teacher salary schedules that tend to increase the personnel costs of the School.
- The mission to serve as a model program that demonstrates best practices for visually impaired students to others in the State who serve similar students. This mission requires an excellent staff of teachers and support services who provide cutting-edge services to students served in this manner.
- The age and condition of each campus. A rapidly aging campus requires that TSBVI make capital expenditures in maintenance and repair to a greater extent than newer campuses. New construction will gradually alleviate this condition.
- The commitment to serve students through intensive, short-term programming. Maintaining this commitment requires quality, intensive services combined with high levels of transition service training of local education staff.

Other significant costs to the TSBVI budget include:

- A set of summer instructional programs that serve blind and visually impaired students who attend local public schools during the regular school year. Parents, local schools, and students love these programs that provide them opportunities to be with other disabled peers, to learn things related to their visual impairment, and have a good time doing them. They return to their local districts better prepared to start another school year in the fall.
- Outreach services provides indirect services to visually impaired students throughout the state of Texas by increasing the skills of their teachers and parents.
- Staff development provides training in skills unique to the needs of visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities, and assures that services provided at the School reflect the best practices. This includes training employees at TSBVI and serving as a professional

preparation program for the entire state. The unique nature of the School's student population requires very specialized staff development. This training often requires expenditures for travel, conferences, and workshops to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers.

- Instructional materials and technology for blind and visually impaired students require adaptation by changing print into the appropriate medium or modifying the materials for visual, tactile, or auditory access. The cost of commercially adapted materials is high in comparison to materials for non-visually impaired students. Not all needs can be met through commercial materials; therefore, many materials must be developed by our staff, requiring additional time and materials.
- Curriculum development includes participation by the School's direct-care staff during times that extend beyond their regular hours. The curricula developed are widely used by professionals throughout the country.
- Intensive, short-term programs, with a very low pupil-teacher ratio, are needed for students with visual impairments who are enrolled in public schools during the regular school year. Nationwide, there is growing evidence that students with disabilities can best succeed in inclusive educational settings if they also have the opportunity to receive specialized instruction in areas specific to their disabilities.

### ***Budgetary Limitations***

The School is impacted by three caps in Article IX of the General Appropriations Act. The first cap on employee FTE levels may be exceeded by the School and therefore a waiver request has been submitted to the Legislative Budget Board.

The second cap from Article IX on capital budget expenditures that limits the School's ability to transfer capital funds between projects has restricted TSBVI's ability to spend bond funds for renovation and construction projects. The TSBVI campus is old and it is hard to predict the actual condition of buildings until construction or renovations begin. It is possible that TSBVI will request a waiver from this limitation based on a facility master plan that is currently under development.

The School is complying with the limitations on out-of-state travel expenditures.

### ***Degree to Which Current Budget Meets Current and Expected Needs***

#### **Current Initiatives**

TSBVI is proud of the initiatives it has undertaken by creatively allocating the resources appropriated by the legislature or secured by the School from other sources. These new or expanded initiatives include:

- Increased accountability to meet federal and state standards for student learning. Student achievement exceeded the performance standards jointly development with TEA in fulfillment of a memorandum of understanding mandated by the legislature.
- A collaborative teacher preparation program implemented with Stephen F. Austin University and Texas Tech University to help reduce the state's shortage of teachers for students with visual disabilities. (TEA state-appropriated funds). In the past two years, these programs have enrolled 121 new candidates to become teachers for blind students in Texas.

- Expansion of the School's web site as a resource for teachers, parents, and other professionals throughout Texas. The web site hosted more than 2.5 million visits in the last 12 months.
- Implementation of a community-based program for older students emphasizing skills necessary for working and living in the community (EXIT Program).
- Expansion of transition services to support the students, their parents, local schools, and other community resources in effecting successful transition from TSBVI to their local communities. Twenty-four to thirty students transition back to local programming each year. A great deal of planning, training, and communication must occur for these students to make successful transitions.

### **Budgetary Strengths and Weaknesses by School Divisions**

Regular School Year Program. Student performance is meeting state standards. Programs for students with limited English language skills have been enhanced. Surveys of graduates indicate 80% of them are living productive lives, but their employment rate (23%) remains below that of the general populace. Reductions in numbers of teachers and residential instructors resulted in increased class size during the school year. Classes with severely multi-impaired students are staffed with one teacher and one teacher aide. These students typically require a one-to-one teacher/student ratio for effective learning to occur.

State funds supplemented by No Child Left Behind federal funds have supported parent participation in the School. In addition to informal visits by parents to campus and attendance at all special events, parents received frequent and regularly scheduled phone calls and written quarterly progress notes from teachers and residential instructors. Other opportunities for parental involvement included an annual parent survey, a Parent Weekend with more than half of the students' families in attendance, *The Spectacle* Parent Newsletter, a parent special focus meeting of the Instructional Planning Council, meetings of a Health Advisory, and creation of a parent discussion forum on the TSBVI website.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Regular School Year Program - Additional staff including braille and adapted materials specialist, music teachers, residential staff, behavior/transition specialist, job coaches, career education teacher and coordinator, additional time for social workers and office staff
  - Regular School Year Program – Additional funds for community-based instruction
  - Curriculum Department – Additional teacher and increased time for graphic designer

Special Programs. The current budget allows the School to provide short-term programs for public school visually impaired students during the regular school year and somewhat longer programs during the summer. Short-term programs continue to expand. The School can operate a series of Summer Programs for visually impaired students from public schools, but at a somewhat reduced level because of previous budget cuts. Programs are shorter in duration than is desirable.

- Budgetary Needs – Short-term Programs
  - Transportation is not easily available from some locations
  - Some classes fill to capacity early in the year and we often lack resources to accept more students
- Budgetary Needs – Summer Programs
  - Increase the number and length of summer program courses to meet the needs of blind students who attend public schools during the regular school year.

Outreach Services. The Outreach function of the School can continue to provide its current level of services but will be unable to respond to all the requests being made for its assistance throughout Texas, especially in the area of parent training.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Additional audiovisual technician, orientation and mobility specialist, VI transition specialist, math specialist
  - Family travel and support to attend workshops
  - Training academies for professional staff
  - Technology
  - Pilot classroom on the TSBVI campus for visually impaired children from birth to age 5

Technology – Instructional. In 1999 the 76<sup>th</sup> Legislature permitted the School to request an increased level of funding for instructional technology within its base budget request. This appropriation has been a significant benefit to the education of children with visual impairments. Continued funding is needed to obtain instructional technology necessary for visually impaired students.

Technology opens doors to education for all children; it can be a basic essential for those with visual impairments or inability to use oral communication. Technological intervention can often be the key to providing these individuals a means of literate, written expression, communication, ultimately independence and a productive adult life. Technology has allowed our students to actively participate in the learning process in ways that are not afforded to them through other means of instruction.

In addition to serving the needs of the complex individuals who are students at our school, TSBVI is mandated to provide statewide training related to students with visual impairments. We accomplish this both by bringing people to this campus and providing training to people across the state either in person or via distance education. TSBVI functions as a statewide evaluation and demonstration site for professionals throughout the state of Texas. We have the responsibility for (1) evaluating new technology as it is applied to visually impaired persons; (2) creating and establishing standards for teaching and integrating technology into the educational setting; and (3) providing technical training, curriculum, and support to a variety of professionals.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Adapted desktop computers, software, portable computing and personal organizing devices
  - Printing, embossing, copying and scanning equipment
  - Adapted devices and technology for students with orthopedic disabilities
  - Equipment for career education and specific job training
  - Newly developed equipment to evaluate for its potential effectiveness
  - Music equipment
  - Speech and audiology equipment
  - Video and sound equipment, Braille and tactual learning equipment to be used for statewide training and distance education

Technology – Infrastructure and Support. Electronic hardware, software, and infrastructure minimally support the School's functions. The basic network with its email functions and network access is functioning adequately. The servers are aging and due for replacement. Wireless capability is needed. There are major student databases that are not integrated, resulting in inefficiency and errors or incomplete data.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Network server to replace aging device
  - Hardware, software, and personnel to adapt and deploy an electronic student records system enacted on the legislature's special session
  - Additional programming and network management staff to integrate disparate data management systems

Facilities. The aging facilities of the School have long needed replacement or major renovation. The School has worked with the Texas legislature to launch a major building plan in which construction will be completed over several years in separate funding phases. The 76<sup>th</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup>, and the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislatures appropriated funds for major renovation and new construction. Construction that has been completed or planned will result in a campus far more appropriate and "student-friendly" than in the past. Texas should always be able to take pride in the facilities in which blind children live and go to school. The School intends to approach the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature for continued funding to complete the next phases of construction in accord with its TSBVI Master Plan for Facilities that will be provided to the LBB, the GOBPP, and the legislature.

- Budgetary Needs
  - The next phase of construction from the TSBVI Master Plan for Facilities: (e.g. instructional facilities, student residences, health center, recreation and play areas)
  - Furniture and equipment for new facilities

Vehicles. All students at TSBVI have the opportunity to be with their families at least two weekends per month. We anticipate requesting an appropriation to purchase new school busses and vans based on a reasonable replacement schedule to ensure the safe transportation of students.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Vans and school busses

Operations and Maintenance. Facilities and grounds receive a minimal level of care. Classrooms, student living areas, and bathrooms do have custodial staff assigned to clean them regularly. Administrative and support staff are required to clean and vacuum their own offices. Buildings are insufficiently maintained to provide an environment that fosters learning and pride in one's living facilities. Building repairs and routine preventative maintenance have been deferred.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Replace well-used lawn mowers, food services equipment, and a vehicle repair lift
  - Custodians, clerk/driver, maintenance technician, and groundskeeper
  - Funds for deferred repairs and maintenance

School Safety and Security. A recently completed internal audit on campus security recommended that the school install systems and devices to control access to the campus, provide staff with electronic identification and access cards, and electronic key system. An E-Rate discount has been approved recently to purchase a new PBX system that will need to have a compatible intercom system added for emergency communications.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Campuswide intercom system
  - Full-time Safety Director
  - Controlled access to campus

Fuel and Utility Costs. Both consumption and unit costs for utilities have increased significantly without any increase in funding. We are completing new dormitories and the additional utility costs associated with these new buildings is not appropriated. The cost of fuel has increased dramatically. Increasing fuel costs for vehicles and busses will need to be budgeted to maintain transportation for students to and from home.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Increased operating funds for natural gas, electricity, water, and vehicle fuels.

Central Administration. The School operates with a Superintendent and five directors or principals of the School's major divisions. A human resources director, agency chief counsel, and curriculum director report to the Superintendent. The School is considering the need for a staff person to assist with the School's increasing research and evaluation activities as part of its Strategic Planning process.

- Budgetary Needs
  - Data Analysis-Statistician

## ***Service Population Demographics***

### Historical Characteristics

It has only been within the last 20 years that many local school districts have developed the capability of providing services to students who were blind or visually impaired. Historically, TSBVI made its educational services available to blind children, ages 6 to 21, who had no additional disabilities. The population served was carefully selected, leaving the more challenging or complex children with limited, if any, educational services. That has changed radically.

### ***Current Characteristics***

Today, the majority of the 7,500 blind and visually impaired students in Texas attend local schools. Often, they are enrolled in regular classes with sighted classmates and provided support from a qualified teacher of the visually impaired at the local level. One responsibility of TSBVI is to provide educational services to children whose needs cannot be met in their local schools or who need short-term intensive instruction in core curriculum areas. Another equal responsibility is to share resources with all local districts in the state that are serving blind and visually impaired students. Indeed, off-campus services emanating from TSBVI are considered as important as on-campus services delivered directly to students. Educational placement takes into consideration the fact that blind and visually impaired children have two areas of need: an academic program that parallels that which they would receive if they were sighted, and a disability-specific program which addresses their unique needs.

Often the academic needs of students can be effectively met in regular classrooms at the local level. However, disability-specific needs (now called the Expanded Core Curriculum) are often difficult for the local school to teach, and they may look to TSBVI for assistance in meeting these needs. TSBVI has the capability to meet all expanded core curriculum needs of blind and visually impaired students, but its best use is to "fill in" the core areas when resources and services are not available locally. This fact impacts greatly on the function of TSBVI. It can meet many core curriculum needs of children either by providing an on-campus program or by sending educators out to districts to help in developing more

effective local programs. TSBVI currently carries out its responsibility to all blind and visually impaired children of Texas by offering these two options.

Visual impairment in children is a low prevalence disability when compared to other disabilities. This creates problems with service delivery, since this population needs highly-skilled teachers. Geographic factors affecting services are a major problem since, in a rural area, there may be only one blind child in a 50-mile radius. Even a moderate-sized district with a larger number of visually impaired students will typically find that it has only one or two visually impaired students who can be served together, due to differences in their ages and skill levels.

In recent years, the number of blind and visually impaired children in need of services has increased greatly in the United States because of the profession's ability to measure marginal vision loss and its effect on learning. Also, advances in medical science have saved the lives of visually impaired children with additional severe disabilities. This need for services is exacerbated in Texas because the state's continued population growth adds to the number of blind and visually impaired children.

Also, it has been found that children who are visually impaired and have additional disabilities need the services of teachers trained in education for the visually impaired. Currently, it is estimated that about 90% of the visually impaired children in Texas have low vision. It is also estimated that about 70% of the children identified as visually impaired have additional disabilities. These changes in populations have had a dramatic effect on educational services. Local school districts only request enrollment at TSBVI for their students when those students require the intense and specialized services of this school. As a result, TSBVI serves the more disabled segment of visually impaired students with additional disabilities. More recently, TSBVI has provided significant resources to address the need for all students to learn the use of technological devices, particularly personal computers.

TSBVI carries the serious responsibility of addressing the needs of a widely diverse population. Children in need of services from the school may be mildly or moderately visually impaired, or they may be totally blind. They may be visually impaired since birth or may have lost vision yesterday. They may have no other disabilities except visual impairment, or they may have several additional disabilities. They may be able to master a regular academic curriculum, or they may have educational goals that address their basic independence needs. They may live in urban areas where there are excellent resources at the local level for a visually impaired child, or they may live in extremely rural areas where services from a qualified teacher of the visually impaired are basically non-existent. Indeed, the demographics of this low prevalence population demand that educators and parents utilize their creativity when planning services that meet all the needs of a particular child.

### ***Demographic Factors and Future Trends***

**Short-term:** Dramatic changes in services to children continue to occur in response to current and anticipated demographic factors. The population of children in Texas schools is projected to increase by about 80,000 students per year for the next several years. Statistically it can be anticipated that this will result in an additional 400 visually impaired children entering the public educational system annually. There will be increasing emphasis on accountability for student learning, on data driven decision-making, and economic pressure on the State to identify adequate and equitable financial resources. The increasing emphasis on the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms will continue. Although there are many benefits from inclusion, one potential harmful effect can be insufficient attention to the disability-specific needs of visually impaired students.

In response, TSBVI has redefined much of its curriculum, and local districts are finding it

appropriate to utilize the services provided by the School more frequently than in the past. TSBVI has expanded its short-term placement programs in the areas of compensatory skills, disability-specific skills, and career education. There continues to be a dramatic increase in demand for summer programs emphasizing enrichment, social skills development, independent living skills, communication skills, and the applications of electronic technology.

TSBVI will continue to receive a substantial number of referrals for children between the ages of 10 and 13, indicating that local districts often need assistance as the visually impaired student makes the transition from elementary to middle school. Many of these students remain at TSBVI for two to three years, then return to their local district with the skills to function in their local secondary school placement. This is presently requiring a level of transition programming that cannot be met with current staffing allocations.

The largest group of students referred for specialized instruction at TSBVI is composed of students 18 or older who have finished or peaked in the general curriculum, but who lack the independent living, self-advocacy, and vocational skills necessary for adult living. About 33% of the School's enrollment is in this age group. Parents and local school districts have discovered that their young blind adults are not really ready and seek "last minute" specialized services before these students "age out" of eligibility for services from public education at age 21.

Another demographic factor having an immediate impact on the need for services at TSBVI is the deplorable employment rate of people with disabilities. Specifically, 70% of people with visual impairments ages 21 to 64 are unemployed, and 30% of those who are working are considered underemployed in relations to their qualifications, according to the US Department of Labor based on the 1994-95 US Census Bureau data.

In response to this persisting demographic trend, the School has embarked upon an expansion of vocational programs for young persons who have graduated from their local high school and a vocational training program for students with mild additional disabilities.

Statewide demographic studies indicate that the number of non-Anglo school-age children will continue to increase in Texas. The current ethnic composition of the School's student population already reflects a population that is 52% non-white.

It will be increasingly important that the School recruit and retain staff that reflect the ethnic makeup of Texas. Instructional programs must take into account the needs of children with limited English proficiency. The culture and values of minority groups must be given respect and understanding in the School's instructional and residential programs. Parent newsletters produced for the regular school year program and for the Outreach Program are also provided in Spanish, as are written Student Progress Reports and all legally required forms related to student and parent rights under federal and state laws. Additionally the "See/Hear Newsletter" produced by TSBVI in collaboration with Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services - Division for Blind Services is available in Spanish both on the Web and in print for Spanish speaking families. The Outreach Program pays for Spanish or sign language interpreters for workshops that the School sponsors to make them more accessible.

There is also some evidence that the students and families of students enrolled at TSBVI are not proportionally sharing in the current economic prosperity of Texas. Fifty-seven percent of students enrolled at TSBVI meet the financial eligibility requirements to receive Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

In response to the needs of students and families with limited financial needs, the School will also need to allocate staff resources to link students and their families to educational, social service, vocational, and medical resources in their communities. This linkage is often vital to make successful transitions for students back to their local communities.

Another current trend is the increased expectation on parents to participate in the education of their children. Parents are expected to actively plan and advocate for their child's educational program, and to understand and secure services for their child in infancy and pre-school years.

In response to this need, the School has launched programs to help parents become informed advocates for their children and learn more about the importance of early intervention for their children during infancy and early childhood.

**Medium-term:** Advances in medical technology will continue to save high-risk infants, resulting in a growing population of children with multiple disabilities. The intensity of disability-specific needs of blind and visually impaired children will require local districts to reconsider their resources in meeting these needs. Local schools will either need to provide more services to children from a teacher of the visually impaired, or consider short-term placements at TSBVI.

The Texas Comptroller's Office projects that the population of Texas will continue to increase in the foreseeable future, thereby creating more demands for services in local schools and at TSBVI.

Successful transition from TSBVI to students' local programs and communities will continue to be a need. If the results of a needs survey confirm what TSBVI suspects, the School will need to increase its efforts to convince and to support local school districts in implementing transition programs. Such transition programs are especially critical at the times when students move from elementary to middle school and to the later years of high school when students approach graduation or "aging out".

In response, the School will develop a one-year program designed to assist students in this transition, and to provide the students with skills in independent living, career education, and orientation and mobility.

The number of young people in Texas with traumatic brain injury who lose their vision as a result of violence and accidents appears to be increasing. These students require very intensive, specialized intervention to address their educational and emotional needs. They need to reacquire the skills to travel independently; to acquire a medium for literacy such as braille; to take care of their daily needs; and to make the emotional adjustment to their new situation.

The School can do an exceptional job with many of these young people, but the instructor-to-student ratio must be sufficient to provide an intensive level of education. To be effective, staff will need ongoing in-service education to work effectively with students whose social and emotional behaviors require interventions that take into account the special needs of individuals with traumatic brain injuries.

Special education across the nation will continue to emphasize the integration and inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular classrooms of local public schools. "Inclusive education" for children with disabilities became an exciting trend, beginning about 15-20 years ago. Today, the reality of "responsible inclusion" for children with visual impairments has shown great improvement. With more and better qualified teachers of the visually impaired being available in Texas, the quality of local services seems to have grown, resulting in a slight decrease in referrals to TSBVI by local districts. This trend is also due to the quality and quantity of services to local districts that TSBVI offers. However, when local school districts find that they are unable to meet the educational needs of certain individual students, they

will refer the most challenging students to TSBVI for services. The natural effect of this is that TSBVI is increasingly serving students with maladaptive behaviors or a long history of educational failure. All too often, these students have fallen farther behind for several years and need intense remediation. Again, this changing population of students at TSBVI requires small class size and ongoing training for staff.

In response the School plans to expand its array of short-term programs during the school year as well as during the summer. By doing so, students can continue receiving the bulk of their education in their local schools and come to TSBVI for specialized instruction in skills directly related to their visual impairment. TSBVI will ask the legislature for additional funds to expand these programs.

There is an increased demand that states and schools be accountable for the learning of students. More testing, more data, more analysis, more program evaluation, and more accountability are the order of the day. Both “No Child Left Behind” and “Individuals with Disabilities Individual Education Act” have added to the strong need for accountability and documentation.

In response the School will increase its accountability systems, including the use of a locally determined assessment system. The School will also explore the use of other nationally recognized assessment tools to measure the progress of its students. The results will be shared with the governing board of trustees, the Texas Education Agency, and with the School’s stakeholders.

Pre-service preparation of teachers to serve visually impaired students has grown considerably since the legislature provided TSBVI with funding to contract with Stephen F. Austin and Texas Tech Universities. TSBVI maintains close collaboration with both universities. Texas Tech University has recently added a presence at TSBVI where teacher preparation courses are taught on the school’s campus.

The Outreach Department at TSBVI continues to be the primary source for professional development of practicing teachers. This is accomplished by workshops, conferences, and, more frequently by distance education technology.

**Long-term:** All of the demographic trends and impacts described above will continue to impact the education of visually impaired children in Texas for the foreseeable future. In response to these service population demographics, the School’s planning must include the following long-term strategies:

- TSBVI and local school districts will continue to develop a mutually supportive system. The future will build upon the expertise of TSBVI staff, appreciation of them by local school personnel, and trust in asking for services from TSBVI without any fear that TSBVI has an interest in recruiting students. The TSBVI philosophy supports local school placement for most students, if the required support system is available, and local schools increasingly acknowledge and respect that philosophy. Children are arriving and departing at TSBVI with increasing regularity. TSBVI has developed creative programming that results in a minimum interruption for children in their local schools as they benefit from intensive instruction in core curriculum areas on the School’s campus. Education for all blind and visually impaired students is directed toward a productive, fulfilling, enjoyable adult life in a setting that best meets the social, personal, and occupational needs of each individual.
- In the future, TSBVI will serve students in small “clusters”, depending on needs. These clusters will represent specific areas of a core curriculum, and students will receive intensive instruction in only those areas for which there is an assessed need. This core curriculum emphasizes instruction

in those areas that address the unique needs and special learning methods of students who are blind, deafblind, and visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.

- TSBVI will increasingly become a statewide entity, outreach services will expand, and the possibility of satellite TSBVI centers in other parts of the State will be considered.
- Funds made available from revenue bonds will allow TSBVI to replace or renovate about half of its campus. It is the intent of TSBVI to carefully and thoroughly develop plans for capital outlay, and the outcome will be classrooms and residential facilities that address the needs of current students.
- Funds made available by the 2005 legislative session will significantly impact construction and renovation on the TSBVI campus. A recently completed Facilities Master Plan demonstrates that current funds available will begin the process of an emerging facility of which all Texans can be proud. Additional funding will be needed to complete a full facility renovation.

## ***Technological Developments***

### ***Impact of Technology on Current Agency Operations***

#### **Instructional Technology:**

Technology, and its application to educating the blind and visually impaired children of Texas, is fundamental to the mission of TSBVI and to its support of the priority goal for public schools as detailed in Pathway To Prosperity, the Strategic Planning document for the State of Texas. Technology has an ever-increasing impact on the education of students with visual disabilities and is now critical to their gaining maximum independence and success in the world. One cannot visit a TSBVI classroom or residential facility without observing the growing role that technology has come to play in the education of our students. Although this is true in most classrooms in Texas, it is especially true at this special school. Computers not only are used for enrichment and motivation, but also to provide the most basic access to instructional materials, reference sources, and to materials previously only available in print. Desktop computers, laptop computers, LCD monitors, and peripheral devices, including speech output and braille output devices give blind students the opportunity to access instructional materials on a level near that of their sighted peers. While providing significant empowerment and opportunities to individuals with visual impairments, technology continues to challenge staff and students. The skills that a student must possess to use technical systems continue to increase as systems become both more useful and more sophisticated.

The use of modern technology is mandatory to enable TSBVI meet the challenge of providing students with equal educational opportunities. To accomplish this goal, instructional technology staff must not only remain apprised of developments in technology as they pertain to the general education population, but they must also provide training for students in issues related to assistive technology. These efforts require a broad knowledge base to meet the needs of our students, most of whom have more than one physical, sensory, cognitive, or language impairment. The technology needs of these students range from basic communication and socialization needs to vocational, telecommunications, and college preparatory training.

We must maintain an inventory of modern, up-to-date equipment to provide the level of service that has been determined as appropriate for the student with visual impairments.

## **Infrastructure Technology:**

TSBVI is a 24-hour, residential school and staff work varying schedules over a large campus. The use of electronic mail has greatly improved communication in support of services to students in our on-campus programs, and to the students, parents, and professionals supported by our outreach services. Members of the School's Board of Trustees, who reside in various parts of the State and significant distances from the School, regularly use electronic mail to enhance their effectiveness as knowledgeable and effective board members. As older applications such as the Student Database software have been re-written as web-deployed applications, then new levels of standardization and agency coordination are possible. It is anticipated that the need for these communication technologies will continue to grow.

The expanded use of TSBVI Intranet has improved campus communication, documentation, and planning coordination through development of a common facilities calendar, routine publication of telephone numbers, meeting minutes, forms, and similar materials. This continued development of the Intranet has allowed TSBVI to promote inter-office communication and standardized publication of information.

TSBVI has made great progress in the development and use of administrative technology. The core of the Student Database has been successfully rewritten in a Java-based software system that is compliant with the state's Public Education and Information Management System (PEIMS). This system was designed with much consideration given to accessibility by individuals with visual impairments, with the intention to provide a model to evaluate "best practice" development. Part of the development costs were funded by TEA with federal special education funds so that TSBVI could join the other public schools of Texas in providing student and staff data to the statewide database.

The Statewide Registry of Students with Visual Impairments is now an on-line registration system, written and implemented for the TSBVI Outreach department. In this system, over seven thousand students with visual impairments are registered for subsequent reporting to TEA. This timely and accurate reporting to TEA ensures that the blind and visually impaired children of Texas receive their fair share of federal funds for educational materials. The system entry is at <http://www.tsbvi.edu/app/>.

## **Distance Education:**

As the Outreach department offers more diverse services to more individuals, the reliance on technology continues to increase. Deployment of new information over the web has been identified as a key need to use limited staff resources effectively, and to ensure the efficient use of public funds. Enhanced use of distance education is a fundamental aspect in future program planning. Courses offered by distance education have included "Foundations in Visual Impairment", "Math Materials and Methods for Teachers of VI Students", and "Abacus Instruction". These courses are examples of how these emerging technologies provide new methods for service delivery. The use of distance education and the opportunities and savings it provides will continue to expand.

The TSBVI Web site ([www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu)) continues to expand our information services. The World Wide Web has provided a unique opportunity for the School to broaden and increase service delivery with minimal additional expenses compared to conventional support methodologies. Quick and efficient distribution of profession-specific information to an expanded group of parents and professionals has proven extremely helpful. The use of TSBVI website, (<http://www.tsbvi.edu/>) has increased significantly. Over two and half million visitors a year view school schedules, download braille books, visit adaptive technology resources, or otherwise use TSBVI as a resource. The reader is encouraged to visit the website.

## ***Impact of Anticipated Technological Advances***

### **Instructional Technology:**

Technological advancements are changing the face of education through the use of telecommunications and multimedia technology. These advancements are allowing students to control the learning process through creative means of expression and information gathering. One of the greatest challenges at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to provide students with visual and multiple impairments a means of access to these technologies so that the same kinds of learning opportunities available to sighted students can be made available to them. There are many specialized products currently available that allow students with these impairments to participate in the educational opportunities afforded by advancements in technology.

The commitment of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to serve as a statewide research and demonstration facility requires that the School consistently do the following: (1) evaluate technological advances, (2) determine the most practical and functional technological systems for use with this population, (3) create and establish standards for teaching and integrating technology into the educational setting, and (4) provide technical training, curriculum, and support to professionals.

An example of the constant need to update equipment is illustrated by new developments in equipment specifically for persons with a visual impairment. An example of such a product that we have used for several years is the Braille 'n Speak. Students use this much like a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) to manage notes, create documents, and manage their calendar. These devices are based on the old Zilog 80 processor and only support a serial connection to a host pc or modem and do not have a braille display. New devices are now available that offer a full braille display and Ethernet connections that support network access. This device is considerably more functional for modern applications but they cost about \$4,000 per unit. Gradual conversion from the old technology to the new device platform will require a phased procurement with consistent funding. There are a great many other examples of advances in instructional technologies that can have a strong and positive impact on the progress the blind and visually impaired children of Texas. These may range from the simple advances of LCD monitors to the complexities of streaming quality video presentations to remote students and educators. There is a pressing need to restore the level of funds for instructional technology previously appropriated by the 75<sup>th</sup> and 77<sup>th</sup> Legislatures.

### **Infrastructure Technology:**

Continued upgrade of the School's local area network has significantly improved the functionality and application of the School's desktop computers. Access and interaction with Internet resources has provided new dimensions for classroom and residential instruction and communication/support to local independent school districts. As staff gains skills, new initiatives and applications are implemented to improve services to students, families, and other professionals.

Continued upgrading of desktop and laptop computers on a regular basis is needed to ensure the reliability and compatibility of TSBVI computing resources, and to meet the technical demands of adaptive software and equipment. Technical developments are closely monitored to ensure our use of computer environments that reflect those of other schools and businesses. The development of a consistent development architecture based on industry standard products is important to enable maximum accessibility for individuals with visual impairments, maintain platform independence, and ensure

compatibility with future technology innovations and development. Given these design goals, new software systems will be written as web-deployed applications using Java Enterprise (J2EE) technology using IBM's DB2 database management software. All future development will be within this software environment to advance the use of object-oriented programming to maximize platform independence and long-term supportability.

### **Distance Education:**

As technology advances, the School's commitment to serve as a statewide research and demonstration facility becomes more critical. Our role to evaluate new technologies oriented toward the individual with visual impairments and our participation on standards bodies to create and establish textbook and electronic publishing standards are two primary leadership areas that have significant impact to the state and nation. Development and documentation of techniques for use with new technology and technical training support to professionals who work with individuals with visual and/or other impairments are a continuing program initiative. Innovation with new network-based deployment will continue. The advent of digital video and the ability to create instructional videos with high production values on the desktop is another important advance in instructional technology and distance education for TSBVI. This technology, when fully implemented, will allow for enhanced efficacy of TSBVI outreach programs, better documentation of students progress, and the ability to effectively share this progress with parents and educators. The needs and uses of digital imaging, both video and still, hold the promise of greatly increasing the efficiency of service delivery to Texans.

### ***Degree of Agency Automation and Telecommunications***

TSBVI has highly automated telecommunications and computing functions. Approximately 300 individuals access TSBVI computer systems by networked desktop computers or laptop computers. Workstations are connected via TCP/IP transport over Ethernet. All workstations are configured for standardized networking configuration and network transport is standardized on Cisco equipment. The network is configured to provide file sharing, networked printing, and other services for both Macintosh and PC clients. Both PC and Mac clients share all networked printers by use of the Adobe Postscript driver standard. Fiber optic cable segments are in place between the major computing centers on campus with networking to all buildings on campus. The School is a member of the CapNet network and granted an Internet domain address of TSBVI.EDU (192.188.148.x) in 1992. Currently, TSBVI servers support the various functions such as web-hosting ([www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu)) Web-based distance education, video-conferencing, resource sharing, application serving, and Intranet applications. TSBVI was able to incorporate surplus computers acquired from other agencies into its server environment during the difficult budget cuts in recent years, but up to date equipment is required for the effective, efficient, and reliable delivery of services.

The technical standard for network deployment is 100MB to the desktop so that any client endpoint on campus can be the source of video conferencing or to meet other high-bandwidth requirements. Long-term plans to meet anticipated capacity requirements have been addressed by deployment of Gigabit backbone segments to prepare for and to provide the most reliable and supportable campus environment possible.

Communication routing for TSBVI is provided via the Texas Department of Information Resources. All access and report/mail delivery to the USAS, USPS, and other state and federal computer facilities is provided through this link. Through our participation in the Esconnett, the school uses a second T1 circuit to Educational Service Center XIII to provide client Internet access as well as to route all video protocols.

A business class DSL circuit is used for access to the worldwide web. ISDN PRI circuits are used for video-conferencing to areas without high-speed Internet connections.

### ***Anticipated Need for Automation (either purchased or leased)***

The TSBVI management team, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, has determined that a four-year replacement cycle for computers and assistive technology is required for the efficient and reliable delivery of services to the blind and visually impaired children of Texas. This schedule meets service delivery requirements while avoiding reduced reliability and increasing maintenance brought about by obsolete equipment. The ability to adapt and maintain this schedule allows for effective planning and implementation of technology refresh plans, and results in steady state cycle in which approximately one quarter of TSBVI's computer assets are replaced each year. Aside from planning and deployment efficiencies, this cycle reduces the risk that service delivery may be adversely impacted by budget constraints at a time when the majority of TSBVI computers may be due for replacement.

After careful consideration utilizing the Texas Department of Information Resources Guidelines for Lease vs. Purchase of Information Technologies, TSBVI has determined that the purchase option is in the best interests of the school and those it serves. The relatively long life of the assets along with the need for flexibility and integration with adaptive technologies were important considerations in this decision.

It is a top priority of the TSBVI management and Board of Trustees that adaptive, instructional, and information technologies be brought up to date as rapidly as possible, and that consistent funding be put in place so that the school does not risk falling behind in maintaining at least current levels of service to the blind and visually impaired children of Texas.

## ***Economic Variables***

### ***Identification of Key Economic Variables***

There are two key economic variables for TSBVI to consider. The first is the impact of the economy on the lives of blind and visually impaired adults, and how our educational program reflects this impact. The second variable is how the general economy impacts the capacity of TSBVI to carry out its mission

### ***Extent to Which Service Populations are Affected by Economic Conditions***

Blind and visually impaired adults are traditionally unemployed or underemployed. While there are no specific data available, the general consensus of experts in rehabilitation is that unemployment among blind adults has hovered around 70% for the past 40 years. TSBVI emphatically states that this is unacceptable, and that education must own at least part of the responsibility for this tragic level of unemployment. We have been restructuring our vocational program, both philosophically and programmatically, in order to address this economic fact. TSBVI is capable of carrying out its mission only to the extent that funds from the State are available to purchase services, materials, and equipment. As we identified new areas of need for TSBVI, we have been in a pattern of "add-on", not "replace". When we added services, such as technology instruction, we did not eliminate another program. This meant attempting creative ways of providing additional services without additional resources. The specific needs that are growing, such as vocational training, technology instruction, and education of children with severe multiple disabilities, are expensive to add or enhance. Outreach services, the most rapidly growing, in-demand" service, is still not adequately staffed to meet the demands for its services from public school personnel and parents.

There are three factors that are commonly mentioned as inhibiting the ability of the blind or visually impaired person whom society may believe ought to be working. The first is discrimination among employers. This has long been believed to be the major barrier to a higher rate of employment among visually impaired persons. However, as inclusion of persons with disabilities increases at a dramatic rate, the very presence of this population in our society and in our communities would be expected to have an impact on the attitudes of employers toward hiring persons with disabilities. There is some evidence that this is true. If there continues to be a need to educate employers about the capabilities of blind workers, then TSBVI will work with other agencies and consumer groups in an effort to heighten the awareness of employers.

The second assumption made about what impacts the employment of blind and visually impaired persons is the preparation they receive in school that would lead to appropriate job readiness and work skills. This topic has two dimensions. The first is the personal characteristics and skills of the blind applicant. Often employers have stressed their concern for such issues as "...what is the personal appearance of the blind worker?...", or "...will the blind worker get along socially with other employees?...", or "...how will the blind person get to work and find his/her way around?...". The second dimension is work skills and work experience. While the latter will add considerably to the "hirability" of a blind applicant, many employers express more concern over the former concern. Thus, the opportunity to work for a blind or visually impaired person may be most often impacted by dress, grooming, and social and mobility skills.

There may be another factor that affects employability, and that is academic skills. Recent surveys conducted by national organizations confirm the fact that most blind persons successfully employed in competitive jobs are highly literate. This finding needs to be qualified by the fact that many of the graduates of TSBVI do not, nor will they ever, have traditional literacy skills. TSBVI has the philosophy that literacy may be obtained through a variety of methods and at a wide range of competency. Most graduates of TSBVI will consider employment opportunities that do not have a high level of need for reading and writing in print or Braille. This means that traditional "academic skills" will not be a factor in their employment. The kinds of positions that would be most appropriate for the majority of TSBVI graduates need to be further identified, studied, and tried. TSBVI commits itself to this task.

The third assumption made concerning the alarming rate of unemployment of blind and visually impaired adults is that Supplementary Security Income (SSI) and other sources of "welfare" act as a disincentive to seeking employment. When one adds up the dollar amount of SSI, plus benefits, it is not difficult to understand the lack of incentive among blind persons to accept entry level positions that may not have health and other benefits. There are two prevailing positions among professionals concerning social welfare for blind persons. One is that it is more expensive to live in this sighted world as a blind person, and that SSI merely "levels" the resources needed to live at any level of comfort. The second position, of course, is that the blind person has little, if any, incentive to go to work if it, in the final analysis, means a reduction in personal income. TSBVI is committed to instilling a work ethic in its students that honors either paid or volunteer efforts that benefit others. Only through embedding this ethic among our students will they be able to find satisfaction and fulfillment as adults.

### ***Expected Future Economic Conditions and Impact on Agency and Service Populations***

The state of the general Texas economy affects the population served by TSBVI in terms of employability. The workforce environment increasingly requires that prospective workers have the technical skills necessary to be employable. Literacy and the skills to live and travel independently are also prerequisites for blind people to be able to obtain and hold jobs. The programs of the School will need to continue to emphasize these skills. TSBVI is developing its vocational program to directly

address projections for future employment in Texas. TSBVI has reorganized its career education program so that all students will receive extensive learning experiences designed to prepare them for the labor market of today and tomorrow. As presented above, we are also developing a post-secondary vocational training program for students that graduate from their local schools but are not prepared for employment.

Future economic conditions of the State will certainly impact TSBVI. The school has carefully and prudently examined its budget, redefined its various roles, reallocated resources, and is now using its resources in creative and conservative ways to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired students throughout Texas. As new and innovative programs are considered, it has become increasingly apparent that there are limited resources to provide vital new services. We cannot reduce or eliminate services now being offered and still meet the needs of Texas children, and of their parents and school districts.

### ***Agency Response to Changing Economic Conditions***

For the past four years TSBVI has continually searched for internal ways in which it can change, because we responsibly and prudently use the State's resources allocated to us. As program needs changed and expanded, we first sought ways to handle newly identified needs and increasing costs by reallocating existing resources. We now come to the legislature, confident in knowing how we must expand and change in order to meet the current needs of blind and visually impaired students, and confident in knowing what resources we need in order to fulfill our mission.

### ***Impact of Federal Statutes/Regulations***

#### ***Historical Role of Federal Involvement***

Since 1976, the most significant impact of federal involvement has been the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), previously called the Education of All Handicapped Children Act. The requirements of this law, and the processes required to implement it, have affected TSBVI greatly. Direct participation by parents and local school staff in the educational process, and the requirement of an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for each child have positively affected programming for students while requiring increased time and attention from staff and administrators.

In addition to its impact on programs, instructional planning, student assessment, educational placement, and due process rights for parents, this law has also provided the School with some funding, most notably those allocated to operate the statewide Deafblind Project. The School has been the primary source for the statewide delivery of these services since 1973. This source of federal funding has provided a high quality outreach program to local districts and families.

Also, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has made available to the School some federal IDEA funds awarded to Texas for statewide priorities. These funds have been used for several programs, including a technology loan program for students throughout the state and conducting the statewide registry of visually impaired students.

#### ***Description of Current Federal Activities***

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was re-authorized and amended by the U.S. Congress in 1995, and the reauthorization process has begun again. Any future changes in the law or its accompanying regulations will significantly affect TSBVI. Congress has upheld the right of all children with disabilities to a continuum of placement options, including schools such as TSBVI. Federal and Texas statutes, rules, policy statements, and case law continue to make it clear that special schools

like TSBVI continue to be the “appropriate” and “least restrictive environment” for some visually impaired students. TSBVI is an essential placement option within the Texas public education system.

The enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), formerly the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), has also affected the School significantly, beginning with the 2003 school year. There are increased requirements for documenting student learning, and increased testing and accountability systems. We are proud to have been pioneers in partnership with the Texas Education Agency in developing a meaningful accountability program for TSBVI students years before there was a State-Developed Alternative Assessment.

The School continues to participate in the Medicaid reimbursement programs for specific reimbursable expenditures. These include portions of school health and related services (SHARS) provided directly to students, and certain administrative overhead costs (Medicaid Administrative Claims, abbreviated as the MAC). The MAC program has seen a major reduction during the past four years, and these reductions are likely to increase. Revenue from the MAC program at TSBVI decreased from \$230,000 in 2003 to \$60,000 expected in 2006, with greater reductions expected to come.

The federally funded Free and Reduced Lunch Program also provides funds that offset the state's cost in providing meals to students enrolled at the School. All residential students at TSBVI are eligible for this program because they are in a state-operated, residential, educational program.

### ***Anticipated Impact on Service Populations and Agency Operations of Future Federal Actions***

The current IDEA with its accompanying federal regulations, the Federal Department of Education has clearly and decisively declared schools for the blind as a necessary and viable placement option. The federal House and Senate versions of the bill lead us to anticipate that the future reauthorized version of the IDEA will retain this fundamental component. The newly amended IDEA, the new federal regulations to take effect in September of 2006, and the expanding requirements of the NCLB Act are combining to alter significantly the services provided to students with disabilities. The individualization of curriculum is being supplanted by individualization of services aimed at having all children master the same curriculum. This trend will pose interesting challenges in the education of blind and visually impaired students, including those with deafblindness and other additional disabilities.

### ***Other Legal Issues***

#### ***Impact of Anticipated State Statutory Changes***

House Bill 1 passed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> called special session of the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature will affect the school calendar and the management of student records. The fiscal impact of both of these measures is not yet known.

#### ***Impact of Current and Outstanding Court Cases***

TSBVI has no current or outstanding court cases.

#### ***Impact of Local Government Requirements***

None at this time.

## ***Self-evaluation and Opportunities for Improvement***

### ***Meeting Legal Requirements, Serving Critical Populations, Achieving Accreditation and Recognition***

#### ***➤ Legally Required Services***

TSBVI is established to provide appropriate educational services to school-age children with significant visual impairments who may have additional disabilities when the local or regional programs cannot meet the educational needs of those students. There are nearly 8,000 children with blindness or visual impairment geographically dispersed throughout Texas. TSBVI may be called upon at any point in the educational careers of these students to directly serve them in the School's regular school year program, in a summer program, or in one of the new short-term programs. In addition to direct instruction of students, the school is also established to be a statewide resource for the education of blind and visually impaired children who attend their local public schools. TSBVI continually evaluates the effectiveness of its programs and the satisfaction of those it serves. Evaluation is conducted by performance measures, internal audits, customer surveys, and comparisons to other states' schools for the blind.

#### ***➤ Accreditation***

TSBVI is accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as a special school within the Texas public education system. The School and the TEA have jointly developed and approved a set of Academic and Program Excellence Indicators to measure student learning and program effectiveness at TSBVI. These indicators have also been incorporated as measures in the School's Strategic Plan. These Indicators serve as a corollary to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) benchmarks and accountability standards applied to all public schools in Texas, and are a component in determining the accreditation status of the School.

#### ***➤ Attainment of Performance Objectives***

During fiscal year 2005, the School attained or exceeded 100% of its 12 established key performance targets as set forth in its Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriation Request. Specifically, the School achieved or exceeded 3 of the 3 outcome measure projections, 7 of 7 output measure projections, and 2 of 2 efficiency measure projections.

The following information details the School's performance for FY 2005 in areas critical to the School's mission:

- **Student Learning.** The School exceeded its projections in the areas of student learning as reflected by progress in performance indicator assessments and parents, progress in Short-term Programs, and local school district responses regarding the successful transitions of students back to local programs.
- **Customer Satisfaction.** The School exceeded its projections in the following areas:
  - 62% of parents, local school districts, and students stated they were at least very satisfied with the students' progress in Comprehensive Programs.
  - 96% of parents, local school districts, and students stated they were at least very satisfied with the students' experiences in Short-term Programs.

- 87% of local school districts and 84% of parents rated as very satisfactory or above their satisfaction with students' learning in summer programs.
- 88% of Outreach customers rated as very satisfactory or above the improvement of their knowledge and skills as a result of Outreach products or services.
- 91% of Outreach customers rated as very satisfactory or above the effectiveness of the TSBVI consultant in addressing the reason for on-site visits and workshops.
- 86% of Outreach customers agreed that there was a positive change for students, staff or families as a result of on-site visits.

➤ ***Program Evaluations***

TSBVI evaluates the effectiveness of its programs through both formative and summative evaluations. Detailed action plans are developed to accomplish the Strategic Plan. Formative evaluation is conducted by documenting progress on the action plans at scheduled intervals. Summative evaluation is conducted annually by the School's Board of Trustees and administration based on attainment of objectives in the School's Strategic Plan and in the TSBVI Annual Improvement Plan.

TSBVI maintains its accreditation by TEA based on meeting the student performance requirements approved by TEA in Administrative Rules.

➤ ***Audit Reports***

The School has conducted several internal audits. The internal auditor develops an annual audit plan in close collaboration with the Board of Trustees. Recent audits have focused on the School's safety and security systems, protection of students from abuse and neglect, Human Resources Department, Weekends Home Program, compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act, and reducing the risk of fraud.

Internal audit develops an annual risk based audit plan in close collaboration with school administrators and the board of trustees. Audits assessing compliance with state laws and rules as well as agency policies and procedures have been completed. Recommendations are implemented as necessary to improve compliance and increase efficiency of operations as needed. Performance measures for new programs have been reviewed to ensure adequate and accurate information is being provided to agency administration and government oversight agencies. The administration has implemented appropriate responses to the findings of these audits.

In fiscal year 2005, the State Auditor's Office conducted a financial audit of the School. The Audit found that the School was doing a reasonable job of protecting state assets and providing accurate financial information. The Audit made recommendations in the following areas:

- (1) Financial Planning and Budgeting, Expenditure Monitoring, & Accounting Processes
- (2) Protection of Financial Information
- (3) Update of Accounting Systems and Streamline of Accounting Processes

The School has implemented or is the process of implementing the recommendations.

### ➤ *Comparisons with Other States and Industry Leaders*

As part of its benchmarking process, TSBVI has collected data and compared its performance to that of schools for the visually impaired in other states. In every category regarding parent satisfaction, TSBVI is rated equal or superior to the composite data on all other schools for the blind. TSBVI significantly exceeded national results in the area of competitive employment for its graduates.

TSBVI has pioneered the role of schools for the blind as a statewide resource. Other states have long envied and now are beginning to emulate the comprehensive outreach programs provided by TSBVI. The School's curriculum has been published and adopted by other schools for the blind, local school districts, and university teacher preparation programs. The School's summer programs have long been a model for the country, reaching out to students who attend local public schools during their regular school year sessions.

The School's evaluation and planning process has also led to a significant programmatic change as a result of comparison with other states' schools for the visually impaired. The School has initiated short-term special programs during the regular school year for students who attend public schools. TSBVI has looked at models for this service in other states, adapted a Kentucky model, and is now in its sixth year of conducting short-term special programs. Local school districts, parents, and students have welcomed this new area of programming at TSBVI.

Overall, needs assessments gathered for the Outreach program reflect a high level of satisfaction with the range of services provided by this program, and a continuing desire for more assistance. Consumers need information provided in a variety of formats, languages and media. The sheer size of the State of Texas limits opportunities for face-to-face interaction and makes isolation a major concern. Parents and blind or deafblind students are eager for opportunities to meet others with similar needs and issues. For professionals and families there is a desire for general training on the impact of visual impairments and deafblindness, and for individualized answers to more specific questions. In-person conferences and consultations are rated consistently as very helpful, and there is also a growing demand for products accessible at the moment a need arises, as through Web sites, videotapes, booklets and pamphlets, and computer disks. The Outreach Programs are continuing to diversify the materials used for packaging information and training in order to most effectively meet statewide requests.

## ***Performance Benchmarking***

### ➤ *Benchmarking Process*

The School engages in internal benchmarking and industry benchmarking. Internal benchmarking relies primarily on the School's evaluation of its outcome, output, and efficiency measures. Examination of output and efficiency measures has allowed the School to re-allocate some resources to initiate or expand services.

Industry benchmarking is a new effort of the School in collaboration with other schools for the blind throughout the United States. TSBVI is an active member of the Council of Schools for the Blind (COSB), a national organization of residential schools for blind and visually impaired students. COSB has begun the task of developing baseline data on all schools for the blind in the U.S., in order to provide both composite data and information on how schools compare to one another. Thus far, data from demographic studies, customer satisfaction (parents) surveys, and student learning (employment) have been collected, analyzed, and compiled. TSBVI has met or exceeded the composite scores of those schools for the blind participating in the national study and benchmarking process.

## ***Agency Characteristics Requiring Improvement***

The following characteristics are those that the School is committed to:

- Student learning at a level parallel to the degree of accountability expected for all public education in Texas.
- Improved quality, effectiveness, and efficiency in the operation of instructional programs, and in the administrative divisions that support the instructional programs. The Comprehensive Programs division has initiated a benchmark quality improvement program known as Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired (QPVI).
- A continuous improvement process for all divisions.
- Increased use of data in needs assessment and decision-making.
- Increased use of and follow up to the data and anecdotal information provided to us from all those that the School serves.
- A clear, well-articulated understanding among Education Service Centers, local school districts, and TSBVI regarding the strengths and limitations of all service delivery systems for education of blind and visually impaired students in Texas.
- A higher, more positive profile of TSBVI in the State.
- Completion of the School's project to develop a balanced curriculum that meets the individual needs of each student and that includes the expanded core curriculum to address the unique needs of learners with a visual impairment.
- Delivering a program that clearly addresses identified needs of students and works diligently to return children to their local schools as soon as possible.
- Preparing students for adult life in the curriculum and instruction and implement effective transition strategies.
- Increased accountability through the use of data to evaluate the educational performance of students and the quality of programs and services to parents and professionals.
- Alignment of the School's curriculum to the Texas general curriculum and to the core curriculum for visually impaired learners.
- High quality, diverse programs, maintaining the national reputation of TSBVI as a leader.
- Increasing revenues from other public and private sources to help meet the expanding demand for services from TSBVI.
- Expansion of the Outreach Program's capability to impact the education of every blind and visually impaired child in the State.

- A career education program that assists every student to make informed career decisions, and that prepares students for immediate employment or advanced vocational training.
- Further expansion of short-term programs during the regular school year and in the summer.
- Active involvement of local districts and parents in maintaining a sense of responsibility for residential students at TSBVI. Increased parental participation is a specific goal, utilizing telephone conferences, on-site visits, videoconferences, a Parent Weekend, and participation in the school wide site-based decision making committee.
- More opportunities for student integration with non-disabled peers.
- Expansion of technology available to students and training of staff in instructional and administrative technology applications.
- A long-range plan that will provide physical facilities that are congruent with the needs of our students.

### ***Key Obstacles***

- Fiscal Resources: Insufficient funds to meet the expanding needs.
- Human Resources: A shortage of well-trained professional educators skilled in working with the special needs of visually impaired children.
- Physical Resources: An aging campus in desperate need of renovation and replacement.
- Cultural Resources: The still persistent social and cultural beliefs of general society that blind individuals cannot be successfully employed in real and competitive jobs. The unemployment rate, and the underemployment rate, of visually impaired individuals is much too high.
- Geographic Obstacles: the geography of Texas profoundly affects the travel budget and delivery systems for outreach services, parent participation, and Weekends Home for students.
  - Student Transportation. Many blind children live in some of the more remote, rural areas of Texas. This geographical dispersion complicates the logistics of transporting students to and from the School, which is especially challenging because the School strongly believes that students attending a residential school should maintain the closest possible ties with their families, and should travel home as often as possible. The School has undertaken extensive travel obligations to ensure that students in east, west, north and south Texas have the same opportunities to be with their families as the students in central Texas.
  - Outreach Services. The geography of Texas also presents special challenges for the School's Department of Outreach Services, the component of the school that provides services statewide to parents and professionals who work with students who have visual impairments, other additional impairments, and deafblind students. A great deal of travel is required for these individuals to benefit from the type of hands-on training and consultation that Outreach Services provides.

## ***Opportunities***

TSBVI has defined and nurtured its role in the education of all blind and visually impaired students in Texas. We have a two-fold responsibility: to our on-campus students and to all other students being served in local districts. TSBVI has very carefully allocated resources for both of these tasks, and we are meeting these two responsibilities. The Legislature has properly defined our role. As a result, the legislative mandate for the services we provide and the needs of blind and visually impaired students are closely aligned. We have the opportunity to provide vital services to a population that needs these services.

Our opportunities are great, including:

- An outstanding professional staff, constituting the greatest concentration of expertise in education of children who are blind and visually impaired in Texas. Most recently, this expertise has been expanded in the areas of serving children with additional disabilities and in technology instruction. TSBVI has become recognized nationally for its expertise in these two areas.
- A committed and excellent support staff. Every TSBVI employee knows that she is employed in order to serve children, whether the job is preparing meals, providing physical therapy, or mowing the lawn.
- A large campus that has the capacity to carry out its current mission. Actions by the two previous legislatures have provided TSBVI with much-needed funds to renovate and repair its aging campus. However, additional funding needs to be appropriated from bond funds and other sources so that the students of TSBVI may continue to have a safe and home-like campus conducive to learning.
- There is a climate at TSBVI that encourages personnel to explore, create, and accept new challenges. All staff are urged to participate in decision-making and to assume shared responsibility for our efforts.
- TSBVI is a recognized leader in technological development, both for its staff and for students. Recent advances in technology have the potential to open unlimited professional and personal doors for blind and visually impaired persons. We are providing our students with instruction in state-of-the-art technology.
- TSBVI and Texas Division of Blind Services (TDBS), formerly the Texas Commission for the Blind, share a common interest, good working relationship, and geographic proximity. This interagency partnership has created the opportunity to provide excellent transition services to young people preparing to leave school and enter the world of work and independent living. We are developing an even closer working relationship with the TDBS so that our students will receive the best preparation for adulthood from us, and then, as necessary, take full advantage of appropriate services at the TDBS.
- The citizens of Texas, through their elected legislators, have demonstrated a commitment to quality education for blind and visually impaired children at TSBVI. This is evidenced by the continuing strong fiscal support for our school by the Legislature.

- TSBVI recognizes its responsibility to provide our students with opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers, and we have developed a community program that brings sighted children onto our campus for social and recreational activities, as well as provide opportunities for our students to access community activities off-campus.
- Our curriculum department has published curriculum guides and other documents that greatly enhance the education of children on our campus and throughout the state. TSBVI is known nationally and internationally as the source for the best curriculum materials in the world.

### ***Working with Local, State, and Federal Entities***

TSBVI works with local school districts and local Education Service Centers throughout the state to develop an appropriate, individualized educational program for each student. TSBVI is mandated by the Legislature to provide services to all blind and visually impaired children in the state. This requires that the School maintain and nurture effective working relationships with local school districts and Education Service Centers. An increasing number of staff development activities are the result of collaboration between TSBVI, ESCs, and school districts.

TSBVI will work with state agencies such as the Texas Department of Blind Services, the Texas Education Agency, branches of the Health and Humans Services Commission, and local interagency groups such as Community Resource Coordinating Groups (CRCG's) to assist in locating and delivering services to the students served by TSBVI.

Federal funds continue to provide the state and TSBVI with the resources necessary to coordinate state-wide programs and services for deafblind students. The School also receives federal and state funds through TEA, and in one case through the Region XI (Fort Worth) Education Service Center, to provide many of the School's Outreach services that enrich the educational programs for all blind and visually impaired students in the State.

### ***Key Technological, Capital, Human and Community Resources Available***

The School has initiated a program to obtain more community resources to assist the School in its mission. An existing staff position and director-level administrator have been assigned part-time to enhance revenue from both public and private sources. All Blind Children of Texas, a 501c(3) non-profit educational charity, has been established to support the School.

The School will continue to avail itself of the excellent resources of the Austin community. These include the Austin ISD which has long been a partner in providing opportunities for students at TSBVI to attend academic classes in regular public school settings. Students from the University of Texas-Austin and Texas State University, especially the Delta Gamma sorority, continue to volunteer and provide opportunities for TSBVI students to participate in social activities in the community. TSBVI has been accepted as a partner with the Austin Junior League, whose volunteers are providing recreational opportunities for our students, as well as recording recreational reading and transcribing braille.

Service organizations such as the Austin Downtown Lions Club, the Texas National Federation of the Blind, the Austin Council of the Blind, church groups, corporations, and individuals continue to provide their time and some funds for special activities. Finally, there are the ample and unique community resources of the city of Austin and its environs that are much used by the School's students for recreation, cultural awareness, employment, and gaining consumer skills.

The School is employing videoconferencing equipment as a cost effective strategy to deliver outreach services and to increase parental participation in the School.

The School will continue to be a partner with universities to recruit and train teachers for the visually impaired in high-need areas of Texas. Currently, TSBVI is collaborating with Stephen F. Austin University and with Texas Tech University in teacher preparation.

### ***Employee Attitudes Regarding TSBVI***

TSBVI has not participated in the Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE) since FY 2002. In our previous experiences with the SOE, we learned that the greatest sources of staff dissatisfaction concerned compensation (see “Compensation,” above).

A unique problem for TSBVI staff compared to employees at other state agencies is that the majority of our staff are only budgeted to work 9.75 months per year in accordance with the school schedule. When we had fewer budgetary constraints, we operated larger and longer summer programs. We actually had more work than we had staff to do it, so we hired a significant number of extra temporary help to work in our summer school. Now, with reduced program offerings in the summer, we are unable to offer our staff as much work as they want and need. Staff having to go for weeks at a time without pay over the summer has a detrimental effect on both morale and retention.

Also as a result of insights gained from our last SOE participation, we are continuing to emphasize more effective top-down communication. We are now ensuring that all new staff are oriented to the School’s intranet system and given a user ID and password; we have distributed a new, more comprehensive employee handbook which is also available on line as well as in regular print, large print, and Braille; and we are still holding town meetings as needed to address topics of concern to staff, most recently on indoor air quality.

Our current area of emphasis in seeking employee input concerns facilities. As the School embarks on a long-term project to renovate or replace many campus buildings, we are involving staff significantly in the development of a campus master plan.

During FY 05, participation in the State Auditor's Office Employee Exit Survey dropped to 15.9%, down from 22.6% in 2003 but still at the approximate rate of participation for all mid-sized agencies. Although there is some risk in making inferences from such a small number of respondents, the survey results revealed some frustration with staff cuts and the resulting workload pressures as well as resentment of return-to-work retirees. Nevertheless, no one cited job or agency-related reasons as their primary reason for terminating. In our experience, very seldom do staff express dissatisfaction with the work itself. The focus at TSBVI is, first and foremost, on students, and that is reflected in the attitude of all staff.

Finally, TSBVI continues to have very few grievances and we have not had a complaint filed with the Texas Commission on Human Rights and/or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in over five years. We believe that these are also indicators of generally positive employee attitudes.

## **AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**GOAL 1:** **Students who are visually impaired or deafblind will demonstrate the skills and knowledge to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying lives as demonstrated by academic success and successful transition to the community.**

**OBJECTIVES:** Students will demonstrate increased knowledge and skills, increased participation and independence, and ability to generalize and apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. By fiscal year 2010:

- TSBVI will achieve 100% of the student learning indicator standard established annually with the Texas Education Agency.
- 95% of responding LEAs, parents, and students will rate the students' progress in Comprehensive Programs as satisfactory or above.
- Student progress in all major instructional areas will be rated by at least 90% of LEAs, parents and students as satisfactory or above.

Students attending short-term programs will annually demonstrate success in their educational programs. By fiscal year 2010:

- 92% of students attending short-term programs will demonstrate progress as measured by pre- and post-assessment.
- 90% of responding LEAs, parents, and students will rate the students' experiences in the short-term programs as very satisfactory or above.

Students will have beneficial experiences at TSBVI summer programs. By fiscal year 2010:

- 85% of students' learning experiences in summer programs will be rated by local districts as very satisfactory or above.
- 80% of students' learning experiences in summer programs will be rated by parents as very satisfactory or above.

Students will make successful transitions. By fiscal year 2010

- 75% of students who have graduated from TSBVI within the past 5 years will be employed, enrolled in post-secondary education or training, or engaged in productive activities.

### Outcome Measures:

- \* Percent of Student Learning Performance Indicator Attained
- \* Percent of Responding LEA's, Parents and Students Rating the Students' Progress in Comprehensive Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above
- \* Percent of Major Instructional Areas in which Students' Progress was Rated by at Least 90% of LEAs, Parents and Students as Satisfactory or Above
- \* Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-assessment
- \* Percent of Responding LEAs, Parents, and Students Rating the Students' Experiences in the Short-term Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above
- \* Percent of Students Whose Responding Local School Districts Rated Their Learning Experience at TSBVI Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above
- \* Percent of Students Whose Responding Parents Rated Their Learning Experience at TSBVI Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above
- \* Percent of Students Graduated from TSBVI During the Past 5 Years Who are Currently Employed, Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities

**STRATEGY:** Provide a well-balanced curriculum which includes disability-specific skills and which meets either State Board of Education requirements for regular education or individual education plan (IEP) goals. Provide instruction in academic/functional, vocational, and orientation and mobility skills and promote the successful transition of students to local schools, community placements, work or further education.

### Output Measures:

- \* Number of Students Enrolled in Day Programming During the Regular School Year
- \* Number of Students Working Off-Campus or Attending Class Off-Campus
- \* Number of Students Returned to Local School Districts
- \* Number of Students Graduated
- \* Percent of Students Enrolled Who Have Multiple Disabilities

Efficiency Measure:

- \* Average Cost of Instructional Program per Student per Day

Explanatory Measure:

- \* Average Length of Enrollment in Regular School Year Program (months)

**STRATEGY:** Conduct residential programming that provides instruction in independent living skills and social skills.

Output Measure:

- \* Number of Students Enrolled in Residential Programming During the Regular School Year

Efficiency Measure:

- \* Average Cost of Residential Program per Student per Night

**STRATEGY:** Provide a variety of instructional and residential Special Programs including summer enrichment and short-term programs designed to meet the educational needs of students with visual impairments. Curriculum will be provided in the following content areas: (a) compensatory academic skills, including communication modes; (b) social interaction skills; (c) recreation and leisure skills; (d) use of assistive technology; (e) orientation and mobility; (f) independent living skills; (g) career education; and (h) visual efficiency skills.

Output Measures:

- \* Number of Students Enrolled in Short-term Programs
- \* Number of Students Enrolled in Summer Programs

Efficiency Measure:

- \* Average Cost of Special Programs per Student

**STRATEGY:** Provide related and support services during the regular school year and short-term Special Programs that support the instruction of students attending TSBVI.

Output Measures:

- \* Total Student Caseloads of Primary Related Services Staff
- \* Average Weekly Percent of Residential Students Participating in the "Weekends Home" Program

Efficiency Measures:

- \* Average Cost of Related and Support Services per Student

**GOAL 2: Families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve educational programming and other services for all Texas students who are visually impaired or deafblind.**

**OBJECTIVE:** By fiscal year 2010, 85% of families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will rate as very satisfactory or above the improvement of their knowledge and skills as a result of services products received from TSBVI.

By fiscal year 2010, 85% of families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will rate as very satisfactory or above the effectiveness of the on-site visit/workshop.

By fiscal year 2010, 90% of families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will agree that there was a positive change for students, staff, or family as a result of on-site visits.

Outcome Measures:

- \* Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Improvement of their Knowledge and Skills as a Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI
- \* Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the On-site Visit/Workshop
- \* Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Agreeing that there was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a Result of the On-site Visit

**STRATEGY:** Provide technical assistance and information and referral services for families of and programs serving children with visual impairments and children with deaf-blindness through pre-service, inservice and family services programs.

Output Measures:

- \* Number of Education Regions Receiving On-Site Consultation and/or Workshops in Their Regions or Attending Training Sponsored by TSBVI
- \* Number of Districts/Special Education Cooperatives Receiving On-Site Consultations
- \* Number of Conferences/Workshops-Local, Regional, Statewide, and National

- \* Number of On-Site Visits
- \* Number of Participants at Local, Regional, Statewide, and National Conferences and Workshops
- \* Number of Videoconferencing Events

Efficiency Measures:

- \* Average Cost of Each On-Site Consultation
- \* Average Cost of Workshop per Person

**GOAL 3: We will establish and carry out policies governing purchasing and public works contracting that foster meaningful and substantive inclusion of historically underutilized businesses.**

**OBJECTIVE:** TSBVI will include historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) in at least 18% of the total value of contracts and subcontracts awarded annually by the agency in purchasing and public works contracting by fiscal year 2010.

Outcome Measure:

- \* Percent of Total Dollar Value of Purchasing and Public Works Contracts and Subcontracts Awarded to HUBs

**STRATEGY:** Develop and implement a plan for increasing the use of historically underutilized businesses through purchasing and public works contracts and subcontracts.

Output Measures:

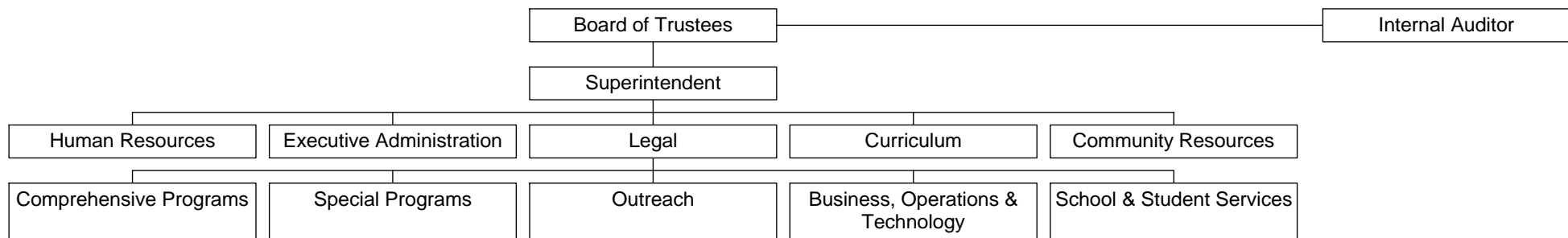
- \* Number of HUB Contractors and Subcontractors Contacted for Bid Proposals
- \* Number of HUB Contracts and Subcontracts Awarded
- \* Dollar Value of HUB Contracts and Subcontracts Awarded

## ***Appendix A: Strategic Planning Process***

This Agency Strategic Plan was developed with input from the School's Instructional Planning Council (IPC), TSBVI's Management Team, and the Board of Trustees. Members of these groups include TSBVI staff, students, parents, ex-students, individuals with visual impairments, professionals serving students with visual impairments throughout Texas, and members of the business community.

*Appendix B: Current Organizational Chart*

# Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired



*Appendix C: Five-Year Projections for Outcomes*

**TSBVI PROJECTED OUTCOMES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2007-2011**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Percent of Student Learning Performance Indicator Attained	100	100	100	100	100
Percent of Responding LEA's, Parents and Students Rating the Students' Progress in Comprehensive Programs as Satisfactory or Above <i>(new measure beginning in FY 2008)</i>	--	95	95	95	95
Percent of Major Instructional Areas in which Students' Progress was Rated by at Least 90% of LEAs, Parents and Students as Satisfactory or Above <i>(new measure beginning in FY 2008)</i>	--	100	100	100	100
Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-assessment	92	92	92	92	92
Percent of Responding LEAs, Parents, and Students Rating the Students' Experiences in the Short-term Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above	85	90	90	90	90
Percent of Students Whose Responding Local School Districts Rated their Learning Experience at Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above	90	85	85	85	85
Percent of Students Whose Responding Parents Rated their Learning Experience at Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above	80	80	80	80	80
Percent of Students Graduated From TSBVI During the Past 5 Years Who are Employed, Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities	70	75	75	75	75
Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Improvement in their Knowledge and Skills as a Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI	85	85	85	85	85
Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the On-Site Visit/Workshop	85	85	85	85	85
Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Agreeing that there was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a Result of the On-Site Visit	90	90	90	90	90

## *Appendix D: Performance Measure Definitions*

### OUTCOME MEASURES

#### **Objective 1:1 – Student Success**

##### **Percent of Student Learning Performance Indicator Attained**

**Short Definition:** This measure indicates the degree to which the School attains the standard for student learning established for it by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). All students are evaluated to determine the knowledge and skills that they have acquired in all the curricular areas in which they receive instruction.

**Purpose/Importance:** This measure reflects the School’s primary measure of student learning and also serves as a basis for determining the accreditation status of the School. The standard for student performance that underlies this measure was jointly developed by TEA and TSBVI in response to a legislative requirement that such a measure be adopted by a joint memorandum of understanding.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Each student receives a pre-test in the curricular areas in which the student is scheduled. The number of skills in which the student has competency and generalized use are recorded on a computer database. At the end of the school year, the student is tested again to determine the number of skills in which the student has attained competency and generalized use. The teachers enter this data into a computer database and submit it to the Curriculum Department for compilation and analysis. The final results are forwarded to the Texas Education Agency.

**Method of Calculation:** The improvement in skills for each student is calculated at the end of each school year. Improvement is based on attainment of the following three criteria: a predetermined increase in the number of skills at the competency level, a predetermined increase in the number of generalized skills, and a predetermined prompt-level decrease, all of which were established in the student’s previous Individual Education Plan (IEP). The percent of students who achieve the required level of mastery is calculated and measured against the annual standard established for TSBVI. The percent of deviation between the aggregated scores of the students and the standard established for the School is calculated.

**Data Limitations:** The evaluation data is curriculum-based and criterion-referenced. However, the results will have some limitations based on the degree to which the evaluators demonstrate objectivity and inter-rater reliability in conducting the assessments.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than Target

##### **Percent of Responding LEAs, Parents, and Students Rating the Students’ Progress in Comprehensive Programs as Satisfactory or Above:**

**Short Definition:** Student progress is measured based on the perceptions of all the stakeholders interested in the learning acquired by students at TSBVI during the regular school year.

**Purpose/Importance:** Student learning is the primary mission of the School. This measure helps the School to determine whether its regular school year program is considered to be effective.

**Source/Collection of Data:** All parents, all local districts, and selected students are surveyed. Student participants are those middle school and high school students who have the cognitive ability to understand the questions in the survey. Surveys are mailed out by, and returned to, the Superintendent's office near the time of the annual review of each student's individual education plan (IEP) and consist of a rating instrument on which the local district, parent, and student indicate their degree of satisfaction with the student's progress in 10 identified skill areas. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Results for each current year are reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** A percentage is obtained by averaging the 10 skill area scores for each student by type of respondent (local district, parents, and student) to obtain one average score per student per type of respondent. An average of 3 or lower is rated as very satisfactory or above. The final reported result is calculated by determining the number of average scores of 3 or lower as compared to the total number of surveys returned.

**Data Limitations:** The entire survey is somewhat subjective. Student progress can be impacted by a number of factors beyond the School's control including each student's motivation to learn.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** Yes

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Major Instructional Areas in which Students' Progress was Rated by at Least 90% of LEAs, Parents, and Students as Satisfactory or Above**

**Short Definition:** Student progress is measured based on the perceptions of all the stakeholders interested in the learning acquired by students at TSBVI during the regular school year.

**Purpose/Importance:** Student learning is the primary mission of the School. This measure helps the School to determine whether its regular school year program is considered to be effective.

**Source/Collection of Data:** All parents, all local districts, and selected students are surveyed. Student participants are those middle school and high school students who have the cognitive ability to understand the questions in the survey. Surveys are mailed out by, and returned to, the Superintendent's office near the time of the annual review of each student's individual education plan (IEP) and consist of a rating instrument on which the local district, parent, and student indicate their degree of satisfaction with the student's progress in 10 identified skill areas. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Results for each current year are reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** An average percentage of satisfaction is obtained by tallying the number of respondents who rated progress in each instructional area as a 3 or lower versus the total number of respondents to obtain one average score for each of the 10 instructional areas. The final reported result is

calculated by dividing the number of instructional areas in which at least 90% of customers rated progress as a 3 or lower versus the total number of instructional areas.

**Data Limitations:** The entire survey is somewhat subjective. Student progress can be impacted by a number of factors beyond the School's control including each student's motivation to learn.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** Yes

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-Assessment:**

**Short Definition:** All students are evaluated to determine the knowledge and skills that they have acquired in the special program that they attended.

**Purpose/Importance:** This is the School's primary measure of student learning in the special programs. The results are shared with the students' local school districts and parents.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Each student receives a pre-test in the skill areas for which the student has registered. At the end of the program, the student is tested again to determine progress. The teachers collect this data and submit it to the principal's office for compilation and analysis.

**Method of Calculation:** For each skill taught within an objective, the student is assessed on his/her ability to demonstrate the skill with 1 point given for demonstration of the skill and ½ point given for improvement in the skill. A percentage of progress for each objective is then obtained by tallying the number of points earned within the objective and dividing the total by the total number of skills taught. "Progress" on each objective is defined as a score of 70% or more. Progress in the Special Program class is considered to have been made when the student has made progress (a score of 70% or more) on at least 50% of his/her objectives. On an annual basis, the total number of students (duplicated count) who have made progress in the Special Program classes is divided by the total number of students (duplicated count) who attended the program classes to determine whether or not the program's performance objective has been met.

**Data Limitations:** The evaluation data are criterion-referenced. The results have some limitations based upon the degree to which the evaluators exercise objectivity and inter-rater reliability in conducting the assessments.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** Yes (new definition)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

### **Percent of Responding LEAs, Parents, and Students Rating the Students' Experiences in the Short-term Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above:**

**Short Definition:** This is a measure of customer satisfaction with students' experiences during the short-term programs provided during the regular school year.

**Purpose/Importance:** Student learning is the primary mission of the School. The School uses this measure to determine whether the short-term programs are considered to be beneficial to students.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Surveys are mailed out and returned to the Principal's Office following each short program. Local school districts, parents and students will indicate their degree of satisfaction with the instructional experience. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of local district, parents and students rating the students' experiences as a 2 or lower is divided by the total number of respondents to the survey question.

**Data Limitations:** Customer satisfaction surveys are based primarily on the subjective perceptions of the respondents. The ratings depend heavily on information provided to the respondents by the students themselves as well as the customers' individual interpretations of the purposes of the programs. Customer satisfaction is not based on measurement of actual student learning.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No (new definition of survey)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

### **Percent of Students Whose Responding Local School Districts Rated their Learning Experience at TSBVI Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above:**

**Short Definition:** The measurement of student progress is based on the perceptions of all the stakeholders interested in the learning experience of students attending a summer program at TSBVI.

**Purpose/Importance:** Student learning is the primary mission of the School. This measure helps the School to determine whether its summer programs are considered to be effective.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Surveys are mailed out by, and returned to, the Superintendent's office early in the fall and include a rating instrument on which local school district personnel indicate their degree of satisfaction with the student's learning experience. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Results for the summer program sessions are reported in the following calendar year in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of local districts rating the students' learning experiences as a 2 or lower is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

**Data Limitations:** Customer satisfaction surveys are based primarily on the subjective perceptions of the respondents. The ratings depend heavily on information provided to the respondents by the students themselves and are not based on measurement of actual student learning.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No (new definition of survey)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Students Whose Responding Parents Rated their Learning Experience at TSBVI Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above:**

**Short Definition:** The measurement of student progress is based on the perceptions of all the stakeholders interested in the learning experience of students attending a summer program at TSBVI.

**Purpose/Importance:** Student learning is the primary mission of the School. This measure helps the School to determine whether its summer programs are considered to be effective.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Surveys are mailed out by, and returned to, the Superintendent's office early in the fall and include a rating instrument on which parents indicate their degree of satisfaction with the student's learning experience. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Results for the summer program sessions are reported in the following calendar year in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of parents rating the students' learning experiences as a 2 or lower is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

**Data Limitations:** Customer satisfaction surveys are based primarily on the subjective perceptions of the respondents. The ratings depend heavily on information provided to the respondents by the students themselves and are not based on measurement of actual student learning.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No (new definition of survey)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Students Graduated from TSBVI during the Past Five Years Who are Currently Employed, Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities**

**Short Definition:** Percentage of students who graduated from TSBVI five years before, and up through, May of the previous year who, during the past six months, had paid employment, were enrolled in post-secondary education or training, were homemakers with at least one dependent, were engaged in unpaid work or who, during the past 30 days, were actively seeking employment or who currently participate on an ongoing basis in volunteer activities. Graduates who are no longer in the labor force because of long-term physical or mental illness are not included in the calculation.

**Purpose/Importance:** This measure provides information about the employability of TSBVI graduates, the rate at which they are enrolled in post-secondary education or training and the effectiveness of TSBVI's career education programs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Surveys are mailed out by the Superintendent’s office each summer to the last known location of TSBVI graduates, including to their own homes, to their parents’ homes and to adult living centers. Respondents are asked to state the history of the graduate since leaving the School. Because the return rate for written surveys is low, a telephone survey is initiated later in the summer to locate students and learn their history. Data are reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of graduates who, during the last six months were employed, enrolled in post-secondary education or training, were homemakers with at least one dependent, were engaged in unpaid work or who, during the past 30 days, were actively seeking employment or who currently participate on an ongoing basis in volunteer activities is measured against the total number of respondents to the surveys. Graduates who are not in the labor force because of long-term physical or mental illness are not included.

**Data Limitations:** Employment of graduates and enrollment into post-secondary education or training are contingent upon many factors, many of which are beyond the control of TSBVI. A graduate’s motivation to work or to receive further education or training, as well as an employer’s willingness to hire an individual who has a visual impairment have a strong impact on the results of this measure.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

## **Objective 2.1 – Statewide Resource Center**

### **Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Improvement of their Knowledge and Skills as a Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI:**

**Short Definition:** Parents and professionals throughout Texas who have received services and products from the School’s Outreach Program are surveyed to measure their satisfaction with these services and products.

**Purpose/Importance:** This is a key question to indicate whether the TSBVI training and materials provided new or valuable information in a format useful to participants.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Surveys are distributed following each workshop and along with written reports mailed out following each on-site consultation. Surveys are mailed annually for the “See/Hear Newsletter”, and for customers of the Technology Loan Program and Instructional Materials Center. The surveys include a rating instrument on which Outreach customers indicate their degree of satisfaction according to the following rating scale: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Data are compiled manually and reported in the Annual Performance Report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of Outreach customers rating how well Outreach products or services improved their knowledge and skills as a 2 or lower is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

**Data Limitations:** Success is based on the perceptions of those who have received the products and services. A degree of subjectivity is inherent but the measure offers reliable information on program results and customer satisfaction.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No (new definition of survey)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the On-site Visit/Workshop:**

**Short Definition:** Parents, professionals, or paraprofessionals attending Outreach workshops or receiving on-site technical assistance rate the effectiveness of the services.

**Purpose/Importance:** This measure of customer satisfaction provides information about whether Outreach staff effectively address the specific needs of parents, professionals and paraprofessionals receiving consultation or training.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach customers are provided with written surveys following each workshop and on-site visit on which to rate their satisfaction according to a five-point rating scale: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Data are manually compiled and reported in the Annual Performance Report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of Outreach customers rating the effectiveness of the on-site visit or workshop as a 2 or lower is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

**Data Limitations:** Success is based on the perceptions of those who have received the services. A degree of subjectivity is inherent but the measure offers reliable information on program results and customer satisfaction.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No (new definition of survey)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Agreeing that There was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a Result of the On-site Visit:**

**Short Definition:** Percentage of Outreach customers agreeing that the student, staff or family experienced a positive change as a result of an on-site visit.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure addresses the question as to whether the services of Outreach actually make a positive difference. This is an important measure of program effectiveness.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach customers are provided with written surveys following each on-site visit on which to rate their satisfaction according to a two-point scale: Yes or No. Data are manually compiled and reported in the Annual Performance Report following the fourth quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of Outreach customers agreeing that the on-site visit resulted in a positive change as compared to the total number of responses.

**Data Limitations:** Success is based on the perceptions of those who have received the services. A degree of subjectivity is inherent but the measure offers reliable information on program results and customer satisfaction.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

## OUTPUT, EFFICIENCY and EXPLANATORY MEASURES

### Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.1

#### **Number of Students Enrolled in Day Programming During the Regular School Year:**

**Short Definition:** The total number of individual students enrolled at TSBVI who received classroom instruction during the regular school year (September-May) including students on evaluation status.

**Purpose/Importance:** Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs. The data is also used to determine the School's allocation of federal IDEA funds and the local schools' contribution of funds to TSBVI.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The School's Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes. A database report is compared with student enrollment lists provided by each program to determine the number of students enrolled each quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** Each individual student who has attended classes during any time each quarter is counted.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

#### **Number of Students Working Off-Campus or Attending Class Off-Campus:**

**Short Definition:** The number of students attending classes during the regular school year who participate in work experiences off-campus or attend a portion of their classes off-campus in an accredited school program.

**Purpose/Importance:** Evaluates degree of students work experience and participation in the general community. Provides information related to the statutory requirement that students with disabilities participate in the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The Career Education Program provides information about students' work activities during each quarter. The instructional program offices provide information about student attendance in regular public schools to receive instruction in the State's general curriculum.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of individual students who either participate in work activities off-campus or attend classes off-campus is counted. Students who participate in both activities are only counted once.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Number of Students Returned to Local School Districts:**

**Short Definition:** The total number of students transitioned from TSBVI to local school districts in the state of Texas.

**Purpose/Importance:** This measure reflects the number of students transitioned to local school districts through the ARD process, as having met goals designed to enable the students to successfully participate and integrate in their local school's and community's programs. Data are obtained through the agency's automated student database system.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The School's Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes. A database report is compared with student enrollment lists provided by each program to determine the number of students that transitioned each quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of individual students that transitioned each quarter is reported.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Number of Students Graduated:**

**Short Definition:** The number of individual students who graduated from TSBVI and transitioned to a group home, private residence or supported living arrangement. It includes students who continue to receive local educational services.

**Purpose/Importance:** Number of student graduates provides data related to planning and decisions about staffing levels and funding needs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The School's Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes. A database report is compared with student enrollment lists provided by each program to determine the number of students that graduated each quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of individual students who graduated each quarter is reported.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meets target

**Percent of Students Enrolled Who Have Multiple Disabilities:**

**Short Definition:** The total percent of students with multiple disabilities who received classroom instruction during the regular school year.

**Purpose/Importance:** The percent of enrolled students with multiple disabilities is a critical factor in planning programs, allocating staff and fiscal resources, and modifying facilities.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Disability status is determined at each student's annual ARD (admission, review, and dismissal) meeting and maintained in a student database in the Registrar's Office. Students counted are those having "multiple disabilities" as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations 300.7(6). The measure also includes students labeled as "deafblind". A report from the database is generated each quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** Counted are the total percent of individual students who are identified as having a disability in addition to a visual impairment.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Efficiency Measure – Strategy 1.1.1**

**Average Cost of Instructional Program per Student per Day:**

**Short Definition:** Daily cost per student attending the instructional component of the regular school year program, not including short-term program students.

**Purpose/Importance:** Useful for long-range planning.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Applicable portions of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

**Method of Calculation:** Divide applicable expenses by total enrollment by the number of teacher contract days.

**Data Limitations:** The total population of the School varies from year to year in terms of number and degree of disability. Therefore, the average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students referred by local districts, and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Lower than target

**Explanatory Measure – Strategy 1.1.1**

**Average Length of Enrollment in Regular School Year Program (months)**

**Short Definition:** The average length of enrollment at TSBVI (in months) of students who graduate or return to local school programs during the regular school year.

**Purpose/Importance:** Students come to TSBVI for specialized and intensive services related to their visual impairment. The School is committed to helping students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for them to successfully function in their local schools. The measure when viewed over time indicates the degree to which the School is successful in preparing students for return to their families and local programs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Enrollment history is maintained in the School’s computer-based Student Data System.

**Method of Calculation:** The duration of student enrollment is obtained by annually calculating the total lengths of stay (in months) of all students who exited TSBVI during the past regular school year, divided by the total number of students who exited the same school year. Data is reported in the fourth quarter.

**Data Limitations:** The duration of each student’s enrollment is based on individual needs and the availability of appropriate programming in the local school. Some students will require longer enrollment at TSBVI than others. The decision is made by each student’s Annual Admission-Review-Dismissal (ARD) Committee.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.2**

**Number of Students Enrolled in Residential Programming during the Regular School Year:**

**Short Definition:** The total number of individual students enrolled at TSBVI who received residential programming during the regular school year (September-May) including students on evaluation status.

**Purpose/Importance:** Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The School’s Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes.

**Method of Calculation:** Each individual student who was enrolled in residential programming during any time of each quarter is counted.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Efficiency Measure – Strategy 1.1.2**

**Average Cost of Residential Program per Student per Night:**

**Short Definition:** Daily cost per student enrolled in the residential program during the regular school year, not including short-term programs.

**Purpose/Importance:** Useful for long-range planning.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Applicable portions of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

**Method of Calculation:** Divide applicable expenses by total enrollment by the number of days each month.

**Data Limitations:** The total population of the School varies from year to year in terms of number and degree of disability. Therefore, the average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students referred by local districts, and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Lower than target

**Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.3**

**Number of Students Enrolled in Short-term Programs:**

**Short Definition:** The total number of individual students enrolled in instructional short-term programs offered during the regular school year.

**Purpose/Importance:** Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The School's Registrar enters enrollment information into a database. A report is generated each quarter to determine the number of students enrolled each quarter.

**Method of Calculation:** This is a cumulative, duplicated count of individual students who are enrolled in instructional programming in any short-term program during each quarter.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No (clearer definition of how counted)

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Number of Students Enrolled in Summer Programs:**

**Short Definition:** The total number of individual students receiving instruction during the summer programs.

**Purpose/Importance:** Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** The School's Registrar enters enrollment information into a database. A report is generated in the fourth quarter to determine the number of students enrolled.

**Method of Calculation:** The number of students (duplicated count) attending each summer program is added to attain this information.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No (clearer definition of how counted)

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

**Efficiency Measure – Strategy 1.1.3**

**Average Cost of Special Programs per Student:**

**Short Definition:** Average total cost per student of all short-term programs offered during the regular school year and summer.

**Purpose/Importance:** Useful for planning, and for the allocation of budget, personnel and facilities.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Applicable sections of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

**Method of Calculation:** Divide applicable expenses by total enrollment of students in short-term and summer programs.

**Data Limitations:** The average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students participating in all short-term programs (regular school year and summer), and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Lower than target

#### **Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.4**

##### **Total Student Caseloads of Primary Related Service Staff**

**Short Definition:** This measure reflects the total number of students assigned to each of the following related service providers: counseling and social work services, psychological and assessment services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, health services, speech-language therapy, and orientation and mobility instruction, including direct, consultative, and infused services.

**Purpose/Importance:** Useful for planning, for determining staffing needs, and for documenting compliance with the statutory requirements related to special education.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Students' schedules, providers' schedules, and students' IEPs are the sources for this information.

**Method of Calculation:** The caseloads of each related service provider are tallied and added together for a total related service caseload.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

##### **Average Weekly Percent of Residential Students Participating in the “Weekends Home” Program:**

**Short Definition:** The average weekly percent of regular school year residential students participating in the Weekends Home Program.

**Purpose/Importance:** All residential students enrolled during the regular school year (August-May) are provided the opportunity to go home on weekends via commercial transportation, parent transportation, or TSBVI vehicles. The measure is important for allocating drivers and escorts, maintaining and replacing vehicles, and allocating funds.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Transportation logs and dormitory records are completed weekly.

**Method of Calculation:** A percentage of weekly participation is obtained by dividing the number of students participating in the program by the total number of residential students enrolled that week. The

weekly percentages are then totaled and divided by the number of weeks the program operates. The program does not operate when TSBVI is closed for school holidays/vacations.

**Data Limitations:** Many factors beyond the School's control affect the number of students participating in the program. Among these factors are the desires of the students' families, distances to home, and students' desires.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Efficiency Measures – Strategy 1.1.4**

**Average Cost of Related and Support Services per Student:**

**Short Definition:** This measure calculates the per student cost of related and support services for all programs conducted on the School's campus. Related and support services include orientation and mobility, social work services, occupational and physical therapy services, psychological services, counseling, educational diagnostician services, speech and audiological services, library services, curriculum services, staff development, health services, food services, recreation services, and transportation service.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure provides the School with cost data for services required by federal and state laws and rules related to special education, and for services required because of the residential component of the School's programs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Applicable sections of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

**Method of Calculation:** This measure is calculated by dividing the total cost of the related and support services strategy (Strategy 1.1.4) by the total number of students enrolled in the regular school year and in all short-term programs.

**Data Limitations:** The total population of the School varies from year to year in terms of number and degree of disability. Therefore, the average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students referred by local districts, student participation in all short-term programs, and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Lower than target

## Output Measures – Strategy 2.1.1

### **Number of Education Regions Receiving On-site Consultation and/or Workshops in their Regions or Attending Training Sponsored by TSBVI:**

**Short Definition:** The measure reflects how many of the twenty Education Service Center regions throughout the State received consultation or workshops from Outreach staff or attended training sponsored by Outreach staff concerning services for children with visual impairments and deafblindness. Consultation consists of suggestions for instructional methodologies, materials and equipment, staffing needs, educational placement, behavior programs, related services, or other local and regional resources.

**Purpose/Importance:** Measures the degree to which TSBVI Outreach Services are provided to all regions of the State.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet that records Outreach Services provided throughout the State and specifically listing the regional education service centers in which they were provided and the regions represented at training sessions.

**Method of Calculation:** The total number of regions receiving services each quarter.

**Data Limitations:** Outreach services are provided to regional education service centers or their constituents only upon request.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Meet target

### **Number of Districts/Special Education Cooperatives Receiving On-site Consultations:**

**Short Definition:** The number of independent school districts, special education cooperatives, families, and local service providers receiving on-site consultations coordinated by TSBVI Outreach Programs. Consultation consists of suggestions for instructional methodologies, materials and equipment, staffing needs, educational placement, behavior programs, related services, or other local and regional resources.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure indicates the impact of Outreach consultations in terms of quantity and geographical dispersion.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing the content and location of the services provided.

**Method of Calculation:** Tally the total number of individual local school districts or special education cooperatives receiving on-site consultations.

**Data Limitations:** Outreach services are provided to districts and special education cooperatives only upon request.

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Number of Conferences/Workshops – Local, Regional, Statewide, and National:**

**Short Definition:** The number of local, regional, statewide, or national workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by TSBVI, or at which TSBVI personnel are speakers.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure indicates the degree to which the School's services meet its statewide mission and demonstrate professional leadership in the field.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing services provided throughout the State and nation.

**Method of Calculation:** Tally the total number of conferences provided.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Number of On-site Visits:**

**Short Definition:** The number of individual on-site consultations to local school programs, families and local service providers regarding services for students with visual impairments. Consultation consists of suggestions for instructional methodologies, materials and equipment, staffing needs, educational placement, behavior programs, related services, or other local and regional resources.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure is important for two reasons: (1) it provides information regarding demand for the School's services, and (2) it provides historical data for planning and budgeting costs related to travel and staffing needs.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing services provided throughout the State.

**Method of Calculation:** Tally the number of individual on-site visits.

**Data Limitations:** Outreach services are provided to districts and special education cooperatives only upon request.

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

### **Number of Participants at Local, Regional, Statewide, and National Conferences and Workshops:**

**Short Definition:** The overall number of participants at conferences and workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by TSBVI, or those at which TSBVI staff are speakers.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure indicates the degree to which the School's services meet its statewide mission and demonstrates professional leadership in the field.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing the number of participants attending conferences and workshops.

**Method of Calculation:** Tally the total number of participants and the locations where they work.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

### **Number of Videoconferencing Events:**

**Short Definition:** The overall number of teleconferencing events sponsored by TSBVI.

**Purpose/Importance:** The measure indicates the degree to which the School's services meet its statewide mission to provide training and demonstrates professional leadership in the field.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing the number of teleconferencing events.

**Method of Calculation:** Tally the total number of teleconferencing events.

**Data Limitations:** None

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

### **Efficiency Measures – Strategy 2.1.1**

#### **Average Cost of Each On-site Consultation:**

**Short Definition:** This measure calculates the average per-trip cost to conduct consultation regarding specific students attending local programs.

**Purpose/Importance:** This measure tracks expenditures on staff travel for on-site consultations. It is important for the School to collect data on costs that are subject to the limit on travel expenditures required by the legislature for state agencies.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff provide receipts for travel expenses that are maintained in a computer-based spreadsheet.

**Method of Calculation:** The sum of costs for all travel for on-site consultation is divided by the number of trips made for this purpose.

**Data Limitations:** There are several independent variables in calculating this efficiency measure: duration of each trip, distance traveled, and commercial airfares.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Lower than target

**Average Cost of Workshop per Person:**

**Short Definition:** Average per participant cost for workshops sponsored by TSBVI Outreach.

**Purpose/Importance:** This measure tracks expenditures for workshops sponsored by TSBVI. The data is important for budget planning.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Outreach staff manually track workshop expenses that are submitted for payment from funds appropriated to TSBVI.

**Method of Calculation:** The cost of each workshop production is divided by the number of participants at each conference to obtain an average cost for each conference. Each average cost is added and then divided by the number of workshops. The total cost of each workshop's expenses, including speaker fees, travel expenses for speakers and/or Outreach staff, audio/visual media, facility rental, copying costs, interpreter fees, and travel assistance for participants, when applicable.

**Data Limitations:** There are several independent variables in calculating this efficiency measure: number of participants, duration of each workshop, distance traveled, commercial airfares, cost for presenters, and the costs paid by other co-sponsors.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Lower than target

## DRAFT

### TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED

#### STRATEGIC WORKFORCE ANALYSIS AND PLAN

##### I. OVERVIEW

Originally created by the Texas Legislature in 1856, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been established as part of the public education system that serves as a special school in the continuum of statewide alternative placements for students who have a visual impairment. It is also a statewide resource to parents of these children and professionals who serve them.

##### ***Mission of TSBVI***

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) will be a leading center of educational expertise in Texas for students with visual impairments, their families and the local and regional service providers who work with them. TSBVI will provide opportunities for children and youth who are visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness, to develop the skills necessary to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying and productive lives.

##### ***Strategic Goals and Objectives***

**GOAL 1:** **Students who are visually impaired or deafblind will demonstrate the skills and knowledge to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying lives as demonstrated by academic success and successful transition to the community.**

**OBJECTIVES:** Students will demonstrate increased knowledge and skills, increased participation and independence, and ability to generalize and apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. By fiscal year 2010:

- TSBVI will achieve 100% of the student learning indicator standard established annually with the Texas Education Agency.
- 95% of responding LEAs, parents, and students will rate the students' progress in Comprehensive Programs as satisfactory or above.
- Student progress in all major instructional areas will be rated by at least 90% of LEAs, parents and students as satisfactory or above

Students attending short-term programs will annually demonstrate success in their educational programs. By fiscal year 2010:

- 92% of students attending short-term programs will demonstrate progress as measured by pre- and post-assessment.
- 90% of responding LEAs, parents, and students will rate the students' experiences in the short-term programs as very satisfactory or above.

Students will have beneficial experiences at TSBVI summer programs. By fiscal year 2010:

- 85% of students' learning experiences in summer programs will be rated by local districts as very satisfactory or above.
- 80% of students' learning experiences in summer programs will be rated by parents as very satisfactory or above.
- 75% of students who have graduated from TSBVI within the past 5 years will be employed, enrolled in post-secondary education or training, or engaged in productive activities

**GOAL 2: Families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve educational programming and other services for all Texas students who are visually impaired or deafblind.**

**OBJECTIVE:** By fiscal year 2010, 85% of families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will rate as very satisfactory or above the improvement of their knowledge and skills as a result of services or products received from TSBVI.

By fiscal year 2010, 85% of families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will rate as very satisfactory or above the effectiveness of the on-site visit/workshop

By fiscal year 2010, 90% of families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will agree that there was a positive change for students, staff, or family as a result of on-site visits

### ***Main Functions: Direct and Outreach Services***

- \* To provide a free, appropriate public education that addresses the intense or specialized needs of visually impaired children and youth, including those with additional disabilities when the local school district and parents agree that such services are not available in a local program.
- \* To conduct supplemental programs, such as summer and other short-term programs.
- \* To provide statewide services to parents of students with visual impairments, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies. These services include training,

consultation, technical assistance, and developing and disseminating materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology.

- \* To provide information about instructional resources and materials, including educational technology, related to teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments.
- \* To lend educational and technological materials for student use to school districts and regional education service centers.
- \* To partner with Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin University in preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired.
- \* To cooperate with public and private agencies and organizations serving students and other persons with visual impairments in the planning, development, and implementation of effective educational and rehabilitative service delivery systems.
- \* To serve as leaders in the use of distance learning for teachers, parents, and students.

### ***Anticipated Changes***

It is expected that the primary functions of TSBVI will remain the same over the next five years; therefore, the mission, goals, and objectives of the School will remain relatively stable. However, the following types of changes will cause us to adjust some of our strategies, or at least the manner in which those strategies are executed:

- We are serving an increasing number of students who are either wards of the State, from unstable families, or otherwise in situations that have caused them to have severe emotional needs.
- We are serving an increasing number of adult-age students. This is creating a need to develop programs directed at transitioning to adult life, such as career education.
- To meet local school districts' desire to increase students' readiness for statewide testing, we will be expanding programming for academic students during the summer.
- Within the Outreach Program, new training and support models will be developed in the areas of transition (services which facilitate the success of students transitioning between school and adult placement), distance learning, and professional mentorship

## ***II. Current Workforce Profile***

The staff of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is comprised of 413 budgeted full- and part-time positions, totaling 360.46 FTEs during the regular school year. However, after adjusting for the fact that the majority of our employees do not work continuously through the summer and other school breaks, our annual average FTE count for FY 2005 was 312.71. Of the 413 regular positions, 314 are classified and one, the Superintendent, is line item exempt. The remaining are teachers, principals, counselors, and other educational positions that, by statute (Texas Education Code 30.024(b)(1)), are paid in accordance with Austin Independent School District pay scales for comparable positions.

Among the classified positions, the single largest staff group (146 positions) consists of residential instructors. Classified as Resident Specialists, these are the staff that provide care, instruction, and supervision of students in their non-school hours. Other classified positions range from nurses to maintenance mechanics, from accountants to technology specialists. The campus-based workforce is a small community with nearly every occupational field represented.

TSBVI's contract workforce provides services primarily in the following areas: Pediatric medicine, low vision services, psychiatry, dietitian, and linen service. The first four of these are specialized professional services that can be provided more efficiently by contractors. Linen service is contracted out for some, but not all, linen use due to the safety and equipment issues involved in laundering linens heavily soiled with biohazardous substances. Contract workers are used to a lesser degree in the following ways: Spanish translation for documents required to be provided to parents in their primary language; temporary employee vacancies; specialized, non-routine repairs.

## Demographics

### Staff by Gender

<b>Female</b>	65%
<b>Male</b>	35%

### Staff by Length of Service (still needs to be updated)

<b>&lt; 2 years</b>	24%
<b>2 – 5 years</b>	26%
<b>5 – 10 years</b>	22%
<b>10 – 15 years</b>	12%
<b>15 – 20 years</b>	10%
<b>20 – 25 years</b>	5%
<b>&gt; 25 years</b>	1%

### Staff by Age (still needs to be updated)

<b>16 – 29</b>	15%
<b>30 – 39</b>	25%
<b>40 – 49</b>	27%
<b>50 – 59</b>	26%
<b>60 – 69</b>	5%
<b>70 +</b>	2%

### Staff by Ethnicity

<b>Caucasian-American</b>	74%
<b>Hispanic-American</b>	12%
<b>African-American</b>	12%
<b>Other</b>	2%

### Staff Ethnicity by EEO Category Compared to Statewide Availability

<b>Job Category</b>	<b>African American</b>		<b>Hispanic American</b>	
	<b>TSBVI %</b>	<b>State %</b>	<b>TSBVI %</b>	<b>State %</b>
Officials, Administrat'n	0	7%	0	15%
Professional	1.8%	8%	4.3%	14%
Technical	24%	10%	0	20%
Protective Services	25%	18%	25%	22%
Paraprofessional	16%	18%	14%	32%
Admin. Support	0%	10%	19%	23%
Skilled Craft	43%	5%	32%	34%
Service & Mainten.	42%	9%	33%	33%

As is typical of an education setting, almost two-thirds of TSBVI employees are female. Sixty percent are over the age of 40, and about one-third have more than 10 years of experience at this school.

Among the EEO occupational categories, the "Officials, Administration," "Technical," "Protective Services," and "Skilled Craft" categories do not contain sufficient numbers of employees from which to make reliable inferences. For example, there are only two TSBVI employees designated as being in the "Officials, Administration" category. Nevertheless, racial minorities are still underrepresented in several categories of the TSBVI workforce, with three of the most notable discrepancies (considering the size of the categories) being in the percentage of African American professionals, Hispanic American professionals, and Hispanic American paraprofessionals. Although we are addressing this in our recruiting plan, we are limited by the fact that the majority of our professional staff consists of certified VI teachers, and it is known that minorities are vastly underrepresented in this specialized teaching field.

### ***Retirement Projections***

The task of projecting the number of retirements is more difficult for TSBVI than it might be for other agencies because our School changed retirement systems twelve years ago. In September 1994, the School moved from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) to the Employees Retirement System (ERS); therefore, the data available from ERS about retirement eligibility is incomplete because it is based on ERS service only. The ERS projection of 47 retirements from FY 2006 through 2009 will not reflect employees who may be eligible to retire when their TRS service is added to the ERS service. To further complicate matters, we cannot reliably project retirements based on length of TSBVI service because our employees were able to withdraw their TRS service without terminating employment when we moved to ERS. We know that some, perhaps many, employees did so, but this information is not formally available to us.

Fortunately, in an agency of this size, it is possible to acquire a reasonable amount of information through informal means. The following projections are based in part on length of service data augmented by anecdotally acquired information.

Administrators and Department Heads: Among the 15 managers who are the school's top administrators or major department heads, it is expected that approximately one-third to one-half will retire (or, as return-to-work retirees, terminate) within the next five years.

Educational and Related Services Professionals: Teachers, educational diagnosticians, school psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers, physical/occupational therapists and similar professionals make up this group. Approximately one-fourth of them may be eligible to retire within five years. Due to the fact that the majority of these individuals are professional educators, these are the least likely staff to have withdrawn their TRS retirement.

Mid-managers and Non-educational Professionals: This is a varied group that includes smaller department heads, living unit managers, programmers, and nurses, among others. Expected retirement eligibility within the next five years is approximately 25% also, but this assumes that they have not withdrawn their TRS service.

Instructional and Residential Paraprofessionals: Although this is our largest group of staff and consists primarily of Residential Instructors and Teaching Assistants, the anticipated retirement rate within it is negligible. These jobs are primarily done by younger individuals who will leave TSBVI employment well before retirement eligibility. The small group of older employees within this group who were eligible to retire did so during the last biennium due to the retirement incentive bonus. Now, less than 5% of our paraprofessional direct care staff have the age and length of service to retire within five years, and it is thought that many people in this group of staff withdrew their TRS retirement contributions when we moved to ERS.

Technical/Clerical Support Staff: It is likely that no more than 10% of this group will be eligible to retire within the next five years.

Other Support Services: This group includes maintenance technicians, cooks, custodial workers, drivers, and security personnel. Of these, it is estimated that about 15% could be eligible to retire within the next five years, but this is another group that includes several people who withdrew their TRS retirement contributions.

In summary, within the coming five years, TSBVI is likely to experience the most significant losses through retirement among the top administrators, managers, and professionals in the School. The fact that retirement eligibility is primarily concentrated among TSBVI's most experienced and highly skilled employees is of more concern than the actual number of prospective retirees. We know that this will be a "second and final" retirement for some individuals, but others will be interested in returning to work post-retirement and will be able to do so, which will mitigate some of the loss.

### ***Turnover and Projected Attrition***

During the 2005 fiscal year, our turnover rate as reported by the State Auditor's Office was 14.4%, including interagency transfers, compared to 16.6% turnover statewide, excluding interagency transfers. TSBVI's prior years' rates were 16% for FY 2004 and 12.8% in FY 2003.

The data presented in the State Auditor's Office annual report of turnover is based on full-time, classified staff; however, this category omits two significant segments of the TSBVI workforce. First, and most important, as noted above, nearly a quarter of our staff are categorized as "unclassified" because they are teachers and other educators paid in accordance with the local school district salary scales; therefore, including only classified staff in turnover data omits our core professional staff. Secondly, due to the 24-hour nature of our school, we employ many part-time workers to cover a variety of shift patterns. We consider part-time employees to be an integral part of our workforce and believe it is important to examine turnover in a manner that includes them. Including all exempt and part-time workers along with full-time classified staff, our turnover in FY 2005 it was 12.9%

Given that statewide unemployment is expected to remain stable through FY 2007, it is hoped that TSBVI's turnover will continued to compare favorably with the consolidated turnover rate for all state agencies.

## ***Critical Workforce Skills***

TSBVI relies primarily on teachers and other educational professionals to carry out its core mission. Additionally, direct care paraprofessionals extend the capabilities of teachers during the school day and provide care, supervision, and instruction to students during non-school hours. Finally, employees with a wide variety of administrative, technical, manual and other skills provide the support activities that allow our campus to function programmatically and physically. As such, we consider the following skills and credentials to be critical to the performance of our mission:

- Certification as a teacher of visually impaired students.
- Certification or licensure in the professional areas that comprise special education related services required for our students: O&M Specialist, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, Educational Diagnostician, Speech-Language Pathologist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Librarian, Social Worker, Nurse.
- Knowledge of local school districts and how to work with them
- Proficiency in training and consulting skills
- Proficiency in working with students with multiple disabilities.
- Proficiency in instructing students in career education and other subjects related to transition to adult life.
- For direct care paraprofessionals, individuals who have:
  - A human service orientation with a sincere desire to work with children with disabilities.
  - Paraprofessional certification and qualified under No Child Left Behind Act
- Proficiency in leadership and management skills, and educational administration certification if required for position.
- Proficiency in technology and skilled trade areas.
- Proficiency in business and administrative support areas.

## ***III. Future Workforce Profile***

### ***Factors Driving Expected Workforce Changes***

- Although, as noted above, Comprehensive Programs (regular school year) enrollment appears to be stabilizing, increased participation in the school's Special Programs (Summer and Short Term Programs) could result in more students seeking enrollment in the regular year.
- Expanded summer program offerings will generate more work for staff during the summer and the possible need to hire temporary staff from outside the school.
- Students will continue to present more severe and complex disabling conditions, particularly emotional and behavioral disorders, along with visual impairment. They will have more intense needs while enrolled at TSBVI, and will require more indirect services to help ensure their success in local school districts.
- The Weekends Home program (transporting students to and from their homes on weekends) is likely to continue to expand.
- The proportion of students who need vocational instruction and independent living skills will increase.
- Federal and state education and special education regulations will require more services and impose more standards. Although requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act have been in

place for several years, the requirements related to “highly qualified” teachers are still evolving in the area of special education.

- A long-term building project will continue to increase the number of structures on campus and, therefore, increase the need for physical plant support staff accordingly.
- Increased reliance on technology, both to execute the school's core mission and to assist in all support activities, will demand greater technical competence of staff.

### ***Future Workforce Skills Needed for Critical Functions***

The mission of TSBVI and its key goals are unlikely to change in the coming years. The critical functions will continue to be the direct and indirect provision of services to the visually impaired, school-aged children of Texas. While the mission will remain the same, it will be implemented with a changing student population and within a changing regulatory environment, by an evolving staff. As such, we anticipate the following future workforce skill needs:

- TSBVI will continue to have a steady demand for certified VI and O&M teachers, but will also need teachers who are certified in VI along with auditory impairment, math, science, ESL, and geography.
- We will continue to need certified or licensed professionals in the related services areas, but with particular emphasis on counseling and assessment personnel because of (a) anticipated attrition through retirement in this area, and (b) the need for more intensive services related to student behavioral disorders and severe emotional needs.
- We will need educational administrators with a strong background in education of the visually impaired as well as administrative and leadership skills.
- We will need managers in non-educational areas with strong leadership skills in addition to expertise with their own functional areas (facilities, business, technology, etc.).
- All staff who provide direct services to students, whether professional or paraprofessional, must develop skills to manage students' behavior and emotional problems.
- All staff must have an adequate working knowledge of technology appropriate to their assignment.

### ***Anticipated Changes in the Number of Employees Needed***

TSBVI is insufficiently staffed, primarily for two reasons: (1) Staff reductions necessitated by previous legislative funding cuts have not been fully restored; and (2) As predicted, the students being referred to TSBVI from their local districts increasingly have more complex, multiply disabling conditions which require more intense staffing. Additionally, we have experienced growth in our Short Term Programs, and will need increased custodial and maintenance support of new buildings as they are put into use.

It is difficult to forecast future enrollment, because we cannot ordinarily predict how many or which students will be referred to TSBVI, and we cannot know the extent of their needs until they have been assessed. A referral from a local district to TSBVI can take place at anytime, and it is a complex, highly regulated process which does not give us much flexibility to decline to accept students we do not feel adequately staffed to serve. Nevertheless, we do not expect a decline in enrollment or demand for other services, so the current status of being understaffed is likely to continue indefinitely.

## ***IV. Gap Analysis***

### ***Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Employees and Skills***

The following gaps are either likely or possible based on a comparison between the current staff profile and anticipated future staffing and skills needs:

- Staff will lack the knowledge and skills in behavior management required to work with students who are presenting increasingly challenging disabilities.
- We will have an insufficient supply of VI teachers, educational administrators and related service professionals due to retirement and other attrition.
- We will have an insufficient supply of professionals in the fields of visual impairment and deafblindness who are available to travel as statewide consultants.
- Fortunately, due to the availability of bond funds, during the past four years and over at least the next five years TSBVI will have built or will build more buildings than we will eliminate. The net gain in buildings will necessitate more custodial support staff.
- The need for increased fiscal and program data management will require us to either hire additional computer programmers or contract for this service.
- As technology becomes more integral to most jobs, staff will need to increase their technical competence accordingly. In some jobs, the required competence level will be quite high due to the complex technology related to visually impairment.
- To ensure that training needs related to behavior, technology, VI core curricular areas, and other content are met, we need to increase the personnel assigned to staff development. We also need for staff to have time to be trained.

## ***V. Strategies for Workforce Transition***

### ***Succession Plan***

The core of TSBVI's institutional knowledge is held by (1) its professional staff members who provide direct services to students on campus and indirect services to students throughout the state through families and other educators; and (2) its administrators and managers. Emphasis in this succession plan is given to those two groups.

At TSBVI, we take a three-pronged approach to succession planning:

- (1) We believe that a diversity of professional educational approaches enriches our programs; therefore, we strive to recruit broadly to bring highly qualified professional staff from outside our school.
- (2) The large number of paraprofessional positions at TSBVI provides a supply of staff who have demonstrated good basic skills and a genuine interest in working with children with disabilities. Some of these individuals decide that they want to make a professional career of teaching visually impaired children, which we encourage and support. Our VI teachers can pursue further career development, with our support, by obtaining additional subject matter certification, becoming administrators, or becoming related services specialists.

- (3) We seek to disseminate key institutional knowledge throughout the organization both laterally and vertically by means such as cross-training and documenting work processes. There are key positions at our School that, because of the nature of the job and the size of the department, do not have potential internal successors.

## **Direct Instruction and Service**

### **1. VI Teachers**

*Action steps to ensure adequate supply of VI teachers:*

- a. Continue to administer the VI teacher preparation project established by legislative rider. This includes: Financially supporting the Texas universities (Texas Tech and Stephen F. Austin) who offer VI teacher preparation in return for their assurance of a minimum number of graduates per year; providing mentors for teachers in training; and providing workshops for new teachers to minimize attrition.
- b. Work to assure the continued funding of the VI teacher preparation project by documenting the outcomes of the program and communicating them to the funding sources.
- c. "Create" VI teachers from TSBVI staff:
  - (1) Identify and encourage degreed paraprofessionals (e.g., teaching assistants) who could complete alternative teacher certification in Special Education through the Region XIII Education Service Center program. After completion of this program, employ them (if vacancies occur) as first year classroom teachers to fulfill their internship.
  - (2) Hire promising teacher candidates who already have Generic Special Education or other related certification.
  - (3) Require all teachers hired under both circumstances to obtain VI certification over a designated period of time. Provide tuition reimbursement for those who complete coursework toward VI certification.

### **2. Related Service Professionals and Teachers with Additional Certification**

*Action step to ensure adequate supply of related services professionals (e.g., Educational Diagnosticians, Speech/Language Pathologists) and specially certified teachers (e.g. English as a Second Language, Science)*

- a. Continue to identify "high need" credentials based on actual and expected attrition.
- b. As funding permits, utilize the existing procedure that provides for teachers to receive tuition reimbursement for completing coursework toward credentials designated by the School's management as "high need."
- c. Actively solicit interest among current VI teaching staff in these opportunities.

### **3. Outreach Specialists**

The majority of outreach specialists are highly experienced VI teachers or professionals in the field of deafblindness. A person would typically progress to this position from an earlier successful career as a provider of direct instruction; in other words, they are nearer retirement age than the average employee. It is estimated that at least half of the staff in this group will be eligible to retire within the next five years, whether they choose to do so or not. The classroom teacher staff at TSBVI provides a natural “training ground” for future outreach specialists; however, many teachers would not be interested in this role due to the extensive travel and longer work year. Generally, vacancies in this area require a national or at least statewide search. Fortunately, the very nature of the outreach specialist job involves extensive networking in the fields of visual impairment and deafblindness, both on a state and national basis. Our Outreach program is well known, and potentially suitable candidates for vacancies in this area are usually well known to us.

In summary, effective succession in this area will be accomplished by a combination of drawing upon a pool of highly qualified internal applicants and cultivating a ready-made network.

#### **Management**

##### **1. Educational and residential program administration:**

- a. Superintendent: Expected to be vacant within five years. There are one or more current employees who will meet the minimum qualifications (MQ’s) for this position.
- b. Principals/Assistant Principals/Outreach Director/School & Student Services Director: It is possible that one-third to one-half of these positions will be vacated within the next five years. It is expected that succession will be accomplished through (1) re-organization or consolidation of some functions or (2) filling vacancies with current employees who will meet MQ’s. Our practice of developing lead teachers helps ensure our future supply of educational leaders.
- c. Residential Directors/Dorm Managers: Attrition at the residential director level is not expected within the next five years. Turnover among dorm manager is routine and succession is expected to be accomplished through the competitive selection of outstanding Residential Instructors.

##### **2. Management of Support Functions:**

It is likely that three to four of the top five non-programmatic management positions will be vacated within the next five years. Although these are critical and highly skilled positions, they – unlike the educational administrator positions – do not require educational certification, and they have counterparts in other state agencies. State agency reductions in force due to consolidation and outsourcing should make this sector of the job market favorable to the employer. It is expected that both internal and external applicants will compete for most of these positions. Meanwhile, the emphasis in these

areas is on documenting institutional knowledge to ensure the smoothest possible transition to successors.

### ***Other Goals for Workforce Transition***

The first three goals, below, concern staff training. The first one addresses the need for training concerning students with severe emotional needs. Not every direct care employee will become a professional teacher, but all TSBVI staff must be able to manage student behavior and emotional issues safely and effectively. Workers, even professionals, do not arrive at our doorstep with these skills. It is imperative that we be able to rely on our own training to meet the complex behavioral and emotional needs of the students we serve. During the past four years, we have met our previously stated goals to develop our own comprehensive behavior support system in conjunction with the statewide Texas Behavior Support Initiative. Our next area of development will be training for teachers and paraprofessionals that will assist them in working with students with severe emotional needs.

The second goal will facilitate having an involved and well-informed staff by ensuring that staff who do not normally use computers in their jobs begin participating in the school's intranet.

The third goal considers the possibility of combining Outreach and internal training efforts.

The fourth goal focuses on retention through continuing development of career and salary progression.

The fifth and final goal recognizes that we cannot meet all of our needs by training, promoting, and retaining our existing staff. The expanding and changing needs of our school will demand that we add staff in certain areas. This goal does not necessarily imply that the overall staff or contract workforce size must increase, since some positions may be able to replace other, less critical ones.

**Goal 1: Ensure that all staff who work with students have adequate knowledge and skills in working with students who have severe emotional needs.**

**Goal 2: Ensure that all staff in all departments have the skill and the access to consistently use the intranet for necessary information.**

**Goal 3: Explore the possibility of establishing a training academy that would serve the needs of TSBVI staff at all levels as well as non-TSBVI professionals.**

**Goal 4: Improve our ability to attract and maintain staff.**

- A. Continue efforts to fully document all aspects of our career progression programs.
- B. Develop rules to utilize our authority to make salary adjustments for purposes of internal and external equity.
- C. Work to identify more funds for merit salary increases so that deserving staff can be moved upward through the salary ranges for their jobs.

**Goal 5: Increase staff in needed areas.**

- A. Continue to refine our determination of areas in which we will need to add staff as funding permits, and then prioritize those areas (e.g., physical plant support, training, direct care, technology).
- B. For each identified need and in order of priority, work toward a decision of whether and how to fund staffing for the need or how to meet the need in an alternative way.