Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
A Center for Educational Services for All Blind and Visually Impaired Students in Texas
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A Message from the Superintendent
2008-2009

In 2008-2009 the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) delivered state-of-the-art educational services in the middle of a sometimes-chaotic construction zone covering the majority of our campus. We accomplished this without missing a beat and with a safety record that would make any organization proud. This was all made possible because our faculty and staff maintained their focus on teaching and their attention proactively on potential hazards around the campus. Our statewide outreach services staff was relocated to temporary quarters off campus, and did so without the slightest drop in the quality of their technical assistance. Given the circumstances it was a very good year, but not one we would care to repeat.

This was a legislative session year for us, and I was so encouraged to see the support TSBVI has earned from our lawmakers. Publicly presenting the strategies the school is using to achieve the greatest value for the state’s investment is a strong reminder that everything TSBVI does now, and may be funded to do in the future, has to be viewed within the context of all of the state’s many obligations to its citizens. TSBVI has built its reputation, and garnered the support I mentioned earlier, on the principles of educational quality and a diversified service delivery model that purposefully intends to touch every child in the state who has a visual impairment either directly or through their families or their school districts. How we do business at TSBVI seems to make sense to our elected officials and we have been so fortunate that their understanding of what we do translated into the financial support that allows us to do this work we love.

The many successes of 2008-2009 were built on innovations over the past three decades or so that have made TSBVI famous internationally. Our work with students who have the most complex learner needs, our ability to make challenging academic concepts accessible through non-visual means, our skills with specialized technologies, and our ability to reach out beyond our campus through the web, through our publications and through our technical assistance expertise, has been many years in the making and has many champions, past and present.

It is fitting that as we ended 2008-2009 we began an intentional process to envision what innovations in service delivery the next decades may hold for us. We’ll be on a newly rebuilt campus and it is reasonable to expect that our stakeholders will be looking for a certain freshness in how we carry out our mission. This process will begin by gathering inputs from everyone in Texas who has an interest in the education of children who are blind or visually impaired. By the time the 2009-2010 Annual Report is written, these inputs will begin to piece together the strategic direction TSBVI will set about to implement. Whatever direction that is, it will be of the highest quality and it will be done with the needs and interests of the entire state in mind. We hope this 2008-2009 Annual Report provides you useful information in how TSBVI carries out its exciting and important mission.

William Daugherty
A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

The School was established in 1856 and classes were first held at the residence of Mr. W. L. Hill in Austin, Texas. The School moved to the present day “Little Campus” in the current day Arno Nowotny Building/Custer House of the University of Texas. A second campus was established on Bull Creek Road in Austin in 1889. In 1915 the School’s name was changed to the Texas School for the Blind and the School moved to its present 45-acre campus on West 45th Street in Austin. A special program for deafblind children was initiated in 1972 and was housed in the former Confederate Widows’ Mansion on 38th Street. The deafblind program moved to the 45th Street campus in 1981. In 1989, the School was given its current name, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), to reflect more accurately the population it serves.

The main functions of TSBVI include:

✦ 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 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, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies including training, consultation, technical assistance, and developing and disseminating materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology.
✦ To partner with Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin State University in preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired.

OUR VISION

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.

OUR MISSION

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 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.
OUR PHILOSOPHY

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.
✦ benefit from having parents who are informed about the educational needs of their children, and who are equal participants in the educational process.

The Staff

The staff of TSBVI is comprised of 404 full-time and part-time positions including classroom teachers, teacher aides, job coaches, related service staff including orientation and mobility instructors, speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, psychologists, behavior specialists, counselors, social workers, health services staff, residential staff who work with students after school hours, clerical staff, business office staff, admissions and records staff, technology staff, maintenance workers, groundskeepers, food service workers, custodial staff, transportation and security staff, among others.

The Board of Trustees

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 comprised of three members who are blind or visually impaired, three who have experience working in the field of visual impairment, and three who are parents of a child who is blind or visually impaired. Public meetings of the Board are generally held 5-6 times per year.

Our Partnerships

✦ Local school districts refer students to us for specific needs. Students are then shared between the school district and TSBVI, and information sharing and collaboration for the benefit of students is continuous.
✦ Education Service Centers are often a source of referrals to TSBVI, and the ESCs often are the point of contact when a student is returned to his/her community.
✦ Additional partners with whom TSBVI has a mutually productive and satisfying relationship are all local and state agencies and organizations of and for the blind.
**Sources of Funding**

The School is primarily funded through appropriations granted by the State Legislature. Other sources of funding include federal funds, appropriated receipts, interagency contracts, and donations.

![Pie chart showing sources of revenue](chart.png)

**SOURCES OF REVENUE 2008-2009**

- General Revenue: $13,453,501
- Federal Funds: $1,304,706
- Appropriated Receipts: $2,380,908
- Interagency Contracts: $1,492,758

Total Revenue: $18,631,873

**COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS**

**K-12 Program:** TSBVI provides full-time comprehensive programs during the regular school year to students who are unable to receive an appropriate public education from the local school district. Districts refer students for placement to acquire a student-specific set of skills that, once learned, will allow the student to return to education in the home community. At TSBVI, students receive intensive instruction in all areas of the curriculum including braille reading and writing, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, career education, social skills, occupational and physical therapy, speech therapy, daily living skills training and many other disability-specific skill areas. TSBVI is the only placement in the State where all educational staff are specially trained and certified to teach students with visual impairments and all residential staff receive ongoing training in teaching independent living skills, including personal hygiene, dressing, grooming, and home care.

**Post Secondary Program:** This program, offered in partnership with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services – Division of Blind Services, provides training for students who are legally blind and have a regular State Board of Education high school diploma or GED. Students seeking this post-secondary experience are in need of remedial academic, independent living and work related skills training. They will cultivate the skills, attitudes and opportunities necessary to meet the demands of competitive employment and adult living.
ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR

- The school met and exceeded the performance standards agreed upon with the Texas Education Agency representing significant student progress in the following curricular areas. The percentages of students assessed making moderate to substantial progress on curricular-based assessments were:

- 98% 100% 98% 97% 100% 97% 100% 100% 100%
- 86% 93% 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%
- 70% 80% 90% 100%

** Infused Skills (for multiply impaired students) – Social Communicative Interactions, Emotional Development, Senses and Motor Skills, Basic Concepts, Representation/Cognition

- 98% of parents, local school districts and students rated their satisfaction with students’ progress in the Comprehensive Programs as satisfactory, very satisfactory, or outstanding.
- 78% of graduates surveyed from the past 5 years were engaged in productive life activities (work, post-secondary education or training, volunteer activities or seeking work).
- 100% of teachers and paraprofessionals met No Child Left Behind highly qualified standards.
- 100% of Post-Secondary students demonstrated a mastery level of 75% or greater in selected instructional areas.
OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Students presented the UIL One-Act Play, “To Burn A Witch,” and advanced to the Area competition. In addition, cast members earned the following individual awards: Outstanding Crew Member, All Star Cast and Outstanding Actress.

- Participation in an array of beneficial after-school informal course opportunities for students including: Rowing, Yearbook Club, Yoga, Dance, Art, Group Games, Spin Biking, Tandem Biking, Writer’s Workshop, Music Mania, Goal Ball, Social Club, Movie Appreciation, Radio Station, Swimming, Homework Haven, Music Recording, Scrapbooking, Cooking & Baking, Walking & Running Club, Jewelry Making, Pep Squad, Cheerleading, Gardening Club, Book Club and Rock Wall Climbing.
• Students participated in a wide variety of work training activities at 14 different businesses and organizations in the community including Goodwill Industries, Capital Area Foodbank, Dragon’s Lair Comic Books, Faith Lutheran Day School, Yoga Yoga, Dell Children’s Hospital, KAZI Radio Station, Northwest Baptist Day Care, Austin Council of Churches, University of Texas Mail Services, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, Gullett Elementary School, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and El Caribe Mexican Restaurant.

• Orientation and Mobility Assistant Robyn Kinley was honored as the 2009 Principals of Schools for the Blind Outstanding Paraprofessional and Dorm Manager Kerim Peirce was selected as the 2009 Principals of Schools for the Blind Outstanding Residential Staff Member.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN 2008-2009

• Students participated in statewide White Cane Day activities in downtown Austin.
• A parent weekend conference was held at TSBVI with 686 students’ families in attendance.
• Students participated in the Sports Extravaganza for Blind and Visually Impaired Students in Irving, Texas, which included goal ball, track and field and archery. Eighty-two students from TSBVI competed and brought home a record 328 medals and ribbons in the track and field events. Twenty TSBVI students also competed in the Goal Ball tournament, with one of the varsity boys’ teams taking first place.
• Students participated in the Braille Challenge along with other students in the Education Service Center, Region 13, area.
• Elementary students participated in learning activities with students from Redeemer Lutheran School.
• A student holiday music assembly and play were held in the auditorium.
• TSBVI hosted the fall South Central Association Schools for the Blind (SCASB) Conference track and field meet. TSBVI’s boys team placed third and the girl’s team placed third as well.
• In the spring, TSBVI athletes traveled to the SCASB wrestling, cheerleading and performing arts conference event in Alabama. The TSBVI cheerleaders were awarded third place with members of the wrestling team placing well in their individual weight class divisions.
• Varsity Goalball team members participated in the United States Association of Blind Athletes Western Regional Goalball Tournament in Salt Lake City, Utah.
• Students participated in a Red Ribbon Safe and Drug-free Schools assembly and poster contest.
• Black Heritage and Fiesta Day activities were held at the School.
• Prom night 2009 was held at the Crowne Plaza in Austin followed by a Junior/Senior banquet.
ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2008-2009 school year, 147 students representing 99 local school districts throughout Texas were enrolled in the Comprehensive Programs of TSBVI.

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ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2008-2009 COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

- Hispanic: 18%
- White: 28%
- Black: 2%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 52%

TSBVI track team at SCASB Track Meet
April 24-25, 2009

TSBVI elementary students visit classes and offices on Constitution Day
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Summer programs are designed to serve students who are not full-time students at TSBVI during the regular school year. As such, they emphasize those vision related skills from the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments that may be challenging for districts to teach during the school year. Students are served through six different summer programs: Academic Secondary Enrichment, Functional Secondary Enrichment, Elementary Summer Enrichment, SWEAT (an exit level work program for academic students), WALIC (an exit level work program for functional academic students), and Life Skills Camps. Instruction focuses on:

- Applying academic skills within functional, real-life situations such as independent living or having a job;
- Improving skills of independent living such as personal care, home care, money management, travel, responsibility and organization, and working well with others;
- Learning skills related to recreational activities and the creative arts;
- Participating in recreational/leisure activities on campus and in the community; and
- Enhancing one’s sense of confidence and well-being, self knowledge, and self advocacy that can come from being away from home on one’s own, as well as from interacting with other successful visually impaired students and adults.

Students who attend summer programs are often the only visually impaired student in their school. The classes introduce students to empowering experiences and ideas about living with visual impairment, and provide a socially supportive peer group, which reduces feelings of isolation, difference and loneliness. Many students develop enduring friendships and support networks that can last a lifetime. This support can be an important factor in enabling these students to remain in their local districts.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2009 SUMMER PROGRAMS

- In the summer of 2007, we modified our classes for academic secondary students to make them theme oriented rather than subject matter oriented. For example, students would take a class called “Radio Station Management” rather than “Introduction To Work.” The students would then practice academic and vision-specific skills within the context of appealing, real-life content (e.g., develop a budget, shop for goods, write documents to advertise products, evaluate effectiveness). This change resulted in a twofold increase in academic secondary enrollment, and therefore we have held to this method of class offerings ever since. In summer 2009 we served 105 academic secondary students through 13 different classes (described below).
- Our functional secondary students also participated in theme oriented classes where they practiced and used a broad array of skills (e.g., functional literacy and math, personal and
domestic care, recreation and leisure, work, social skills, and self-determination) within meaningful daily activities related to themes such as “A Trip Around the World,” “Where Things Come From,” and “Camping”. In summer 2009 we served 38 functional academic secondary students in these two- or three-week classes.

- Elementary summer enrichment classes were similar to secondary classes in structure: They provided opportunities to practice students’ current academic and vision-related skills in activities such as thematic units, music, community outings, self-care, shopping, cooking, arts and crafts, and recreational activities. 94 elementary age students participated in these one- and two-week classes.

- 28 high-school aged students participated in jobs throughout the Austin community (described below) for which they were paid the minimum wage. They received intensive training in all aspects of work — such as getting a job, keeping a job, workplace protocol, specific job skills, money management, traveling independently to work, and problems that arise at work. They also received intensive training in independent living at home and in the community. This included managing a house or apartment; domestic skills such as cleanliness, cooking, shopping, recreation in the community; and the balance between independence and interdependence.

- 46 visually impaired students with multiple impairments, including deafblindness, were provided the opportunity to be away from home (often for the first time) and to participate in skills of independent living and recreational activities in the community.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN SUMMER 2009

- Secondary academic classes were offered in four major areas:
  1. **Fine Arts:** Camp Fine Arts, Writers’ Workshop, Rock Band
  2. **Physical Education:** Strength training and cardiovascular skills, bowling, yoga, recreational games
  3. **Small Business Endeavors:** Restaurant Management, Radio Station Management
  4. **Adaptive Strategies and Technologies:** Adaptive Math Tools and Strategies, Accessible Science (Astronomy), Taste of Independence, Self-Determination, Getting There (community mobility), Middle School Enrichment

  - Skills related to the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments were infused into all programs’ activities, including residential time.

  - We developed a relationship with the Armstrong School of Music, contracting with well-known Austin musicians to perform for our students at the elementary and secondary levels. One local musician and songwriter, Darden Smith, also worked with the Writers’ Workshop class on how to write songs.
• The local Theater Action Project worked for one week with two groups of middle school age students to support interactive performances around the topic of “The Courageous Bystander,” a project aimed at teaching about and preventing bullying.

• A model classroom was established for a small group of deafblind students. The goals of the class were to provide state-of-the-art instruction for this unique population, become familiar with the individual learning needs and style of each student, and then provide training to the parents and professional staff who work at the local level with each student.

• TSBVI offered SBOE (State Board of Education) academic credit for a summer class in the area of Physical Education. Not only did these students earn credit towards their graduation requirements, but they were able to participate fully in a class that is often minimally accessible to them.

• Two classes of older elementary students focused on issues related to “Transition to Middle School”. This is an especially difficult transition for students with visual impairments. The class addressed issues such as personal organization (managing lockers, organizing backpacks and day timers, retrieving information, dealing with time and deadlines); self advocacy (explaining your needs to teachers and other students); social skills (caring for personal appearance; initiating conversations and meeting new people); adaptive tools and technology (exposure to scanning software, magnification systems, and homework and classroom aids); and orientation and mobility (changing classes, negotiating crowded hallways).

• Individual high school academic students were assigned to community jobs in Austin at the following locations: two childcare centers, the Austin Humane Society, an office of the National Federation of the Blind, Dell Children’s Hospital, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, a local hotel, a bookstore, a sculpture garden, and a radio station. Small groups of functional academic high-school students worked together at the following sites: The Capital Area Food Bank, Goodwill Industries, University of Texas Mail Services, and Wal-Mart Supercenter. During residential time all these students participated in intensive instruction in skills of independent living and community participation.
ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2009 Summer Programs, 311 students were served, representing 161 local school districts throughout Texas.

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ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2009 SUMMER PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>48%</td>
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SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

Short-term Programs were initiated in 2000 in response to local districts’ requests for assistance with the unique needs of students who are academically successful and on grade level, but need to learn special adaptive skills in order to access the statewide curriculum. We offer brief, intensive classes, from three to five days in length, in areas such as adaptive technology, math tools and strategies, tactile graphs and maps, etc. In addition to working on the objectives for which they were referred, students receive informal instruction and supported practice in other aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for Students with Visual Impairments. This includes access skills related to independent living, travel, recreation and leisure, social interactions, and self-determination — in the company of visually impaired peers who are also practicing these skills. Instruction begins when students wake up (they help prepare breakfast before going to class) and ends at bedtime (with after-school activities such as domestic and personal care, food preparation, community access, organization and responsibility, homework, self knowledge and self advocacy). Participants also meet other students and adults with visual impairments, which is often the significant ingredient contributing to a change of attitude that can impact the rest of their education and life.
TSBVI provides four types of short-term classes:

1. **Individualized instruction to promote access to and success with the statewide curriculum (TEKS)** Local districts refer students to work on aspects of the ECC that support academic success. Each student’s individualized objectives are jointly determined between TSBVI and the local teacher of the visually impaired. Parents may also contribute to the selection of objectives.

2. **Special topic classes**
   Classes are offered on specific topics pertinent to students with visual impairments (e.g., adapted tools and technology for accessible mathematics; travel in the community; issues in low vision).

3. **Independence weekends**
   Students participate in theme-oriented classes that provide opportunities to apply and practice skills of independent living, mobility, academics, self-determination, communication, recreation and leisure. This year’s themes were: December holidays (elementary), Life in the Time of Dinosaurs (elementary), Yes We Can! (middle school), Camping (high school) and Senior Prom (high school).

4. **Off-Campus class**
   For the first time, TSBVI piloted the offering of a short-term class outside of Austin. A class addressing the needs of students with low vision was taught in cooperation with Education Service Center Region 15 in San Angelo. A month before the class, the Special Programs instructor visited online with participating Region 15 staff to present concepts related to low vision and the use of low vision devices. The Special Programs instructor and principal then traveled to the site for an evening meeting evaluating the vision needs of each student participant. The following day all teacher-student pairs came for the day-long class, which encouraged students to evaluate various devices and use them at different settings in the community.

**ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2008-2009 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS**

- Students were provided instruction in a broad range of skills related to visual impairment, including tactile graphics; skills for independent living; math tools and concepts for nonvisual learners (including Nemeth code); low vision adaptations, strategies and devices; using a portable notetaker; adaptations for accessing the computer keyboard and screen, and using software for word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, email, and internet access; traveling in the community; social skills and self-determination. Students were introduced to a wide range of adaptive technologies and strategies that are available to assist persons with visual impairments (both electronic and low-tech), and taught how to evaluate and match them to meet various needs that arise.
• 91% of students met the objectives for which they were referred.
• 95% of responding school districts, parents and students rated their experience in short-term programs as very satisfactory or above.
• Short-term programs served a total of 148 students from across the state of Texas, ranging from the panhandle, to the Valley, and from the western to eastern parts of the state. During this school year, we served students from 12 of the 20 educational regions in the state.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS 2008-2009

1. Special Programs increased its services to students with low vision. These students comprise approximately 85% of the academic VI population in Texas. When resources are limited, however, this population often goes underserved. At the same time their needs may be more difficult to ascertain than those of blind students, simply because they vary so much from one student to another.

2. Special Programs teachers are advanced professionals who are expected to support pre-professional training for future teachers, as well as inservice for current Texas teachers. In that capacity, presentations were made at various conferences:
   - Envision Conference
     - “Psychosocial Impact of Long Term Optical Device Use” (Cynthia Bachofer)
     - “Telescope Use: Factors of Frustration, Factors of Success” (Cynthia Bachofer)
   - Texas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired (TAER)
     - “Tools for Visual Independence: Instruction in the Use of Optical Devices” (Cynthia Bachofer)
     - “Reading Strategies: Research, Habits, Questions” (Cynthia Bachofer)
     - “Telescope Use: Factors of Frustration, Factors of Success” (Cynthia Bachofer)
   - Outreach Conference at TSBVI: “Hands-On Math” (Margaret Robinson with Susan Osterhaus, TSBVI Outreach)
     - Mentor Center: Presentations on Special Programs (Margaret Robinson)
     - Facilitator of TSBVI study group on Low Vision (Margaret Robinson)
3. Margaret Robinson, Special Programs instructor, taught the Braille class for the Texas Tech VI teacher training program.
4. Teachers continued to acquire and refine their skills in teaching adaptive math and technology, which are areas of high referral.
5. New classes were added that focused on various aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum:
   - Low Vision On-The-Road. Class taught onsite in San Angelo, TX. Described above.
   - Low Vision Weekend. This class introduced students to knowledge and skills needed by learners with low vision. The students visited with a Low Vision Specialist at her office to learn about their specific eye conditions, as well as how and why assessments are done. They learned how to find information and to be a smart consumer. They were introduced to strategies for increased environmental access, procedures for evaluating low vision devices, using vision in various settings, factors affecting academics, and accessing transportation. They also discussed the psychosocial issues of being a person with low vision.
   - Independence Weekend classes. Three new themes were added: “December Holidays,” “Life in the Time of Dinosaurs,” and “Yes We Can!”
6. The Special Programs department fully functionalized its new online student application system and database. The result of this endeavor is that local teachers of the visually impaired fill out a student’s application only once, regardless of how many times the student attends a short-term or summer program. We have also automated many tasks that used to require long time periods to complete.

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2008-2009 Short-term Programs, 148 students were served, representing 67 local school districts.

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ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2008-2009 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR 2008-2009

The following graphs display the achievement of Special Programs in meeting objectives set out in the School’s Agency Strategic Plan and in the School Improvement Plan.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR 2008-2009
OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired offers a wide range of services to families, school districts, regional education service centers (ESCs), and other agencies serving students with visual impairments and/or deafblindness including those with additional disabilities. The Outreach Programs from TSBVI are the most comprehensive in the country and include:

1. Developing and providing local, regional, and statewide training for parents, paraprofessionals and professionals;
2. Providing consultation to educational teams regarding individual student programs;
3. Developing and disseminating original reference materials;
4. Providing information related to adapted materials, current research, technology resources, and teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments;
5. Managing a loan program for assistive technology;
6. Facilitating recruitment of new VI professionals and supporting teacher preparation programs;
7. Implementing a Federally funded deafblind technical assistance grant;
8. Conducting a mentorship program for new VI professionals;
9. Coordinating with the Education Service Center VI network to ensure accurate registration of students with visual impairments and distribution of adapted materials available through a Federal Quota account from the American Printing House for the Blind.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2008-2009 FISCAL YEAR

• Over 97% of Outreach customers rated the improvement of their knowledge and skills as a result of services received from the Outreach program as satisfactory or higher, of whom over 83% reported that improvement as either very satisfactory or outstanding.
• Getting the word out about services available from the TSBVI Outreach Programs continues to be a challenge in this vast state. TSBVI Outreach created a new format for an Outreach Catalogue of Services that was posted on the www.tsbv.edu website and well received.
• TSBVI Outreach Program continued to develop new trainings offered via videoconferencing. This format allowed VI professionals and related others to access 18 high quality presentations without the costs of time and travel to a central location. Coordination with the TETN system facilitates statewide access for participants either at their regional ESC or in many areas, at local campuses.
• For the first time, the TX Deafblind Project collaborated with the Southeast Regional Deafblind Projects to send a Texas family to a Southeast Regional Teen/Young Adult Deafblind Retreat and Parent Event.
The Texas Deafblind Project staff has been actively participating in national initiatives concerning the development of Intervener credentialing, which gained the attention and interest of a credentialing body, the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals.

Videoconference instructional formats are excellent for introducing new concepts and building awareness, but less effective at fostering intensive skill development. Also, evaluation data clearly indicates higher levels of satisfaction with in-person workshops where questions can be answered immediately and more in depth training can occur. Therefore, the Outreach staff continued to present in person training at the local, regional and statewide levels. In the 08-09 year, the Outreach program offered 256 presentations on a wide range of topics related to the education of students with visual impairments and/or deafblindness. This included a statewide deafblind symposium for families and professionals, training for new mentors, national training on analyzing district-wide programs for students with visual impairments, statewide training on the role of the Intervener, a specialized paraprofessional position in deafblindness, job fairs for prospective VI professionals, presentations at family weekends and many more related topics.

The TSBVI conducted the Annual Registration in January 2009. This was the first year that the VI registration process was “paperless”. The primary single cause of visual impairment in Texas continues to be cortical visual impairment, followed very closely by retinopathy of prematurity, nystagmus and then optic nerve atrophy.

The TSBVI website continues to provide information and support to people across the globe. This year TSBVI had over 3.1 million visits. The site is one of the primary locations for VI information in Spanish, as the listing of countries accessing www.tsbvi.edu documents shows.

The Professional Preparation Advisory Group (PPAG) met in November 2008. Among the accomplishments was the release of the O&M brochure developed for parents in both English and Spanish. The brochures have been distributed all over Texas, as well as other states and Canada.

Students with visual impairments and deafblindness represent extremely low incidence populations. The range of
student needs is enormous. When districts have concerns on the appropriate program for an individual student, they turn to their regional ESC VI consultant or Deafblind Specialist, and those professionals in turn may refer to the TSBVI Outreach Program. In 2008-2009 the Outreach staff made 132 visits for local school consultation around the state to 103 districts across Texas. In addition, there was an increase in the use of telephone, email and video consultations, especially as follow up to personal on-site visits. Evaluations indicate that 91% of participants reported positive changes as a result of consultation from Outreach personnel.

- TSBVI Outreach continued the three new initiatives authorized and funded by the Legislature in the previous year: New levels of support were available specifically in the area of mathematics, transition for students with visual impairments, and orientation and mobility (O&M). TSBVI provided local and regional trainings on math strategies for blind students in Regions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20, for Texas Tech college students, and students in Special Programs, at TAER in San Antonio, and in Nova Scotia, Indiana, California, Utah, and Ontario. TSBVI hosted a statewide transition discussion group via videoconferencing, and helped to develop and facilitate a pilot summer internship program for COMS in training during TSBVI summer programs.

- Families are the long-term keys to success for students with disabilities. TSBVI has expanded its family leadership training series for families of children with deafblindness and/or visual impairments to new families in the Valley as well as family members from Central Texas who came to Waco for training. These families and those who received training in the past became active members of school advisory groups, hosted a successful 3rd Annual TX Chargers family weekend retreat, advocated for increased services for families with children who are deafblind in front of Legislative committees, mentored other families with similar issues and concerns, and have become more involved in their own children’s educational programs. Many have joined Texas Parent to Parent as mentors in their statewide program, filling a need within TX P2P for families to match with others who request assistance related to issues involving visual impairment and deafblindness.

- The Outreach Programs are moving towards web-based training options, recognizing the increasing difficulty that VI professionals have had in getting released for training off campus. Training in the area of transition planning, motor development, routines and calendars for students with multiple disabilities and literacy are currently under development and will be ready for posting, with full accessibility options, in the next year.
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR 2008-2009 FISCAL YEAR

The following graphs display the achievement of Outreach Programs in meeting objectives set out in the School’s Agency Strategic Plan and in the School Improvement Plan.

OUTREACH PROGRAM MEASURES FOR 2008-2009

- Percent of Outreach customers rating as very satisfactory or outstanding
- Percent of Outreach customers rating as very satisfactory or outstanding
- Percent of Outreach customers agreeing there was a positive change for the student, staff, or family as a result of the on-site visit

Fiscal Year 2008

Fiscal Year 2009
OTHER SERVICES TO PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Curriculum Department at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired develops curriculum written by teachers and other certified professionals serving blind and visually impaired students in all curricular approaches. Curriculum and resource guides are peer-reviewed, published and sold world-wide to assist the TVI, the classroom teacher, orientation and mobility specialist and family in areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum such as independent living, career education, technology, Braille instruction, orientation and mobility, and low vision. Each guide contains assessment and instructional methodology.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2008-2009

- A total of 7,313 publications were sold in fiscal year 2009. This includes print and Braille (7,025), videos (216) and CDs (72). Our publication Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments was the top seller at 1,666 copies. Over 500 copies of the Independent Living Assessment and Ongoing Evaluation (524), and the TAPS Assessment & Ongoing Evaluation (598) were sold.
- Over 200 of the following publications were sold: Independent Living Curriculum; Low Vision Resource Guide; TAPS (O & M) Curriculum; Learning Media Assessment; and Teaching Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments.
- The curriculum department provides training, in Texas as well as out of state, on the use our publications.
- Curriculum for Practical Academics Math, Science and Social Studies is being developed.
- TAPS, our O & M Curriculum guide is being updated.
- Development continued on a Practical Academics Health Curriculum in coordination with the School Health Advisory Council.
- The Curriculum Coordinator continues to evaluate and refine the performance indicator evaluation tools that guide IEP development and instruction for TSBVI students.
- The Curriculum Coordinator continues to submit a report to TEA detailing the yearly progress made by our students as determined by our Performance Indicator Evaluations.
- The Curriculum department continues to support classroom teachers in their instruction.
- The Curriculum department is continuing to employ TSBVI student workers to bind and package the publications we produce on campus.
The School hosts a web site that is recognized throughout the world for content concerning visual impairment and the education of blind and visually impaired students. The entire website is accessible to blind and visually impaired persons.

In 2008-2009, there were over 2.3 million visitors, with over 5 million page views, to the web site from more than 200 countries including Mexico, Canada, the United Kingdom, China, Australia, Columbia, France, Argentina, Spain, Peru, and India. The most visited pages were on sensory integrative dysfunction in young children, non-verbal communication, teaching math to visually impaired students, central auditory processing disorders, downloadable braille materials, and teaching strategies. The largest number of file downloads included the See/Hear newsletter in English and Spanish, the Vision Anomalies Handbook, the Math Continuum, and the Algebra 1 Nemeth "Cheat Sheet".

**BOND PROJECTS AND CONSTRUCTION DURING 2008-2009**

The beginning of a master plan was started in 2005-2006 and has been expanded to replace most of the buildings that were constructed in 1917. That master plan began to come to fruition as the legislature approved additional capital funding of $68,287,208 to finance the master plan. This brings the total funding over the past two sessions to over $104 million for new construction, remodeling and deferred maintenance for the campus.

In the spring of 2008 construction was completed on a residential facility in the Pecan Grove, the Elementary Residential Complex and a new four-unit independent living (learning lab) facility. They were designed to facilitate learning for our students, provide a homelike environment, maintain a high level of security and provide the school and State with buildings that can be maintained for many years.

In 2009, work began on an additional seven residential facilities. Three of them were completed in 2009 for the fall semester; an additional four will be completed in early 2010. The units have been modified to include a number of new features including larger bedrooms, a new student study room and a dorm manager’s office. Operations-wise, the new facilities include more hard-floor surfaces than in the original, a simplified roof design and insta-heat hot water heaters.

In addition to the residential facilities, construction has begun in 2009 on the main instructional building, cafeteria, fine arts facility, student activity center and utility infrastructure. Completion of all five buildings is expected in the summer of 2010. The start of these buildings created the most challenging aspect of the construction with regard to access to our campus buildings. Specific pedestrian routes were established to allow staff and students access to facilities. On occasion, routes changed from day to day to allow vital construction to move forward.

Students have received excellent training from staff to assure they follow the safe travel routes. Also in August and September of 2009, a new shade canopy was installed over the elementary playground.
In August of 2009, the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) sought proposals for the vocational, outreach, business/IT facilities and campus infrastructure utilities. In October, the TFC commissioners approved the recommended general contractor and in November construction will start on these major projects, with completion scheduled for 2010.

In 2009 a decision was made to replace the elementary school rather than remodel it, thus allowing a school environment that is more conducive to educating multiply handicapped visually impaired students. Completion of the new elementary school will be complete for the 2011-2012 school year.

The arial photographs show the progress of construction in 2009 in April and in August.

The April photos shows the cleared area in front and behind the main building.

By August, the foundation is poured and construction has begun and the pool has been poured.
Volunteer Program 2008-09

TSBVI has an active volunteer program with participation by many members of the Austin community. One aspect of the volunteer program pairs TSBVI with community groups who want to perform a community service and choose to do so at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This occurs on both formal organized volunteer days, such as United Way’s “Day of Caring” in September, 2008, and less formal requests for a group to come work here on a specific time and day of their choosing. Several groups volunteered to help during the South Central Association of Schools for the Blind (SCASB) Track Meet on April 23-26, 2009, including students from Texas State University adapted physical education program, Delta Gamma members from the University of Texas and Texas State University, church members and others from the regular TSBVI volunteer program.

The Junior Leage of Austin provided 18 volunteers to record books onto CD Rom disks and scan and edit books to be put into Braille. Sixteen Smart Car owners from the CenTex Smart Car Club volunteered as drivers for visually impaired students at the Parent Weekend Braille Rally.

The individual volunteer program involves persons who choose to spend some time out of their personal lives to provide a service to students and staff at TSBVI. University of Texas students, people who live in our area, and others who just have a desire to serve our visually impaired population are among those who volunteer here each semester. Volunteers are placed as tutors or staff helpers in specific school or after school classes for at least an hour a week. Students and staff benefit from the program by getting help, often one-on-one, from a member of the Austin community. Volunteers benefit from getting to know our students and providing an appreciated service to the School.

During the 2008-09 school year, over 175 TSBVI volunteers logged in approximately 1750 hours working at our school. Independent Sector, a leadership forum for charities, estimates the dollar value of volunteer time in 2008 as $20.80 per hour. TSBVI benefited from over $36,400 worth of community volunteer time! Volunteering highlights during the year included the United Way “Day of Caring” in September, the SCASB Track Meet in April, and small groups who volunteered for Parent Weekend, the Halloween Haunted House and the Easter Egg Hunt. Members of Delta Gamma Fraternity at UT made tactile symbols, hosted a Halloween party, a Thanksgiving dinner and a Valentine party at their sorority house, and helped the students dress up for the prom. The Austin individuals and groups who volunteer at TSBVI provide our students and staff with opportunities and assistance that is beyond measure.
**TSBVI Major Donors 2008-2009**

**Over $10,000**
Professional Contract Services, Inc.

**Over $5,000**
Point Venture Lions Club
Delta Gamma Fraternity, University of Texas
Junior League of Austin

**$1,000 to $5,000**
Austin Downtown Liona Club
Austin Council of the Blind
Sunshine Community Gardens
All Blind Children of Texas

**$400 to $1,000**
Delta Gamma Fraternity, Texas State University
American Dental Partners Foundation
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Neal
Ruby Pico Productions

**Dennis Powell Technology Fund**
Multiple Donors

**CONCLUSION**

We are proud of our School and its accomplishments and look forward to many more years of providing services to children and youth with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities. Most of all we are grateful to the parents, colleagues, and legislators who continue to support the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
From groundbreaking in January to construction in July!