AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

For the Fiscal Years 2003-2007 Period

by

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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<tr>
<th>Board Member</th>
<th>Terms Expire</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Sue Welch, President</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
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<td>Frankie Swift, Vice President</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nacogdoches</td>
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<td>Bruce Best, Secretary</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Barbara Cherry</td>
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<td>Zena Pearey</td>
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<td>Otilio Galindo</td>
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<td>Deborah Louder</td>
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<td>Jesus Bautista</td>
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<td>Vacant Position</td>
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June 17, 2002
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Governor Rick Perry’s Vision for Texas *

Working together, I know we can accomplish our mission and achieve these priority goals for our fellow Texans:

♦ To assure open access to an educational system that not only guarantees the basic core knowledge necessary for citizenship, but also emphasizes excellence in all academic and intellectual undertakings;
♦ To provide for all of Texas’ transportation needs of the new century;
♦ To meet the basic health care needs of all Texans;
♦ To provide economic opportunities for individual Texans and provide an attractive economic climate with which to attract and grow businesses; and
♦ To provide for the safety and security of all within our border.

The Mission of Texas State Government *

Texas State Government will be limited, efficient, and completely accountable. It will foster opportunity, economic prosperity, and family. The stewards of the public trust will be men and women who administer state government in a fair, just, and responsible manner. To honor the public trust, state officials will seek new and innovative ways to meet state government priorities within its financial means.

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 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.
➢ 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.

Aim high...we are not here to achieve inconsequential things!

* From Planning for Progress: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government, April 2002, developed by Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.
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 are at grade level in reading and math by the end of the third grade and continue reading and developing math skills at appropriate grade level through graduation, demonstrate exemplary performance in foundation subjects, and acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsible and independent Texans.

* From Planning for Progress: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government, April 2002, developed by Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

**STATE**

**BENCHMARKS**

**ADOPTED BY**

**TSBVI**

* Percent of students from third grade forward who are able to read at or above grade level, or who are able to acquire the level of literacy established in their individual education plans.

* Percent of students who achieve mastery of the foundation subjects of reading, English language arts, math, social studies and science, or who achieve mastery of the core curriculum for visually impaired learners established in their individual education plans.

* 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 who attend schools or districts rated as recognized.

MISSION OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The mission of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) is to provide opportunities for children and youth who are visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, 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) is committed to providing educational services of the highest quality to children and youth who are blind and visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities. TSBVI welcomes the challenge of providing educational services which will result in productive, fulfilled adults who will enjoy the same responsibilities and privileges as all citizens of Texas. These services will be provided to our students in a safe, creative, flexible, comprehensive, and cost-efficient manner.
**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. It is also a statewide resource to professionals and parents who serve these children.

*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.

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.

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 Texas Institute for the Blind. The original campus was located at the present day “Little Campus” of the University of Texas - 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 School for Deaf, Blind, & Orphans (Afro-American students) was integrated into the Texas School for the Blind.

1974 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.

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.

**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 Commission for the Blind, Regional Education Service Centers).

**Main Functions: Direct and Outreach Services**

* To provide, upon request of a local educational agency, a free, appropriate public education that addresses the intense or specialized needs of visually impaired children and youth, including those with additional disabilities.

* To conduct supplemental programs, such as summer and other short-term programs, and to consider information from sources throughout the State regarding the nature of those programs and the needs of students.

* 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 related to library resources, adapted materials, current research, technology resources, and methods related to the teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments.

* To operate programs for lending educational and
technological materials to school districts and regional education service centers.

* To facilitate the preparation of teachers for visually impaired students by providing assistance to colleges and universities as well as alternative teacher preparation programs.

* 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;

* an expert statewide source of information and training regarding education of students with visual impairments;

* a leader in the use of technology, distance learning, and curriculum development;

* through publications and our 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 handicapped 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, attractive 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 468 budgeted full- and part-time positions, totaling 386.32 FTEs. Of the FTEs, 297.19 are classified and one, the Superintendent, is line item exempt. The remaining 88.13 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 (110.83 FTEs) 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 staff is as follows: White - 74%; Black - 12%; Hispanic - 12%; and other minorities - 2%. Women are 67% of the workforce.

- **Organizational Structure and Processes**

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.

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.

In the Comprehensive Program, students are assigned to one of four curricular strands with crossover occurring among these strands when necessary. These curricular strands are: (1) Basic Skills: for severely multiply impaired, visually impaired students; (2) Early Concepts: for students under the age of 12, functioning significantly behind their age peers (not yet reading, writing, or doing math on a first grade level) but with evidence of academic potential; (3) Functional/Practical Academics: for students over age 12, functioning at least two grade levels below chronological age, with at least kindergarten equivalent reading and writing skills, who learn academic, domestic, recreational, social and vocational skills through functional, community-based activities; and (4) Academic: for students of all ages who are able to follow the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) curriculum. The Principal of the Comprehensive Program supervises both instructional and residential components for all four curricular strands.

The Principal for Special Programs supervises all summer programs and develops and provides short-term programs during the school year.

The Director of Outreach coordinates services that are provided to students statewide. These services are provided to parents and professionals through training, consultation, and technical assistance.
The School and Student Services Department provides a variety of educational support functions such as school planning, policy development, admissions, records, health services, and community resource development.

In the area of administrative support functions, the Superintendent supervises the Administrator for Business, Operations and Technology and the Director of Human Resources.

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 programs. All stakeholders are involved in this process through representation in either instructional programs or the school-wide Instructional Planning Council. Additionally, the Superintendent and Principals maintain an open-door policy for all staff.

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**

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 in the most appropriate setting. 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.

In the last version of this plan, we cited the challenge of finding and hiring adequate numbers of teachers certified in the education of visually impaired (VI) students. This is due to a general shortage that was made worse when the University of Texas at Austin discontinued its VI teacher preparation program. We have had some success in meeting this challenge by building strong relationships with the remaining universities in the state which offer this program. We are able to employ more generally certified special education teachers who can then access these programs in a variety of local and distance education venues and media.

Another key element of attracting these highly qualified educators will be to remain competitive with local school districts. Although Education Code 30.024(b)(1) provides for TSBVI to pay teachers and other educational professionals according to the same payscales used by the Austin Independent School District, AISD pays all special education teachers $1000 per year above their base pay. At present, we lack the authority to pay such bonuses, but will be seeking that authority in the coming
Legislative session so that we do not remain in an unfavorable competitive position relative to AISD and other neighboring school districts.

Like all state agencies, the School faces numerous challenges related to attracting and retaining a qualified workforce to meet the demand for its services. The graying of the workforce, increased demand for state services, the emerging “talent war,” and the increased number of jobs requiring high skill levels are among the factors cited by the State Auditors Office in their workforce planning guide, and all of these affect TSBVI. We are involved in a number of efforts to address this problem strategically and proactively, as is explained in more detail in the strategic planning staffing analysis and workforce plan attached to this strategic plan. We have already made progress through the development and implementation of career progression programs for virtually all categories of classified staff, and through our successful effort in the last Legislative session to reallocate the classifications of our largest group of direct care staff, residential instructors, to higher salary groups.

We have both strengths and weaknesses in the area of human resource development. We are continuing to provide regular training in basic areas such as new employee orientation, CPR, defensive driving, and behavior management. 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. The School is somewhat limited by the fact that we have only one FTE assigned to agency wide staff development. 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 stretch this resource further through the use of technology such as web-based training, interactive videoconferencing, and satellite downlink of training which can be offered live or taped for later training.

School wide staff development activities are augmented by regular, specialized training for groups of staff at the departmental level. 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.

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.

• Capital Asset Strengths, Weaknesses and Budgetary Needs

Facilities, Furniture, and Equipment

The TSBVI campus consists of fifty 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 305,674 square feet. There are classrooms, dormitories, independent living facilities, gymnasiums and a swimming pool, an auditorium and a library, a health center, administrative offices, food preparation and cafeteria facilities, maintenance and 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 dormitories. The renovation of the first student dormitory was completed in May 2000. Two additional dormitories were renovated in February 2001. The School has developed a 10-year plan for the continued renovation, repair or replacement of its facilities.

The approval of Proposition 8 in November 2001 authorized the sale of general obligation bonds for renovations and replacements of the School's buildings in the first six years of the plan. The appropriation of these funds will allow the School to proceed with its long-range facilities plan. The remaining four years of the 10-Year Facilities Plan will require additional funding to renovate or to replace the Elementary School Building and Gymnasium, the Elementary Residential Complex, the Support Services Complex, the Homemaking Building, the Main Gymnasium, the Maintenance/Technology Support Building and three buildings previously used as dormitories.

The bond package included $22,637,653 for the School to be used from FY 2003 through FY 2007. Phase 1 of the bond package includes an appropriation of $5,134,000 for FY 2003 to replace dormitories and to repair and renovate other buildings and facilities. Phase 2 of the bond package for FYs 2004 and 2005 contains $13,665,132 to replace or renovate the School’s Main Educational Building and the Recreation Building. Phase 3 for FYs 2006 & 2007 contains $3,838,521 to build or renovate dormitories and other facilities.

In addition to requesting these appropriations from the sale of general obligation bonds, the School will request continued General Revenue funds in its FY 2004 and FY 2005 base appropriation request for capital improvements to maintain and renovate aging facilities. These funds will be used to repair and replace heating and air conditioning systems, roofs, plumbing and electrical systems, and lighting improvements; to expand parking; to install curb cuts and ramps; to repair sidewalks; to install automatic doors for fire protection and wheelchair access; and to upgrade playgrounds. The School will also request funding in its 2004-2005 Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR) to replace the existing indoor swimming pool and elementary gym.

Other needs include the replacement of classroom, residential, and office furniture to complement the renovation or replacement of the buildings.

Vehicles

TSBVI owns, operates, and maintains 27 vehicles. Twenty-five are used to transport students and staff for the educational and residential programs. The other two vehicles are used for operation functions including maintenance, the warehouse, and food service. Thirteen of these vehicles are converted to alternative fuels; five are operating on diesel fuel. Seven are new vehicles for which conversion kits are not yet available. The remaining two vehicles are too old to be converted economically to alternative fuels. 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. In the coming biennium, five replacement vans will be needed for student transportation.

Instructional Technology and Equipment

Students need reliable access to electronic and other adapted technology designed specifically for people with visual impairments so that they can thrive in their vocational pursuit. The School must continue to acquire new computers, software, and electronic devices to ensure that students have access to the general curriculum and appropriate instructional materials. 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 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 in each year of the current biennium for the purchase of instructional technology. The need to replace outdated equipment and to procure the latest adaptive technology will continue. The current level of funding will allow the School to maintain these upgrades.

Adaptive, networking, and desktop technology in the residential area has expanded over the past two years and each residential dormitory has at least two computers dedicated to student use and one computer for staff. Addition of adaptive equipment such as closed circuit television, Braille embossers, and speech-enabled computers replicates the computer resources in the classroom and provides students with more learning opportunities.

**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 have 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. As a member of the Esconett consortium, TSBVI has access to other state and university facilities through the Region XIII Educational Service Center in Austin. Such technology can provide information, training and follow-up, and also reduce the time and cost of travel.

In the past two years, ISDN capability has expanded the use of video conferencing to individual offices and classrooms, making less formal videoconferences possible without the use of the conference center.

**Infrastructure Technology**

The school has a robust fiber optic network infrastructure in all areas of the 45-acre campus. Network access and the related capabilities such as electronic mail and web access for all staff and students have proven valuable to coordinate the various program components and to integrate service delivery between departments. Standardization of wiring and installation has provided increased network reliability. Each client computer is connected to the network at 100mb and the backbone network consists of four gigabit switches.
connecting key campus buildings. Additional fiber optic connections between backbone switches are needed to provide redundancy.

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 and technical environment. A key initiative for the next several years will be to develop software to support these functions.

A VMS-based VAX 4000-200 processor continues to be used until new software can be developed. Current migration planning schedules the VAX computer to be de-installed in fiscal year 2003.

Additional hardware and software is 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 and this equipment needs to be replaced.

TSBVI needs to continue expansion and development of the TSBVI web-site. The school’s Web site of (WWW.TSBVI.EDU) has been tremendously successful and is considered one of the best resources for the education of the visually impaired. 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. 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 a good faith effort to award purchase contracts to certified HUBs. We are using the automated HUB directory provided by the General Services Commission as the primary reference list to identify minority and women-owned businesses. On every purchase order over $1,000, the School requests at least one bid from a minority-owned business and at least one bid from a woman-owned business. On orders under $1,000, every effort is made to purchase from a HUB, provided that the HUB provides the best and lowest bid.

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

In the Spring of 1997, TSBVI recognized an urgent need to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan that would retain and strengthen the School’s leadership as we enter the 21st century. TSBVI has been called upon to assume new roles in recent years. The population of blind and visually impaired students is continually changing, as is the capability of local school districts to provide at least a portion of the educational programs for these children.

TSBVI initiated an external administrative audit. The recommendations from this process confirmed our need to embark upon a more comprehensive, ongoing strategic planning process that would serve to guide the School in making decisions now, in planning for the future, and that would incorporate the planning components required of the School as a state agency and as a school. (Agency Strategic Plan, District Improvement Plan, Information Resources Management Strategic Plan, and School Technology Plan). We continue to benefit from this process.

The process began with a stakeholders’ meeting in July 1997. Parents, former students, representatives from local school districts, and leaders from TEA joined members of the TSBVI staff in a meeting that explored the future, the potential, and the responsibilities of TSBVI for the coming years. Subsequently, large and small meetings and work sessions have taken place almost weekly, involving all of the TSBVI staff, its Board of Trustees, parents,
TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

and community representatives, including members of the business community.

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

• A clearly defined commitment to the Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students, including those with additional disabilities.
• Expansion of career education, including paid 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 the quality of services they provide children who are visually impaired.
• Enhance the visibility of TSBVI by celebrating the achievements of our students.

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, an emphasis on long-term facilities planning, additions to summer programs in specific skill-building, and continued expansion of outreach services, and the initiation of a post high-school program.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) completed in 1999 between TSBVI and the Texas Education Agency has resulted in a document that will be of great assistance in measuring student outcomes at our school, and that will enable TSBVI to participate in the public education accreditation process.

TSBVI now has two subcontracts with an Education Service Center resulting in a substantial expansion of our roles. We provide an Instructional Materials Center for the entire state; we manage statewide registration of all blind and visually impaired students; and we provide technology assistance for all teachers and parents of visually impaired children in Texas. 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 eliminate the shortage of teachers for blind and visually impaired students in Texas.
### Fiscal Aspects

**Size of Budget and Method of Finance – Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003**

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<td>Total, with Bonds - FY 2003</td>
<td>3,580,561</td>
<td>2,628,959</td>
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<td>7,910,468</td>
<td>2,268,507</td>
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Per Capita and Other States’ Comparisons

As compared to other forms of special education programming, including schools for the blind in other states, 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. 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. These students require extensive human and material resources and a low staff 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. 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.

- 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.

- The extent to which TSBVI is a self-sufficient campus. The school has very few subcontracts for services, a practice common in other similar schools. In the opinion of the school, providing one’s own services is a cost-efficient system. However, what it means is that comparisons cannot be made with similar schools who may appear less expensive, but have significant contracts for services from other agencies or organizations.

Other significant costs to the TSBVI budget include:

- A large summer enrichment program serves blind and visually impaired students who attend local public schools during the regular school year.

- 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 state-of-the-art. 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. Often, this training requires expenditures for travel, conferences, and workshops.

- 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**

A major factor on the School’s ability to provide appropriate services is the number of students enrolled in the regular comprehensive programs and in the special summer and short-term programs. To ensure that appropriate services are delivered in a safe environment, it is necessary to maintain adequate staff-to-student ratios. As enrollment increases, the School does not have the ability to increase budget resources to accommodate more students. As a result the students are either not served or are under-served. A possible solution is for the Legislature to provide additional appropriation authority when enrollment exceeds the currently budgeted capacity.

The current limitation (rider 4 to the appropriation) prohibits the School’s ability to use appropriated funds for the construction of a swimming pool or natatorium. As the existing natatorium continues to deteriorate, the School will be forced to discontinue an essential component of the on-campus recreational program. Use of the TSBVI swimming pool is primarily for therapeutic purposes. Activities in water are particularly effective for blind and visually impaired students with limited mobility. Also, swimming pool activities, unlike many other physical education programs, can be done by blind and visually impaired students without any disadvantage based on vision.

The current out-of-state travel cap causes serious difficulties to TSBVI. The school is the only one of its kind in the state, and very often staff development opportunities occur in other states. For example, there is only one national convention for educators of blind and visually impaired children. This summer it will be held in Toronto, Canada. This convention is of significant benefit for many of our staff, since “cutting-edge” methods and materials for instruction are presented. Very few TSBVI staff will be attending due to travel cap limitations.

Also, a track meet was recently held in Mississippi. Six schools for the blind participated, and it is one of the few opportunities our students have to compete with other blind students on an equal basis. We naturally have to send staff for supervision, and this type of excellent student activity is in jeopardy because of the travel cap.
General Issues

The current budget allows the School to provide an excellent education to blind and visually impaired students. The School can operate a series of Summer Programs for visually impaired students from public schools, but at a somewhat reduced level because of reduced external funding. The Outreach function of the School can continue to provide its current level of services. The 76th Legislature also permitted the School to request increased funding for instructional technology within its base budget request. This appropriation has been a significant benefit to the education of children with visual impairments, and the School will request that this funding be continued. Funds for major capital expenditures have been provided for the initial phase of dormitory renovations and for replacement of school buses.

With the recent approval of the Proposition 8 bond issue, the 78th Legislature can appropriate the funds to initiate long-overdue renovations and construction. This will result in a campus far more appropriate and “student friendly” than in the past. Texas must never be embarrassed by the state of the facilities in which blind children live and go to school.

Current Program 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:

- Short-term Special Programs provided during the regular school year to meet the special needs of students with visual impairments who attend their local public schools.

- Extensive staff development provided to teachers in the use of electronic technology applications to enhance student learning [Technology Integration in Education (TIE) grant].

- Creation of a distance education facility to enhance internal and external staff development, and communication with parents and local service providers. [Technology Integration in Education (TIE) grant].

- Joint development with TEA of a comprehensive system to measure student learning in fulfillment of a memorandum of understanding directed 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).

- Curriculum published in the areas of functional academics and career education, and for instruction in braille.

- Instructional technology placed in all classrooms for instructional use.

- Improvement of administrative technology: old hardware and software upgraded, administrative operating systems moved to Windows NT environment, and fiber optic cable installed in additional buildings.

- Expansion of the School’s web site as a resource for teachers, parents, and other professionals throughout Texas.

- Expansion of outreach services for parents with pre-school blind and visually impaired children.

- Expansion of the Weekends Home Program to include all students and their families.
• Expansion of career education to include more opportunities for paid employment on and off campus.

• Expansion of career guidance activities, including teaching students to use the Internet as an information source.

• 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 students, their parents, local schools, and other community resources in effecting successful transition from TSBVI to their local communities.

• Implementation of a career ladder for residential instructors, teaching assistants, maintenance technicians, office support staff, and outreach staff.

• Replacement of one school bus and three busettes.

• Increased recognition for the achievements of our students in the public media.

• **Degree to Which Current Budget Does Not Meet Current and Expected Needs**

  **General Issues**

The current budget is not sufficient to provide the present level of services described in the School’s mission. This mission includes the provision of an instructional and residential program during the regular school year, and the provision of outreach services throughout the State. New efforts to meet the mission of the School have created significant budgetary problems. Among these are continual expansion of special programs (short-term and summer) and a new post-secondary program. An effort to stretch existing funds to cover these new initiatives on a start-up basis has been successful, but additional resources will be needed to meet the increased demands for these specialized services. For many years, TSBVI has experienced a growing and widening demand for services from local districts and from parents, but has not received sufficient additional funds to meet these needs.

The basic trend in appropriations for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for the past several legislative sessions has resulted in a decrease in funds available for operating expenses. Operating expenses (e.g. utilities) have increased due to inflation. Salary costs have increased due to a limited implementation of career ladders and merit pay. Program costs have increased to implement new initiatives and to meet the needs of students with increasingly complex disabilities. These are significant, recurring costs that impact future budgets. Any cost increases have to be funded by decreases in funds previously available for operating expenses.

The limitation on agency appropriation requests to prior-year expenditure levels has resulted in our School submitting an unrealistic base budget with extensive exceptional item requests.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain the aging facilities of the School. One of the School’s highest priorities is a commitment from the legislature to provide capital budget funds for the continued renovation of the School’s facilities over the next 5 to 7 years. Future planning might benefit greatly from the professional services of a facility planner to assist us in determining which buildings should be renovated and which buildings should be replaced. As a state agency with direct appropriations from the legislature, the School is totally dependent upon funding from the legislature for capital improvement funding. Because TSBVI does not have a capacity to assess taxes, as do public
schools, the School is without the authority to issue bonds to build new buildings.

The School has conducted marketing surveys of its customers and stakeholders, both internal and statewide. It is clear that the School needs to initiate both new and expanded programs identified by stakeholders and clients as areas of great need for blind and visually impaired children in Texas.

Based on all these facts, TSBVI has identified two major areas in which the School’s budget does not meet current and expected needs. They will be presented in our next legislative appropriations request as two exceptional item categories.

**Current and Expected Needs - Exceptional Items**

- **Growing Demands for Services:**
  - **Programming for Increased Enrollment of Basic Skills Students**

  Additional instructional and residential staff are required to meet the number of referrals to the School’s regular school year program for students with very special needs in addition to their visual disability. These youngsters have very intense needs and can only benefit from instruction in a classroom with a teacher, a teacher aide, and four or five other students. A parallel need exists in the residential program. Our current student population and new referrals make it evident that we will need more staff in this program or we will be forced to deny or postpone the admission of students.

  - **Reading and Low Vision Specialist**

  The School needs to employ an educator dually qualified in reading and low vision. The School has long known the importance of literacy for blind and visually impaired individuals for success in school and for future employability. There is also an increased emphasis at the state and federal level to hold schools accountable for the literacy of its students. We have teachers who do an excellent job of teaching reading, but there is an increasing number of students who come with dyslexia and other reading disorders that require the direct intervention or consultation of a reading specialist with additional knowledge in how students with low vision can better use that remaining vision to learn.

- **Comprehensive Programs Residential Instruction**

  The School teaches students the skills necessary to live independently after they leave school. An additional dorm teacher and residential instructors are necessary to accomplish this.

- **Short-term Programs Residential Instruction**

  For many years, teachers and parents have asked TSBVI to develop models for short blocks of instruction for students who come to the TSBVI campus coupled with a quick return to the local schools. It is now apparent that the success of such intensive short-term programs requires that instruction occur not only during the school day but also after school and in the evenings. Additional residential staff are required to provide this extended learning and reinforcement of skills acquired earlier each day in the classroom.

TSBVI initiated these short-term programs during the 1999-2000 school year on a pilot basis. The success of this pilot program demonstrates to the School and to its cus-
tomers that this type of service delivery model needs to be expanded. It is effective and cost efficient. It is increasingly clear that this program model may well be one of the most important services that the school can provide now and in the future. The School seeks to expand an ongoing series of short, intensive classes focusing on specialized areas relating to vision loss. Students attending these special classes at TSBVI receive instruction in a small number of carefully chosen objectives that include criteria by which student success will be measured. Depending on the subject, classes vary in length from weekends, to one or two weeks, to a semester. All students return to their local schools at the end of each short program.

Such programs allow students to remain in their local schools, which is more cost effective. These students continue to learn the State’s general curriculum, and yet still have the opportunity to learn those special skills in the core curriculum for students with a visual impairment. Through short courses, TSBVI can strengthen its partnerships with local schools, so that together, we can fully meet the needs of all visually impaired students in Texas. In this way, TSBVI supports, but does not duplicate, local school services.

- **Summer Vocational Programs**

The Summer Programs have long provided opportunities for visually impaired students from public schools to come to TSBVI to acquire vocational experience, including real world summer jobs in the Austin area. A chief component of this program is known as the Summer Work Experience in Austin Texas (SWEAT). The SWEAT Program and other portions of the summer vocation program have been partially funded in the past by an external source that is no longer available to the School. The School needs nearly $132,000 each year to continue this highly requested program.

- **Post-Secondary Program**

Many young people with visual disabilities graduate from their local high school programs without adequate skills for employment or independent living. This short-term program is designed for young people who have completed their high school education, are not yet twenty-two years old, and still lack the necessary skills to be employable, live independently, and generally be productive citizens of the state as set forth in Vision Texas.

The 76th Legislature has authorized the appropriation of funds to TSBVI from the sale of a facility currently operated by the Texas Commission for the Blind (TCB). Those funds were used to construct a small facility in which to operate this program. The building has just been completed, and now funds are needed to provide salaries and operating costs for this much-needed program. By operating this program as a collaborative effort with TCB, there could be a 4:1 match of federal rehabilitation funds to state dollars appropriated for this program. The School is also actively seeking external funds from foundations and public grants for start-up costs in the coming 2002-03 school year.

- **Weekends Home**

This program provides transportation for students to be at home with their families on weekends on a “parent choice” basis. The program was expanded in 1999 to make it
available to all students and their families, not only for students who reside in the Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio areas. Parents have chosen to increase the frequency of their children coming home. Additional escorts are needed on busses for the existing routes, and for two new routes added in the spring of 2002 to the Bryan/College Station and San Angelo areas.

• Outreach Transition Specialist

The transition of VI students from school to the community and to work needs support at many levels. The School has experienced success in the employment of a transition specialist to work with deafblind graduates. This success points to the need to increase transition support for students with a visual impairment, including those with additional disabilities, who are making the transition from their local public schools to adult life.

• Outreach Orientation & Mobility Instructor

Orientation and mobility instruction is vital for the visually impaired person. It is a notable gap that the Outreach program of the School does not have a full-time O&M specialist to assist local schools and parents in this area of critical instruction.

• Newly Certified Teacher Statewide Training Program

Professional fees and travel expenses for newly credentialed VI teachers are needed to support the training program targeting newly certified teachers to supplement basic training that they received in the university training programs.

• Special Education Teacher Salary Bonus

Since 1975 the Texas Legislature has instituted provisions to ensure that the School’s salary schedule for teachers would be equal to the salary schedule of Austin ISD. In order to maintain this balance, the School will be requesting the authority to give TSBVI teachers a bonus equivalent to that provided to special education teachers in Austin ISD.

• Instructional Design Consultant

The School will request the services of an external expert to assist Outreach and other staff to develop training materials available in electronic media to develop training materials available in electronic media such as on CD-Rom’s and on the Internet. These training materials will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the School’s Outreach and internal professional development programs.

• Family Support and Training

Training and support for families of students with visual impairments and deafblindness is an important service, highly in demand for a population that is thinly spread geographically throughout the state. Parents and students need to meet each other and adults with similar visual impairments to develop appropriate and challenging future goals. This funding would support three to four family retreats each year of the biennium as well as provide $10,000 for funding for Spanish translation. The demographics of Texas indicate a need for information in multiple languages as well as state-wide opportunities to gather.
• Reallocate of Bus Drivers and Teaching Assistants in the State Schedule of Classified Positions

TSBVI proposes to collaborate with State Classification Office (SCO) in recommending to the legislature that the positions of school bus drivers and the Education Aide series be reclassified to attract, retain, and compensate qualified individuals commensurate with the very important direct service responsibilities to students with special needs.

• Increase Awareness of Services Available to Visually Impaired Students

The School serves as a clearinghouse for information to professionals and parents about services needed and available to visually impaired children. Funds will be requested to print and disseminate written materials, and to develop video and distance technology materials.

• Maintenance Staff

Because of the age of the facilities and the changing student population, more maintenance hours are needed to meet the demands placed upon the maintenance department. The additional maintenance hours will allow the School to maintain and renovate the aging campus more effectively. The School also needs to consider that the construction of additional facilities through the construction projects will require some additional routine cleaning and preventive maintenance.

➢ Capital Budget Needs - Facilities

• Renovation of Dormitory & Instructional Facilities

The School will request the legislature to appropriate funds from the sale of bonds approved by the voters’ passage of Proposition 8 in November, 2001. The request will be in accord with the School’s Long-Range Facilities Plan previously submitted to the 77th Legislature. The focus of renovation or replacement will be on facilities for student use, specifically dormitories and instructional facilities.

• Replace Swimming Pool

The School’s indoor swimming pool provides opportunities for students to learn to swim, to engage in competitive swimming, to improve their physical swimming, and to enjoy swimming for recreational purposes. The pool needs to be replaced. It is over thirty years old, has a water leak problem that has defied repair, lacks access by physically impaired students, and has a ventilation system that has not functioned correctly for several years.

• Elementary Gymnasium

Children in the Elementary School do not have a gymnasium appropriate to meet their needs related to their serious visual and orthopedic disabilities. The room currently used for this purpose was designed to be a classroom, not a gym. Furthermore, the Texas State Board of Education has required that physical education to be a daily routine in all elementary grades.

➢ Capital Budget Needs - Equipment

• Virtual Private Network

This equipment will provide secure connections to the campus network from off-campus by validating the outside client.
• **Replace PBX Equipment**
  The current telephone system was installed in June 1995. Replacement of the equipment is needed to maintain reliable service and provide increased system capacity.

• **Purchase Additional Server**
  An additional server is required to meet anticipated capacity requirements.

• **Purchase Accounting Software**
  Purchase accounting software to replace existing VAX-based accounting system. New software will meet reporting, budget management, and audit requirements.

• **Distance Education**
  The distance education facility has been increasingly used to transmit interactive training, to hold live parent-teacher videoconferences, and most recently to conduct ARD Committee meetings with local districts and parents. The current equipment was acquired with a federal Technology Integration in Education (TIE) grant in 1998. By 2004 our current videoconferencing equipment will need to be replaced to be compatible with new and emerging standards for connectivity with facilities across the world.

**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.

  Today, the majority of 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. The primary 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. 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.

  The combination of these two areas has become known as the “Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students”. 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. One such factor is the increasing emphasis on inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms. 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 one or two 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.

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 relation 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 50.7% 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 Commission for the Blind 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.
In the next 2-5 years, TSBVI plans to address very specific needs with intense, high-quality services to make it possible for students to move back and forth between local schools and TSBVI with much more ease. This process will require further restructuring of services provided by TSBVI. The impact on TSBVI staff resources will be growing dramatically during this time period.

The demographic trend for low employment of individuals with visual impairments was described above.

In FY 2002, a community-based residential program for post-secondary students is being planned in collaboration with the Texas Commission for the Blind. Its curriculum will concentrate on vocational training, independent living skills, remedial academics, social skills, and orientation and mobility.

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 develop a one-year transition program for students moving from elementary school to middle school. Experience suggests that this is one of the most difficult transitions for blind and visually impaired students.

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 10-15 years ago. Today, the realities of “responsible inclusion” for children with visual impairments is causing parents and local school districts to re-examine the effectiveness of inclusion without preparation. TSBVI anticipates a gradual, but definite increase in local district referrals as they begin to realize the impact of a short-term placement at our school on the success of inclusive education. Also, 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 educational and emotional needs.
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. This will be even more so with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, formerly the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, which provides significant educational funding.

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.

The entire United States, including Texas, continues to face a shortage of teachers specifically trained in the education of blind and visually impaired children.

- With funds made available to TSBVI from TEA, a solid foundation of collaboration between Texas Tech University, Stephen F. Austin University and TSBVI, the state is gradually addressing the issue of adequate numbers of teachers for visually impaired students. The Texas legislature added these funds for teacher preparation to the budget of TSBVI and required that they be provided by TEA.
- Another major strategy to address teacher training will be the use of distance education technologies. TSBVI is exploring the use of these media to provide ongoing staff development for teachers of the visually impaired, and for orientation and mobility instructors throughout the state.

- **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.

**Technological Developments**

**Impact of Technology on Current Agency Operations**

**Instructional Technology:**

Technology has made a significant impact in the education of students with visual disabilities. One cannot visit a TSBVI classroom or living facility without observing the significant role that technology has come to have in the education of 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 basic access to instructional materials, reference sources, and to materials previously only available in print. Desktop computers, laptop computers, peripheral devices including speech output and braille output devices, have given blind students the opportunity to access instructional materials on a level with their sighted peers. While providing significant empowerment to individuals with visual impairments, technology has also provided challenges to staff and students. The skills that a student must possess to use technical systems continue to increase as systems become more sophisticated.

Technology is used to help 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 specialized access technology. This effort requires a broad knowledge base to serve students who may have one or more physical, sensory, cognitive, or language impairments. The technology needs of these students range from basic communication and socialization needs to vocational, telecommunications, and college preparatory training.

**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 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 are re-written as web-deployed applications, then new levels of standardization and agency coordination are possible.

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. Continued development of the Intranet is indicated to promote inter-office communication and standard publication of information.
Distance Education:

As the Outreach department offers more diverse services to more individuals, the reliance on technology increases. Deployment of new information over the web has been identified as a key need to use limited staff resources effectively. Use of distance education is a fundamental aspect in future program planning. Courses offered by distance education will include Foundation of Visual Impairment, Math Materials and Methods for Teachers of VI students, and Abacus Instruction. These courses are examples of how these emerging technologies may provide new methods for service delivery.

TSBVI’s Web site (www.tsbvi.edu) continues to expand TSBVI’s 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.

• 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 also be 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 $4,000 per unit. Gradual conversion from the old technology to the new device platform will require a phased procurement with consistent funding. The School will continue to need the appropriation for instructional technology that the 75th Legislature provided.

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 gain skills, new initiatives and applications are innovated to improve services to students, families, and other professionals. In anticipation of higher bandwidth requirements, networking equipment is to be up-
The desktop computers on campus have been upgraded to eliminate 486-class computers. Continued upgrade is needed 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 Servlet 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 School owns a Legacy VAX 4000-200 computer system that has been undergoing a phased migration as applications for office automation, student demographics, registration tracking, library circulation, work order management, inventory management, student trust fund management are moved to the NT-based Server environment.

Approximately 300 individuals access the system by networked desktop computer (350) or laptop computers. Workstations are connected via TCP/IP transport over Ethernet. The Digital PathWorks LAN manager networking environment has been replaced by Windows NT networking. The network is configured to provide file sharing and networked printing 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 of campus to be deployed in FY2000. 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, six servers support the various functions such as web-hosting (www.tsbvi.edu) Web-based distance education, video-conferencing, resource sharing, application server, and Intranet applications.

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 Telecommunications Division of the General Services Commission. 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 videoconferencing to areas without high-speed internet connections.

**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 75% 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. Thus far, as we identify new areas of need for TSBVI, we are in a pattern of “add-on”, not “replace”. When we add services, such as technology instruction, we do not eliminate another program. This means 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 greatest economic factor affecting the population served by TSBVI is 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 stakeholders. Any changes in use of resources now would seriously deprive current students of state-of-the-art instruction. The School’s current budget does not allow TSBVI to effectively address portions of its mission. Current level funding, or a reduction in funding, will seriously impair the School’s ability to meet its obligation to visually impaired students.

**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 the resources that we must have 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 Deaf-Blind Program. The School has been the primary source for the delivery of these services in Texas 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 a subcontract to TSBVI to perform specific statewide functions previously performed by the TEA prior to that agency's mandated decentralization.

*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 recent enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), formerly the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), will also affect the School significantly, beginning with the 2003 school year in August 2002. There will be increased requirements for documenting student learning, and increased testing and accountability systems.

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).

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. We anticipate that the future reauthorized version of the IDEA will retain this fundamental component.

Other Legal Issues

Impact of Anticipated State Statutory Changes

The state has adopted an assessment system for students with disabilities as an alternative to the TAKS for students with disabilities. TSBVI has offered to consult with the TEA to make modifications in this series of tests in order to make it valid and nondiscriminatory for visually impaired students.

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 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

The School has met or exceeded most of the outcome and output measures set forth in its Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriation Request as submitted in its quarterly reports to the LBB and GOBP. Specifically, the School achieved or exceeded 7 of the 12 outcome measure projections set for fiscal year 2001, an approximate 58% achievement rate. An 8th outcome measure fell slightly below the School’s projection, but within the accepted 5% variance rate.

The following information details the School’s performance for FY 2001 in areas critical to the School’s mission:
• **Student Learning.** The School has exceeded its projections in the areas of student learning as reflected by improved student achievement in their grades, and parents responses regarding the successful transitions of students back to local programs.

• **Customer Satisfaction.** The School exceeded its projections in the following areas:
  - 87% of responding parents stated that they were very satisfied or above with their children’s experiences at TSBVI’s summer programs.
  - 88% of families, professionals and paraprofessionals statewide rated as very satisfactory or above the improvement of their knowledge and skills as a result of services or products received from TSBVI’s Outreach Programs.
  - 92% 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.
  - 100% 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 School Improvement Plan.

In the fall of 2001, TSBVI received accreditation by TEA based on meeting the student performance requirements approved by TEA the previous school year.

The School underwent a comprehensive District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) monitoring visit by TEA in the Spring of 2002. The TEA gave the School high marks for the participatory nature of its strategic planning, for the high value placed on the School’s services by parents, and by the high quality of instruction to students that they directly observed. They did find five areas out of a possible 350 that require corrective action, and steps are currently being taken to make the necessary corrections in forms or procedures.

➢ **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 software management and student attendance.

The management of software has been centralized and a current employee has been assigned additional hours to monitor the implementation of the audit’s recommendations. The school now has a student attendance accounting system that is efficient and reliable.

➢ **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 self-evaluation 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 conducted 15 short-term special programs in the current 2001-2002 school year. 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 improving:

• 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.

- A program that clearly addresses identified needs of students and works diligently to return children to their local schools as soon as possible. Emphasize student preparation for adult life in the curriculum and instruction, and implement effective transition strategies.

- Increased accountability. Improve 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, the core curriculum for visually impaired learners.

- Maintain high quality, diverse programs, maintaining the national reputation of TSBVI as one of the best of its kind.

- Increase revenues from other public and private sources to help meet the expanding demand for services from TSBVI.

- The expansion of the Outreach Program with the capability of impacting 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.

- Salaries for bus drivers and teaching assistants that attract and retain quality employees.

- Further expansion of short-term programs during the regular school year as well as 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 schoolwide 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**

- Human Resources: A shortage of well-trained professional educators skilled in working with the special needs of visually impaired children.

- Environmental: An aging campus in desperate need of renovation and replacement.

- Cultural: 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.
Fiscal: The School has continued to expand its functions in light of its legally mandated mission without a corresponding increase in funds to continue to implement and expand these programs. We have stretched and stretched to meet the increasing demand for services, and now additional fiscal resources are needed.

Geographical: 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 expensive travel obligations to ensure that students in east, west, and south Texas have the same opportunities to be with their families as the students in central Texas.

The geography of Texas also presents special challenges for the School’s Department of Outreach Services, the component of the school that provides services state-wide 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. Distance also deters parents and their children from participating in school activities. In addition, the Weekends Home program, which assures the opportunity of every student to return to home and family every weekend, is a vital part of the School’s program. Therefore, the geography of Texas profoundly affects the travel budget and delivery systems for outreach services, parent participation, and Weekends Home for students.

Travel caps imposed by the state that disregard our state-wide obligation to provide services, and that do not acknowledge that most of our travel funds are generated by federal grants.

There is no systematic, funded project designed to inform and educate parents and guardians about the educational and developmental needs of blind and visually impaired children.

There is no standard by which the quality and appropriateness of all local school programs for blind and visually impaired students are measured.

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 very well. The Legislature defined our role concisely, and left little room for interpretation. 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/he 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 need 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 is committed to the philosophy that, when possible, blind and visually impaired children should be educated in their home schools while living with their families. Therefore, we take very seriously our role of providing intensive services in needed educational areas in order to enable children to return home as soon as possible. Also, through our Outreach Program, we are able to offer technical assistance to local resources that often results in quality local services.

• TSBVI and 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 TCB so that our students will receive the best preparation for adulthood from us, and then, as necessary, take full advantage of appropriate services at TCB.

• 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.

• The TSBVI web site has become a vital tool for the TSBVI staff, educators and administrators throughout Texas, and colleagues and parents throughout the world. For the month of April 2002, the TSBVI web site received over 103,078 visits from all over 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 Commission for the Blind, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, the Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation 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 has been assigned to enhance revenue from both public and private sources. Community businesses in Austin and service organizations throughout the State are now much more involved with and contributing time and other resources to education. The School will need to continue to increase its efforts to solicit and obtain such support from external sources.

Meanwhile 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 Southwest 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. 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.

TSBVI now works with the Austin area Junior League, whose volunteers are currently providing recreational opportunities for our students, as well as recording recreational reading and transcribing braille.

The School is employing videoconferencing equipment as a cost effective strategy to deliver outreach services and to increase parental participation in the School. Parent videoconferences have focused on involving parents and educators from the lower Rio Grande Valley, the El Paso area, Abilene, and Wichita Falls. Plans are underway to expand the use of this strategy.

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.
Employee Attitudes Regarding TSBVI

In December of 2001, TSBVI participated in the Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE) administered through the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. The survey results are summarized in Appendix F.

A relatively new tool for assessing employee attitudes is the State Auditor’s Office Employee Exit Survey. Despite our efforts, participation by our terminating employees so far has been minimal and probably does not yet provide a basis for valid inferences. Nevertheless, in an agency of this size, it is relatively simple to obtain meaningful anecdotal information about the reasons people leave employment here. Although by far the most frequent reason officially given for resignation is “personal reasons unrelated to the job,” it is our impression that staff often leave for reasons directly or indirectly related to pay, and this belief is supported by the Survey of Organizational Excellence results. They might be leaving for a higher paying job, or they might be planning to start or return to school which they hope will lead to a higher paying job. Very seldom do staff express dissatisfaction with the work itself. Many departing staff members comment in their resignation letters on the satisfaction of working with students and their own growth while working here. Staff take pride in the work that they do with students, and even staff who don’t work directly with students often get involved in student activities or attend student events. The focus at TSBVI is, first and foremost, on students, and that is reflected in the attitude of all staff.

The fact that TSBVI has very few grievances and a low incidence of complaints filed with the Texas Commission on Human Rights and/or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is, we believe, indicators of generally positive employee attitudes. Furthermore, many former staff members of TSBVI return to employment here. At the beginning of the 2001-02 school year, four of the twelve vacant teaching positions we had were filled by returning teachers. These were certified teachers of the visually impaired who had many job options and chose to return to TSBVI. Four other vacancies were filled by individuals who had been employed at TSBVI as paraprofessionals and eventually completed training programs to continue or resume employment here as certified professionals.

Further discussion of employee attitudes toward the organization is contained within Appendix F.
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 2006:

- 60% of responding LEAs, parents, and students will rate the students’ progress during the regular school year as very satisfactory or above.

Students attending short-term programs will annually demonstrate success in their educational programs. By fiscal year 2006:

- 90% of students attending short-term programs will demonstrate progress as measured by pre- and post-assessment.
- 75% 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 2006:

- 80% of students’ learning experiences in summer programs will be rated by local districts as very satisfactory or above.
- 82% 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 2006:

- 77% of responding local school districts will rate TSBVI as satisfactory or above in meeting the student’s reason for referral.
- 77% of responding parents will rate TSBVI as satisfactory or above in meeting the student’s reason for referral.
- 55% of students who have graduated from TSBVI within the past 5 years will be employed or enrolled in post-secondary education or training.

OUTCOME MEASURES:

* Percent of Student Learning Performance Indicator Attained
* Percent of Responding LEA’s, Parents and Students Rating the Students’ Progress During the Regular School Year as Very 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 Responding Local School Districts Rating TSBVI as Satisfactory or Above in Meeting the Student’s Reason for Referral

* Percent of Responding Parents Rating TSBVI as Satisfactory or Above in Meeting the Student’s Reason for Referral

* Percent of Students Graduated from TSBVI During the Past 5 Years Who are Currently Employed or Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training

**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

* Number 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 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:**

* Number of Students Receiving Physical/Motor Services
* Number of Students Receiving Counseling and Assessment Services
* Average Weekly Number 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 2006, 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.

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 TSBVI Consultant in Addressing the Reason for 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

* 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 Participants in Video-conferencing 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 2006.

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

- **SUPERINTENDENT**
  - Board of Trustees
  - Executive Administration
  - Human Resources
  - Curriculum
  - Legal
  - Business, Operations & Technology
  - Special Programs
  - Outreach
  - Comprehensive Programs
  - School & Student Services

**Regular school year instructional and residential programs**

**Summer and other short-term instructional programs**

**Training and resource for professionals and families of VI and deafblind children and other statewide services**

**Accounting, budgeting, purchasing, facilities, transportation, food services, security, technology services & telecommunications**

**Planning and evaluation, admissions and records, Learning Resource Center, Health Center, and community resource development**
### Appendix C: Five-Year Projections for Outcomes

**TSBVI PROJECTED OUTCOMES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2003-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Student Learning Performance Indicator Attained</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Responding LEAs, Parents and Students Rating the Students’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress During the Regular School Year as Very Satisfactory or Above</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-assessment</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Responding LEAs, Parents, and Students Rating the Students’</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiences in the Short-term Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Students Whose Responding Local School Districts Rated their</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Experience at Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Students Whose Responding Parents Rated their Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience at Summer Programs as Very Satisfactory or Above</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Responding Local School Districts Rating TSBVI as Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>or Above in Meeting the Students’ Reason for Referral</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>Percent of Responding Parents Rating TSBVI as Satisfactory or Above</td>
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<tr>
<td>in Meeting the Students’ Reason for Referral</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>Percent of Students Graduated From TSBVI During the Past 5 Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who are Currently Employed or Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
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<td>Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory or Above the Improvement in their Knowledge and Skills as a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the TSBVI Consultant in</td>
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<td>Addressing the Reason for the On-Site Visit/Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Agreeing</td>
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<tr>
<td>that there was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result of the On-Site Visit</td>
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</table>
Appendix D: Performance Measure Definitions

OUTCOME MEASURES

Objective 1:1

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 During the Regular School Year as Very 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 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. 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 4 or higher is rated as very satisfactory or above. The final reported result is calculated by determining the number of average scores of 4 or higher 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:** No

**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: On an annual basis, the cumulative number of all students who make documented progress in the special programs will be divided by the total number of students participating in all the special programs.

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: No

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 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding.

Method of Calculation: The total number of local district, parents and students rating the students’ experiences as a 4 or higher 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

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 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. 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 4 or higher 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

 Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Students Whose Responding Parents Rated their Learning Experience at TSBVI Summer Programs 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 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. 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 4 or higher 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

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Responding Local School Districts Rating TSBVI as Satisfactory or Above in Meeting the Student’s Reason for Referral:

Short Definition: All students enrolled in the regular school year at TSBVI are referred by their local schools to acquire specific knowledge and skills. This measure is intended to show the degree to which the School met the needs identified by the local districts.

Purpose/Importance: This measure of customer satisfaction reflects perceptions about how well the School addressed each student’s initial reason for referral to TSBVI. It is a measure of quality of the School’s instructional and residential programs. The measure also meets statutory requirements related to the provision of appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment.

Source/Collection of Data: Surveys are mailed out by the Superintendent’s office each winter for students transitioned during the previous school year. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. An average rating is obtained and manually calculated by the agency on an annual basis and reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

Method of Calculation: The total number of local district personnel rating how well TSBVI addressed the student’s reason for referral as a 3 or higher is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

Data Limitations: The number of students who transition each year is less than 30 and the number of surveys returned is usually less than 10. Therefore, the final percentage obtained can be easily skewed by the responses given by one person.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target
Percent of Responding Parents Rating TSBVI as Satisfactory or Above in Meeting the Student’s Reason for Referral:

*Short Definition:* All students enrolled in the regular school year at TSBVI are referred by their local schools to acquire specific knowledge and skills. This measure is intended to show the degree to which the School met the needs identified by the local districts.

*Purpose/Importance:* This measure of customer satisfaction reflects perceptions about how well the School addressed each student’s initial reason for referral to TSBVI. It is a measure of quality of the School’s instructional and residential programs. The measure also meets statutory requirements related to the provision of appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment.

*Source/Collection of Data:* Surveys are mailed out by the Superintendent’s office each winter for students transitioned during the previous school year. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. An average rating is obtained and manually calculated by the agency on an annual basis and reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

*Method of Calculation:* The total number of parents rating how well TSBVI addressed the student’s reason for referral as a 3 or higher is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

*Data Limitations:* The number of students who transition each year is less than 30 and the number of surveys returned is usually less than 10. Therefore, the final percentage obtained can be easily skewed by the responses given by one person.

*Calculation Type:* Non-cumulative

*New Measure:* No

*Desired Performance:* Higher than target

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

*Short Definition:* Percentage of students who graduated from TSBVI five years before, and up through, May of the previous year, who had paid employment for at least 4 hours during the month prior to the survey, or who are enrolled in a college, a university, a proprietary school recognized by the state’s accrediting agency, or a training program clearly aimed at future employment.

*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 employment and education and training 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 were employed for at least 4 hours during the month prior to the survey or who are currently enrolled in post-secondary education or training is measured against the total number of respondents to the surveys. The measure includes those employed in competitive employment, sheltered workshops, and those self-employed.

**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:** Yes (new definition)

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Objective 2.1**

**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 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. 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 4 or higher 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

**Desired Performance:** Higher than target

**Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the TSBVI Consultant in Addressing the Reason for 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 consultant.

**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 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = very satisfactory, 5 = outstanding. 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 Outreach consultant as a 4 or higher 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

**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 (August-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

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

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

*Purpose/Importance:* The number 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 number 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 (August-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, non-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: Yes

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 attending each summer program is added to attain this information.
Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

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**

**Number of Students Receiving Physical/Motor Services:**

*Short Definition:* This measure reflects the number of students attending classes in the regular school year, short-term and summer programs who receive occupational therapy, physical therapy, health services, speech-language therapy, audiological services and orientation and mobility instruction, including direct, consultative, and infused services.

*Purpose/Importance:* Measure is 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: Each individual student receiving physical/motor services during each of the four quarters is tallied.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Number of Students Receiving Counseling and Assessment Services:

Short Definition: This measure reflects the number of students attending classes in the regular school year, short-term and summer programs who receive psychological, counseling services, assessments and social work services, including direct, consultative, and infused services.

Purpose/Importance: Measure is 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: Each individual student receiving counseling and assessment services during each of the four quarters is tallied.

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:

Short Definition: The measure reflects how many of the twenty Education Service Center regions throughout the State received consultation or workshops from 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.

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 Participants in Video-conferencing Events:

Short Definition: The overall number of people at all sites participating in 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 participants in teleconferencing events.

Method of Calculation: Tally the total number of participants at each event.

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
Appendix E: Strategic Workforce Analysis Plan

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

The mission of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to provide opportunities for children and youth who are visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, to develop the skills necessary to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying and productive lives.

Primary Functions

The School provides services both directly and on an outreach basis, as follows:

- TSBVI provides a free public education to school-aged visually impaired children and youth when it has been determined that they cannot be served appropriately in their local school districts. While a few students live in the Austin area and attend TSBVI as day students, by far the majority are served residentially.

- TSBVI also provides summer and other short-term programs to students who are primarily being educated in their local school districts but who can benefit from supplemental programs offered here.

- The School provides statewide services to parents of students with visual impairments, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies through its Outreach program. These services include training, consultation, technical assistance, and the development and dissemination of materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology. The Outreach program also includes facilitation of the preparation of teachers for visually impaired students and mentorship for newly certified VI professionals.

Strategic Goals, Objective, and Strategies:

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.

Students attending short-term programs will annually demonstrate success in their educational programs.

Students will have beneficial experiences at TSBVI summer programs.

Students will make successful transitions.

Strategies:

- 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.

- Conduct residential programming that provides instruction in independent living skills and social skills.

- 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.

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

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 2006, 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.

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.

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:

- Changes in the number and types of students we are requested to serve. The past two years have seen the reversal of a previous trend toward declining enrollment. Enrollment is now on the rise. We are also serving an increasing number of students with significant medical and/or behavioral disorders.

- Increased demand for short-term programs to supplement the programming of students who are primarily served in their local districts.

- Increased specialization. TSBVI will focus more effort on instruction in those areas that are disability specific, such as Orientation & Mobility (O&M), adaptive technology, daily living skills; and on academic subjects which, due to their spatially-oriented nature (biology, math, geography), are best taught by certified teachers of the visually impaired who are also certified in these subjects.

- Increased need for ESL (English as a Second Language) Services.

- Within Outreach services, increased emphasis on O&M, transition (i.e., services which facilitate the success of students transitioning between school and adult placement), parent education, and distance learning.

II. CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The staff of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is comprised of 468 budgeted full- and part-time positions, totaling 386.32 FTEs. Of the FTEs, 297.19 are classified and one, the Superintendent, is line item exempt. The remaining 88.13 are teachers, principals, counselors, and other educational positions which, by statute (Texas Education Code 30.024(b)(1)), are paid in accordance with Austin Independent School District pay scales for comparable positions. These positions are exempt from the Position Classification Act and are coded in USPS as “unclassified regular.”

Among the classified positions, the single largest staff group (110.83 FTEs) 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. Our single-campus-based workforce is a small community with nearly every occupational field represented.

TSBVI’s contract workforce primarily consists of contract custodial services that replace 2.5 FTEs and heat-air conditioning-ventilation services that replace one FTE. Additionally, to meet residential students’ medical needs, we contract with two pediatricians who share the responsibility of staffing three clinics per week for our students, an optometrist who conducts low-vision clinics twice per month, and a psychiatrist on an as-needed basis. We contract for Spanish translation services due to the large volume of documents required to be translated for parents whose primary language is Spanish. TSBVI uses contract workers to fill temporary state employee vacancies, to perform highly specialized duties, to lower the cost of services, and/or to compensate in areas where our agency is unable to attract or retain state employees. Contract services are also used to provide services where full- or part-time positions are not needed.
Demographics

TSBVI Staff by Gender

- Male 34%
- Female 66%

TSBVI Staff by Age

- 16 - 29 18%
- 30 - 39 26%
- 40 - 49 29%
- 50 - 59 24%
- 60 - 69 3%

TSBVI Staff by Service Length

- < 2 yrs. 20%
- 2-5 yrs. 24%
- 5-10 yrs. 20%
- 10-15 yrs. 18%
- 15-20 yrs. 10%
- 20-25 yrs. 5%
- > 25 yrs. 3%

TSBVI Staff by Ethnicity

- White 74%
- Afric-Amer 12%
- Hisp-Amer 12%
- Other 2%

Staff Ethnicity by EEO Category Compared to Statewide Availability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Category</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TSBVI %</td>
<td>State %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials, Administrat’n</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Services</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin. Support</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Craft</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service &amp; Mainten.</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As is typical of an education setting, almost two-thirds of TSBVI employees are female. Over half are over the age of 40, and over one-third have more than 10 years of experience at this school.

Among the EEO occupational categories, the “Officials, Administration,” “Technical,” and “Service & Maintenance” 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 two of the most notable discrepancies (considering the size of the categories) being in the percentage of African 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 eight 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. We know that the ERS projection of 14 retirements within the next five years is very low. 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: This is the area in which we have the highest percentage of potential retirements. Among the 15 managers who are the school's top administrators or major department heads, approximately 65% will be eligible to retire within 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 23% of them should be eligible to retire within five years if they have not withdrawn their TRS service.

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

Instructional and Residential Paraprofessionals: This is our largest group of staff and consists primarily of Residential Instructors and Teaching Assistants. Although there are about 165 employees in this
group, 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. Only about 5% of these employees have the age and length of service to retire within five years, but 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:** Out of this group of about 40 staff, three or 7.5% will be eligible to retire within the next five years.

**Other Support Services:** This group includes about 44 maintenance, food service, and custodial workers, drivers, and security personnel. Of these, eight or about 18% should 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 appears subject 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, however, that many who plan to retire within this time frame will be interested in returning to work post-retirement and will be able to do so; therefore, the losses might not be as severe as appears possible.

### Turnover and Projected Attrition

The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) Annual Report on Full-time State Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2001 indicates that TSBVI had a 23.02% turnover rate last year, which is higher than the statewide rate of 17.6%. This information is limited in one very significant way: It does not include the 102 members of our staff who are not classified because they are teachers and other educational professionals who, by law, are employed by contract and paid in accordance with Austin Independent School District pay scales. The turnover rate for this group last year was only 7.8%, and when this group is added to full-time classified staff, the turnover rate for the combined group is approximately 18.5%.

Not surprisingly, turnover at TSBVI tracks overall economic conditions and, like all agencies, we benefit when general unemployment is higher. The 23.02% turnover rate among full-time classified employees in FY 01 was down appreciably from 29% in FY 99, but as the economy regains strength, we can reasonably expect more attrition through increased turnover, particularly if State salaries continue to lag the general market. The opportunity for many employees to retire will add to the usual economic and personal factors for leaving employment. It is not possible to fully know how the ability of staff to return to employment after retirement will mitigate this trend, but, as stated above, informal information suggests that a significant number of employees will wish to do so.

### 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
- Proficiency in working with students with multiple disabilities.
- For direct care paraprofessionals, individuals who have:
  - A human service orientation with a sincere desire to work with children with disabilities.
  - Good basic skills such as literacy, problem solving, and the ability to learn and apply knowledge related to working with children with visual impairments and other disabilities.
- 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

- Enrollment is likely to increase as the state’s population grows and local school districts increasingly encounter students they cannot appropriately serve.
- Students will continue to present more severe and complex disabling conditions, particularly 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.
- Federal and state education and special education regulations will require more services and impose more standards.
- A seven-year building program will increase the number of structures on campus and 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 teachers, but will also need teachers who are certified in VI along with 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.
- We will need administrators and managers with strong organizational and leadership skills.
- All staff who provide direct services to students, whether professional or paraprofessional, must develop skills to manage students’ behavior 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 adequately staffed for the students we currently serve, but assuming that both the number and complexity of students we serve increases as we anticipate, we will be insufficiently staffed. As enrollment rises, more staff will be needed, but that increase in staff will not necessarily be proportionate. When the students referred to TSBVI from their local school districts have more complex, multiply disabling conditions, the staff ratios to serve those students safely and effectively must intensify. We also anticipate growth in our short-term programs. This is extremely difficult to forecast 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.

IV. Gap Analysis

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Employees and Skills

As noted above, we anticipate a shortage of employees, the extent of which we cannot accurately predict, based on our belief that the number and complexity of students will increase in coming years. We are also anticipating some attrition through retirement. Furthermore, the skill set required to work with students is changing, as are the needs of our physical plant. The following gaps are either likely or possible if these issues are not addressed:
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 increased demand coupled with retirement and other attrition.

Our physical plant support functions will be inadequately staffed. Our buildings are antiquated, high maintenance structures inadequate to meet the changing needs of our student population. Fortunately, due to the availability of bond funds, over the coming seven years TSBVI will build 10 to 15 new buildings and remodel several others, but we will eliminate only seven structures. The net gain in buildings will necessitate more custodial support and possibly more maintenance. If our recent exploratory efforts to use contract services for certain maintenance functions prove successful, we may replace additional current FTEs and meet expanded needs with contract workers, but whether through contract services or with staff, we will definitely need more physical plant support.

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.

V. Strategies for Workforce Transition

The first two goals below reflect what has become a cornerstone of our workforce planning strategy: Grow our own. The large number of paraprofessional positions at TSBVI provide a supply of staff who start with good basic skills and a genuine interest in working with children with disabilities and eventually decide they want to make a professional career of this work. When those staff have bachelor’s degrees, they can become certified VI teachers with a minimum of personal expense and no lost work time. VI teachers can also develop professionally and benefit TSBVI by further specializing in additional subject matter, becoming administrators, or becoming related services specialists.

The third goal concerns behavior management training. Not every direct care employee will become a professional teacher, but all TSBVI staff must be able to manage student behavior safely and effectively. Workers, even professionals, do not arrive at our doorstep with these skills. It is imperative that we develop and rely on our own training to meet the complex behavioral needs of the students we serve.

The fourth goal focuses on retention. Recent economic conditions have shown many workers that the relatively stable employment and good benefits offered by the state can be attractive, but state salary levels are still not competitive and nor keeping pace with the cost of living.

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 replace other, less critical ones.
Goal 1:  Increase the supply of VI teachers.

Action Steps or Components

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 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.
   4. Provide ongoing training to enhance the skills of recently certified teachers.

Goal 2:  Train existing VI teachers to meet future staffing needs in administration, related services needs, and special teacher certification areas.

Action Steps or Components

A. Identify likely vacancies through consideration of retirement and attrition information and develop a list of “high need” credentials.

B. Identify funds and create a procedure whereby teachers may 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.

Goal 3:  Ensure that all staff who work with students have adequate knowledge and skills in behavior management.

Action Steps or Components

A. Develop modules and training packages to train staff in TSBVI’s Behavior Support System.
B. Identify and train trainers.

C. Begin implementation of training in 2002-03 school year.

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

**Action Steps or Components**

A. Complete all aspects of our career progression programs (CPP’s).
   1. Finish developing criteria for movement through all CPP’s.
   2. Develop and disseminate all supporting documentation (i.e., criteria, rules and procedures).
   3. Develop methods to more systematically include career progression in recruitment strategies.
   4. Develop a system for CPP “maintenance,” i.e., ensuring that new positions get CPP’s, that old CPP’s are reviewed periodically, etc.

B. Continue efforts to move staff through the salary ranges for their jobs by making more funds available for merit pay.

C. Develop a system to increase terminating employees’ participation in the Online Exit Survey to better understand causes of turnover.

D. Seek legislative authority to pay our teachers “signing” bonuses as is done for special education teachers in AISD and other local districts so that we do not remain in an unfavorable competitive position relative to these employers.

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

A. Further refine our determination of areas in which we will need to add workers (through employment or by service contract) and then prioritize them (e.g., physical plant support, training, direct care, technology).

B. For each identified need and in order of priority, develop a proposed solution for how to fund the position or service contract.

C. Develop a contingency plan for how each need will be met if workers cannot be added due to lack of funding.
Appendix F: Survey of Organizational Excellence

In December of 2001, TSBVI participated in the Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE) administered through the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. Although our staff’s participation rate of 29% was not as high as we would have liked, we were generally pleased with the results. The Survey Dimensions are:

- Work Group
- Work Setting
- Organizational Features
- Information
- Personal

In all dimensions except for Work Setting/Accommodations, TSBVI scored significantly higher than the benchmark scores for organizations of similar size and mission and, in fact, for all organizations. In Work Setting (which covers pay, benefits, employee development, and physical environment), we were right at the benchmarks. According to the SOE’s guidelines for interpreting scores, on all but one of the 20 constructs included in the five dimensions, TSBVI’s scores indicated areas of substantial strength for the organization or areas about which employees felt more positively than negatively. The only construct in which our score fell into the range of “more negative than positive” was Fair Pay. This result was somewhat disappointing in light of the efforts we have made to achieve more favorable compensation for our staff, as discussed earlier in the “Human Resources Strengths and Weaknesses” section. However, further examination of this construct revealed that it only accounted for three of the survey’s 86 questions, and the average score for these three questions, though low relative to our other scores, did not fall into the “significant source of concern” range.

The next-to-the-lowest construct, which actually received an average score, was Internal Information, which captures the flow of information within the organization upwards, downwards, and laterally. According to the descriptive information accompanying our SOE results, an average score in this area tends to indicate that employees feel that information is either difficult to obtain or not timely. A common cause of this problem, which we feel is true in our case, is lack of training in modern communication technology.

In the “Employee Attitudes Regarding TSBVI” section of this and previous versions of the Strategic Plan, we have contended that the low number of internal grievances and external complaints filed by employees supports the notion that TSBVI is considered a good place to work by most staff. Some of the SOE constructs on which we received higher scores lend further support to this belief. The constructs that were areas of substantial strength for us were:

- Quality, indicating that employees feel the organization delivers at the state of the art for customers.
- Strategic, indicating that employees view the organization as able to quickly relate its mission and goals to environmental changes and demands.
- Burnout, indicating that employees view their lives positively and feel in control of work and other responsibilities.

In summary, we were mostly pleased with the survey results but (1) our optimism is cautious due to a low participation rate, and (2) we recognize that we have room for improvement. Our plans to address these concerns are as follows:
A. Work harder to publicize the SOE and improve response rate when it is next administered to gain a more accurate picture of staff attitudes.

B. Do a better job of informing staff of the efforts we have made on their behalf to improve their compensation, and continue those efforts. Clearly document and consistently inform staff of all compensations programs that are in place. Clearly distinguish the factors that are and are not within local agency control.

C. Ensure that all staff, including staff who do not routinely use computers in their jobs, have the access and the knowledge to use a computer so that we can increase our reliance on the school’s intranet as a means of communicating important information to staff. Instill regular checking of the Intranet into staff routines.
Appendix G:

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Information Resources Strategic Plan

For Fiscal Years 2003-2007

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Executive Summary

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired derives its authority to operate and its purposes from the Texas Education Code (TEC 30.021). In brief, the law describes the scope and functions of the school “to serve as a special school in the continuum of statewide alternative placements for students who are 21 years of age or younger . . . and who have a visual impairment and who may have one or more other disabilities.” The law also sets forth these additional purposes for TSBVI:

- Conduct supplemental programs such as summer programs
- Provide statewide services to parents of students with visual impairments, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies serving students with visual impairments, deaf blindness, and other additional disabilities
- Develop and provide local, regional, and statewide training for parents and professionals
- Provide consultation and technical assistance to parents and professionals related to special education and special services for students
- Develop and disseminate reference materials in the areas of curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology
- Provide information related to library resources, adapted materials, current research, technology resources, and teaching, assessment, and transition of students
- Operate programs for lending educational and technological materials to school districts and education service center
- Facilitate the preparation of teachers for visually impaired students by providing assistance to institutions of higher education and other teacher preparation programs
- Cooperate with public and private agencies and organizations in the planning, development, and implementation of effective educational and rehabilitative service delivery systems to maximize and make efficient use of state resources

The technology systems of the TSBVI support the varied activities in place at the school to accomplish these purposes. The acquisition, use, and management of information technology at TSBVI supports the State Strategic plan to ensure that decisions are driven by the recognition and understanding of user needs in its varied program offerings. A primary focus of TSBVI’s mission is to support local school districts. The School serves as a clearinghouse for reference information, including instructional methods and materials. It is equally important that the staff of TSBVI have the knowledge and skills to teach students, and to serve as resources to teachers, professionals working with persons with visual impairments, and parents throughout the State.

For several years, the School has dedicated staff and fiscal resources to expand services and updated equipment resources for instruction. The majority of TSBVI students are involved with technology at their individual level of proficiency. Involvement ranges from the use of switch systems and augmentative communication devices for some students, to advanced telecommunication and personal computing for other students. As technology integration into teaching and learning expands, an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to technology planning and implementation will be vital to apply our technological resources effectively and efficiently. A primary emphasis for past planning years has been to build the network and client architecture. Now that the infrastructure is in place, network refinement and standardization are a priority along with the development of new application systems to support the administration of the school including student registration, demographics, classroom management, achievement reporting, IEP preparation, student assessment, budget, and fiscal management.
The key strategic areas of development for Funding Years 2003-2007 include:

Implementation of administrative applications
New systems are required to coordinate and manage administrative and student information. These systems are to be developed using the J2EE web development standard with the expectation that they will be fully accessible and will meet the data management needs of the school. The deployment of school-wide web-based applications with this technology will provide universal access to applications from existing desktops, including both IBM-compatible and Macintosh computers, integration with other TSBVI information systems, and security of sensitive student data. Purchased software for accounting will replace the VAX-based software and provide more comprehensive reporting and funds management.

Computer upgrades and increased student access
We will continue to expand the number of computers and assistive devices (Figure 1) available to students in the instructional and residential settings to provide resources for communication, homework completion, development of life-long leisure skills, and exploration of the Internet environment. Continued upgrades for the school’s classroom desktop computers as well as portable computers, internet-ready Braille devices, CRTs, and software on a planned schedule will provide access to information resources and print media for students who are blind and visually impaired. Because TSBVI models state-of-the-art programming to distracts throughout the state, exploration of “cutting-edge” adaptive technologies is critical to provide support and consultation to other districts for planning and implementation issues.

Expanded teacher and staff training
Training is an ongoing need for TSBVI staff. As systems become more complex and technology applications more prevalent, staff must expand their skills to support student learning. With the advent and expansion of networked computers, training will address utilization of the expanded tool-set. The Agency and IR Strategic Plans include staff training and distance education models for integrating technology use with teaching and learning across the curricula areas, particularly in specialty areas related to technology for students with visual impairments. Training for administrative support staff will increase efficient use of the Microsoft Office environment. Instructional staff will continue training on software and systems that assist in the development of documentation required by federal and state laws governing special education.

Migration of the electronic mail and web server to a fault-tolerant server platform
The NT networking environment supports the Windows and Macintosh clients and provides access to LAN-based applications, file sharing, and printing. The Solaris cluster servers will be integrated into the Windows NT server environment to support critical functions in a fault-tolerant, scalable server environment and reduce the number of NT-based servers.

Expanded distance learning technology
By continuing to expand the capability and application of our teleconferencing facilities, the School will be able to enhance the learning of children with visual impairments both on campus as well as those served in local districts. By use of this technology, TSBVI provides valuable information concerning curricula, materials, technology, teaching strategies, and pre-service training to professionals, parents, and other interested individuals by creating electronic links to regional education service centers, school districts, institutions of higher education, and other agencies. Such technology has been proven to provide information, training, and follow-up while reducing the time and expense of travel. Expansion in the use of such equipment for
ARD meetings, transition training, informal video conferencing, and increased parent involvement will be a focus for the next several years as we continue to exploit the capabilities of the technology and expand program content. This technology will increase the ability of parents and local districts to participate in their children's education regardless of their physical distance from the school.

**Expanded Application of world wide web technologies**

Web-based development has proven effective in service delivery. New applications will be developed to assist in data collection from various sources throughout the state. Introduction of new methods to perform agency duties will be explored. For example, 70% of the orders for materials from the American Printing House for the Blind are now made through email requests. Redesign of the TSBVI web site, www.tsbvi.edu, to a content management model will make the site easier to navigate and manage.

**Tenets of the TSBVI Instructional Technology Program**

- The School is committed to providing the training necessary for students with disabilities to use assistive hardware and software to interact with computers for the purpose of gaining access to information, products, and services.

- Technology offers students with disabilities independence at their individual level of potential, equitable access to information, and increased vocational opportunities. As an educational institution, TSBVI is committed to providing all students the skills and knowledge related to technology to enhance their lives educationally vocationally, socially, and personally.

- Assistive Technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. Technology is included in but is not limited to: adapted input, adapted output, augmentative and alternative communication, environmental control, mobility aid, multi-sensory modifications, physical education/recreation/leisure, positioning, and self-care devices.

- Technology can facilitate language development, communication, independence, interdependence, emergent literacy, development of social and cooperative learning skills, access to information, alternative means of expression, training for more efficient and effective use of vision, and maintenance of skills previously mastered. Literacy, in the form of communication skills, is achieved for all our students, primarily through creative uses of technology, in keeping with state and national educational goals.

- Technology instruction is an essential part of the Core Curriculum for students who are blind, deaf blind, or visually impaired. Instructional technology is used to support, enhance, and facilitate existing classroom instruction—not to replace it. Technology must be integrated into the classroom/curriculum to the maximum degree possible. To accomplish this goal, all students and staff will have appropriate and necessary training in the technology they use.

- Accessibility to information means providing students an equal opportunity to learn. Accessibility is defined relative to the users' needs and requirements for a task. TSBVI will strive to provide access through system infrastructure that allows for add-on assistive software to enable specialized input and output capabilities.
### Planning Factors and Assumption Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Factor</th>
<th>Assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for adequate budget management, general ledger reporting, and local funds management</td>
<td>The Uniform State-Wide Accounting System will not satisfy agency accounting, budgeting, and management needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for incorporation of video conferencing technologies</td>
<td>Continued expansion of outreach services and delivery of services via distance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased demand on information and support systems</td>
<td>Need for increased reliability and capacity scalability of internal systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for ongoing technical training of staff in use and integration of technology systems</td>
<td>As use of technology becomes more pronounced in the organization, the need for training becomes more critical for successful use of the systems and employee effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased complexity of technical systems</td>
<td>Technology planning will be integrated within various technology committees that span instructional and administrative applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased need for technical standards will increase as systems become more sophisticated and complex.</td>
<td>Under the leadership of the IRM, technical staff and administrators will develop information resources standards and policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased CPU processing and memory requirements for adaptive software</td>
<td>Funds will be available to upgrade instructional desktop computers to run assistive/adaptive software for student access as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need new models for support of VI professionals throughout Texas</td>
<td>Development of technology systems for the inter-networking of TSBVI with other agencies serving persons with visual impairments to access students and teachers, regardless of distance separation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSBVI should demonstrate leadership in developing accessible websites and applications</td>
<td>Staff with disabilities and primary constituency will need to access and use developed applications and websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop application systems using standards driven process to provide maximum accessibility</td>
<td>TSBVI should assume leadership in defining accessibility and technical presentation of web accessibility content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAX computer will become less supportable as hardware and software elements are retired. This component presents increased risk Open systems software is required for application development</td>
<td>Funds and staff resources will be available to migrate existing applications and server functions to server platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for technical resources</td>
<td>Object-oriented application environments will support adaptive/assistive client environments and provide for multiple client interfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network capacity demands will increase and reliability expectations will increase</td>
<td>Adequate staff resources will be maintained to support existing applications and develop systems for efficient processing of fiscal and student information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Network planning for distance education is based on adequate capacity to engage a videoconference from any networked location on campus and to establish connections to sites throughout the state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IR Goals

Agency Goal #1: Students who are visually impaired or deaf/blind 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.

State Strategic Plan for Information Resources, Goal 4

Texas state government’s acquisition, use, and management of information technology will be driven by the recognition and understanding of user needs.

IR Goal 1-1: The School will facilitate the use of technology to maximize independence and productivity of all students who are blind, have a visual impairment, or who are deaf blind, including those with additional disabilities.

Objective 1-1-1: Students will have current instructional technology available to them with the capabilities appropriate to their special needs.

Strategy: Upgrade current instructional technology systems to replace outdated systems according to assessed upgrade needs.
Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 2,3

Objective 1-1-2: Students will use technology commensurate with their abilities to enhance personal productivity.

Strategy: Implement technology instruction curriculum
Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 2,3

Objective 1-1-3: Train all instructional staff as appropriate in the use of technology for teaching

Strategy: Expand existing training plan for all instructional, residential, and paraprofessional staff to integrate technology into teaching subject areas.
Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 2,3

Objective 1-1-4: Students will learn to use appropriate technology in order to acquire the knowledge and skills specified in their Individual Education Plan's.

Strategy: Teachers will integrate technology use into content areas to enhance student learning
Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 2,3

State Strategic Plan for Information Resources, Goal 1

Texas state government will integrate government services by developing, implementing, and maintaining a statewide information resources infrastructure.
IR Goal 1-2: Create and maintain information systems and procedures that efficiently accommodate Legislative and/or Board rule changes and interface efficiently with other government entities, provide functional and efficient administration of school business.

Objective 1-2-1: Make all agency data systems and pertinent information accessible to persons with visual impairments.

Strategy: Utilize electronic publishing software to provide an accessible, standards-based, centralized repository of agency information.

Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 1, 4

Objective 1-2-2: Develop, deploy, and document enterprise applications. These systems will promote electronic inter-change with external agencies and constituents. Train staff in systems and promote technical skill development.

Strategy: Deploy applications that meet agency data management needs and coordinate with state systems.

Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 1

Strategy: Document the School’s core technology architecture and improve fault-tolerance of existing systems.

Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 1

Strategy: Provide opportunities for TSBVI staff to develop new computer skills.

Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 1, 4

Agency Goal #2: Families professionals and paraprofessionals will have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve educational programming and other services for Texas students who are visually impaired or deaf blind.

State Strategic Plan for Information Resources, Goal 1

Texas state government will integrate government services by developing, implementing, and maintaining a statewide information resources infrastructure.

IR Goal 2-1: TSBVI will provide adaptive technology training and support to local school districts, Regional Education Service Centers, educators, students, and families to maximize the use and effectiveness of technology for students who are blind, have a visual impairment, or are deaf blind, including those with additional disabilities.

Objective 2-1-1: Provide adaptive technology equipment, software, training, and technical support to students attending their local schools.

Strategy: Maintain, expand, and upgrade the Technology Loan Program

Biennial Operating Plan Project reference: 7

Strategy: Develop and provide statewide training and assistance in adaptive technology to families, professionals, and paraprofessionals.
Objective 2-1-2: School instructional staff, field-based educators, those participating in pre-service certification programs, and families will gain technical knowledge and skills for learners who are blind, visually impaired, and deaf blind, including those with additional secondary disabilities.

Strategy: Expand the use of video conferencing technologies to increase interaction between TSBVI professionals and district VI professionals, student families, and other individuals serving the blind community.
### TSBVI Databases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Database Description</th>
<th>Database System</th>
<th>Estimated Physical Storage Requirements</th>
<th>GIS Data Classification</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Database (SDS)</strong></td>
<td>A complex, highly normalized base that contains relations for a variety of student-related data. Extensive linking to other software systems by student SSN and integrated with office automation systems.</td>
<td>Rdb/Oracle RDO/SQL, COBOL</td>
<td>Eleven Megabytes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>We are currently exploring the feasibility of uploading of this data to the TEA PEIMS database</td>
<td>This system is scheduled to be re-written from VAX/VMS to the PC platform in 2002 using the DB2 database structure and the J2EE development model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accounting Reporting Database</strong></td>
<td>Contains relations for repository accounting data from USAS.</td>
<td>Rdb/Oracle RDO/SQL, COBOL</td>
<td>30 Megabytes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Built from USAS transaction file.</td>
<td>This system is scheduled to be deployed in an overall accounting software project using commercial software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical Limitations</strong></td>
<td>Stores medical data on students concerning medical limitations, medications, immunizations, and medical history.</td>
<td>Rdb/Oracle</td>
<td>1.25 Megabyte</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Uses core student data from Student Database.</td>
<td>This system is scheduled to be re-written from VAX/VMS to the PC platform in 2003 using the DB2 database structure and the J2EE development model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance Work Order</strong></td>
<td>Tracks work orders to provide status, repair history, and assignment information.</td>
<td>Access 2000</td>
<td>Nine Megabytes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The system is in the implementation phase using MS2000 commercial software on the Windows NT platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database Name</td>
<td>Registration Tracking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database Description</td>
<td>Contains elements to track flow of paperwork, student requests/requirements for fall and summer registration.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>Access 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Physical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage Requirements</td>
<td>Two megabytes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS Data Classification</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Uses core student data from Student Database.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>This system will be incorporated in the Student Database re-write in 2004 using the DB2 database structure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Student Incident Reporting (SIR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Database Description</td>
<td>Contains information concerning behavior and injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>Rdb/Oracle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Physical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage Requirements</td>
<td>1.25 Megabytes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS Data Classification</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Uses core student data from Student Database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>This system will be migrated from VAX/VMS as part of the Student Database specifications in 2003 using the DB2 database structure and the J2EE development model.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Warehouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Database Description</td>
<td>All warehouse receipts and issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>RMS ISAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Physical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage Requirements</td>
<td>Eight Megabytes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS Data Classification</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>This system will be integrated with the Accounting system in the year 2003 using the DB2 database structure and the J2EE development model.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Student Trust System (STF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Database Description</td>
<td>All student accounts receipts and expenditures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>RMS ISAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Physical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage Requirements</td>
<td>Seven Megabytes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS Data Classification</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>This system will be migrated as part of the Accounting system in the year 2004. The unique nature of this software may require that we write it with in-house staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accounts Payable/Purchasing (APPS)</strong></td>
<td>Requisition and payable information and status. Several files linked by requisition number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library Management System (LRC)</strong></td>
<td>Catalog information for library media and books. Allows for future development of circulation system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Printing House Materials Management System</strong></td>
<td>Maintains inventories and order information to support the management of the VH materials from Federal quota funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI Registration Database</strong></td>
<td>Contains annual registration of all visually impaired students in Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Database System | FoxPro 2.6                   | FoxPro 2.6                   | Access 2000                  |

| Estimated Physical Storage Requirements | Six megabytes. | 13 Megabytes | 8 Megabytes | 10 Megabytes |

| GIS Data Classification | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

<p>| Sharing | Expenditures, Encumbrance, and payable transactions from this system are uploaded to the USAS system via FTP transport. |
| Future | This system may be migrated as part of the Accounting system in the year 2004. An alternative is to develop an interface to the accounting software system. |
| Future | We have transmitted Mark format files with State Library &amp; Archives agency |
| Future | This system will be replaced by a commercial software named Athena and is scheduled for deployment in 2002. The new system will be web-based. |
| Future | Data is uploaded to the Texas Education Agency upon request. Order status and availability is planned for Web-content distribution. |
| Future | Planned migration in 2005 to Web-based processing of requests. |
| Future | Data is uploaded to the Texas Education Agency annually. On-line registration is planned. |
| Future | Planned migration to Web-based submission of registration information. Testing scheduled for 2003 with production in 2004 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Database System</th>
<th>Estimated Physical Storage Requirements</th>
<th>GIS Data Class</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Loan Program</td>
<td>Contains all inventory and descriptions for equipment available for loan to students with visual impairments</td>
<td>FoxPro 2.6</td>
<td>6 megabytes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Catalog access is planned via Web in Fiscal year 2004. Order status and availability will follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekends Home</td>
<td>Contains travel data for students. Used for reimbursement calculations from local districts</td>
<td>Filemaker Pro</td>
<td>6 megabytes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No specific plans at present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Solutions</td>
<td>Contains IEP goals and objectives for all students, associated with progress notes and various instructional measurements</td>
<td>Filemaker Pro</td>
<td>10 megabytes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Scheduled for replacement in 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Mentor Database</td>
<td>Storage and collection of parent mentor contacts to provide contact resources.</td>
<td>Access 2000</td>
<td>10 megabytes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TSBVI Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Name</th>
<th>Financial Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>The Financial Accounting system used by TSBVI is the Uniform State-Wide Accounting System (USAS) supported by the comptroller's office. We are an internal user of this software and the State-Wide Property Accounting System. The Supplies Inventory (Warehouse) used is a proprietary software system written in COBOL. We use the Uniform State-Wide Payroll System and a PC-based Purchasing/Obligation system. Supplementary reporting and fund management software has been written to increase the functionality of accounting reports from the data downloaded from USAS. All proprietary accounting software systems at TSBVI have data extraction features that provide data upload to USAS to avoid duplicate entry. Since this has basically only provided a single-entry, and not a complete accounting system, an Accounting Task Force was formed to evaluate options. The most promising option at this point is to purchase the MIP software solution with components for General Ledger, Accounts Receivable, budget management, data import/export from USAS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database System</th>
<th>Vax/VMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Language</td>
<td>RDO, Datatrieve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New System Requirements</th>
<th>The new Accounting System will need to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be accessible as required to staff with visually impairments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide department budget information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to existing systems that may not be included (Warehouse, APPS, Student Trust)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing</th>
<th>Accounting transfer of batches to/from USAS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>System will be purchased and installed using vendor implementation services, coordinated with agency technical staff. The project will begin in 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Name</th>
<th>Accounts Payable/Purchasing System (APPS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>All purchase requisitions are entered and the system provides receiving reports for the warehouse, status tracking of requisitions, and generation of payable transactions for general ledger update. After the requisition is filled, data is exported to the payment modules for voucher printing and generation of encumbrance transactions for general ledger update.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database System</th>
<th>FoxPro 2.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Language</td>
<td>FoxPro 2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sharing | Expenditure transactions from the Payment system are transferred via FTP to USAS. Processed History Extract are returned by USAS and uploaded to our reporting database. Transaction Extract files from USAS are moved to the reporting database and appear as Accounts Payable on budget reports. Payables and Encumbrances from the Payment and Purchasing systems respectively are also uploaded to the reporting database. |

<p>| Future | Purchasing and payment systems are under consideration for deployment in 2004. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Administration</strong></td>
<td>The Student Database system contains demographic and enrollment information on students in attendance at the Texas School for the Blind. Phase I of the system has been operational since 1988 and migrated to the in-house VAX in 1991 after a processor upgrade. A system re-write is underway to remove it from the VAX. The data from this system is collected and distributed in a variety of ways to meet the needs of the School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Database System</strong></td>
<td>VAX Rdb/Oracle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Language</strong></td>
<td>COBOL, FMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New System Requirements</strong></td>
<td>The new Student Database system will need to: Be accessible as required to staff with visually impairments Be accessible to a wide group of users Be able to integrate with a wide range of other systems that will use segments of its data (i.e. central collection point for data on school districts, professional contacts, any public information that eventually should be accessible from the web) Ability to accommodate changing enrollment plans and summer sessions Include or be able to interface with related systems (Student Medical Info, Registration Tracking, Student Incident Reporting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing</strong></td>
<td>Backbone for many other systems, reporting to other agencies, and public info access. We are currently exploring the feasibility of uploading of this data to the TEA PEIMS database. Provide method for users to generate their own queries/reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library Management System</strong></td>
<td>The system written in-house is being phased out. A commercial product called Mitinet was purchased to format data entered into Marc format for eventual import into the Athena Library Management system. All records from the in-house system are being transferred to Mitinet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Database System</strong></td>
<td>Mark Format Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Language</strong></td>
<td>Web-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New System Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Accessible to visually impaired via the web. The data is transferred to the Texas Library Cooperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future</strong></td>
<td>Purchase commercial system and make available via intranet in FY 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APH Materials Management System</strong></td>
<td>Manages the ordering, shipping, and receipt of Federal Quota funded equipment from the American Printing House for the Blind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Database System</strong></td>
<td>FoxPro 2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Language</strong></td>
<td>FoxPro 2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Future ability to accept requests for equipment via the web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Name</td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Registration Tracking</strong></td>
<td>Systems to be web-accessible by 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>Tracks registration elements during fall and summer student enrollment. Provides numerous status and management reports. Integrated with word processing system for generation of form letters. Entry performed in Center for School Resources with read-only access to numerous school staff for program planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>Access 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Language</td>
<td>Access 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New System Requirements</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Future It will be included in Phase II of the Student Database migration scheduled for FY2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI Registration System</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>Manages annual registration of all students with visual impairments. Provides numerous status and management reports. Information is received from school districts throughout Texas to indicate enrollment, reading medium, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>Access 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Language</td>
<td>Visual Basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Requirements</td>
<td>Ability to accept enrollment information from districts via Web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Registration data of visually impaired students in Texas is provided by TEA annually to TSBVI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Web-accessible for district updates by 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Solution/IEP System</strong></td>
<td>Application developed by the Curriculum department to create student IEPs. Adding a segment to do grade reporting and maintain attendance information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>FileMaker Pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Language</td>
<td>FileMaker Pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Requirements</td>
<td>Imports core student data from Student Database System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>This system will be migrated in the year 2003 using the DB2 database structure and the J2EE development model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student ARD Assessment Folders</strong></td>
<td>HTML application that stores and distributes various assessments reports as a repository of student information for staff review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database System</td>
<td>HTML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Language</td>
<td>HTML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Requirements</td>
<td>HTTP Server</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sharing
Future

This system will be migrated as part of the Accounting system in the year 2003 using the DB2 database structure and the J2EE development model.

Application Name
Weekends Home

Application Description
Records, manages, coordinates and tracks student travel between TSBVI and local school districts.

Database System
FileMaker Pro

Development Language
FileMaker Pro

Departmental Applications and Databases

Key inventory
Operations

Time-Keeping
Comprehensive Programs

Video Library
Outreach

Outreach Mailing List
Outreach

Instructional Materials
Curriculum

Curriculum Sales
Business Office

Data Dictionary
Technology Services

Phone Directory
Switchboard

Media Archive System
Technology Services
Information Resources Management Organizations, Policies, and Practices

Organization and Personnel
Administrative Technology Staff

Director of Technology Services
Designated as Information Resources Manager for TSBVI.
Duties: Supervise and direct all agency administrative computer applications. Manage Technology Services department activities including budget coordination, technical oversight, network planning and integration, and the overall technical environment. Assist instructional and administrative staff in the technical review and planning of educational systems/equipment. Analyze, design, and manage the implementation of new programs/systems. Plan and coordinate agency procurement and operational management of computer hardware and software. Financial Accounting system analysis and management. Coordinate agency use of Department of Information Resources common software. System manager of the VAX 4000-200 computer. Responsible for network and email account set-up, and software maintenance. Oversee management of NT Server and NT-based network environment. Manage all campus data and telephone network equipment and software. Keep up with current technologies. Directs development of agency standards and operational practices.

Programmer Analyst (half-time)
Duties: Analysis, design, and development of new programs/systems with primary responsibility for financial management/accounting systems and student administration systems. Technical support for agency administrative applications on VAX, Windows, and Macintosh platform environment. Development of technical software documentation and task analysis. Development of Web-based Java applications.

Programmer I
Duties: Assists Programmer Analyst with development activities.

System Support Specialist III
Duties: Development of user documentation and standards. Application systems support. Initial user point of contact for training and technical support in the use of office automation and application systems. Performs special projects to research policy or implementation issues. Develop training materials and provide direct technical instruction to staff.

Web Master Assistant

System Support Specialist I
Duties: Application systems support. Validation of client computers. Troubleshoot desktop, network, and telephone problems. Assist with the purchasing of repair equipment and coordination with service providers. Documentation of technical interfaces and campus wiring topology. Responsible for desktop computer upgrades.
Network specialist (half-time)
Duties: Performs maintenance, hardware setup, and hardware troubleshooting on PC-based and specialized adaptive equipment. Documentation of technical interfaces and operational procedures. Performs software troubleshooting and problem resolution. Performs evaluation of new adaptive equipment and development of documentation. Upgrade and support of WindowsNT Servers, network operations, and server software.

Administrative Technician (half-time)
Duties: Operational management of Technology Services procurement tracking, inventory, equipment repair, and employee time reporting. Assists in the maintenance of centralized PBX circuit assignments, call-accounting, and Audix Voice mail settings. Maintains various departmental databases for central support activities.

Instructional Technical Staff

Educational Technology Coordinators
Divide responsibilities among the 5 curricular areas
Divide service delivery between direct instruction and consultation
Manage computer labs
Provide staff development
Develop training and instructional materials
Test, acquire and allocate software/hardware
Providing outreach services
Technology assessment of students
Develop curriculum
Maintain current inventory of equipment for which each is responsible
Develop multimedia-training systems
Support teachers in the integration of technology into the curriculum

Instructional Administrative Liaison
Performs routine work providing assistance in the development, maintenance, and monitoring of an integrated database system. Provides user assistance and training for all school personnel as needed. Organizes and manages data to ensure data integrity and control redundancy. Performs archival procedures to store pertinent school information. Works with administrators and technology services staff to develop and maintain systems for managing information effectively.

Instructional Technician
This position assists the technology teachers by performing troubleshooting, set-up, configuration, and problem solving for instructional hardware/software as well as assists in equipment and software management.

Residential Technician
This position assists the residential instructor by performing troubleshooting, set-up, configuration, and problem solving for conventional and assistive hardware/software as well as assists in equipment and software management.
Outreach Technical Staff

Statewide Technical Support Specialist
Design, implement, and maintain TSBVI web site
Provide telephone support for state personnel who work with visually impaired students. Provide technical support to Outreach Program for distance education initiatives. Coordinate with other state agencies to ensure accessibility of web-based information. Provide national and international technical presence at assistive and other technology conferences. Document technical and evaluative information pertaining to assistive technology. Assist in teacher training during Technology institutes at TSBVI. Maintain vigilance concerning accessibility of state adopted instructional materials, textbooks, etc. Provides expert-level advice, consultation, and information in various support and presentational roles

Outreach Technology Teachers
Statewide staff development
Student assessment
Student training
Consultation
Staff development (TSBVI)
Curriculum development
Development of instructional materials for staff development
Software/hardware evaluation
Development of multimedia training systems

Telecommunication Infrastructure

Voice Communications
The Texas School for the Blind uses a Definity G3i analog private branch exchange (PBX) for voice communications. The PBX is currently configured to provide 400 single-line service ports. This system provides off-campus service via 14 local two-way trunks and 16 Direct In-dial trunks. The school uses 1 bulk-billed watts line with AT&T as the carrier for in-state service. The PBX console has been adapted to provide an audible tone to alert the visually impaired operator that an outside call is incoming or an inside call is requesting assistance or connection to a TEXAN circuit. The use of voice mail has been well received. After hours coverage of the TSBVI main phone number is an automated attendant system that provide the caller with directory information for call routing.

Data Communications
All campus buildings are networked with fiber optic components. The only remaining fiber optic cable installations will be to provide redundancy between four Gigabit backbone switch to eliminate single point of failure. The standard communication rate is fully transitioned from a 10MB to a 100MB Ethernet over fiber optic cable. Twisted pair wiring within the networked building is standardized on Category 5 passive wiring components to each office location meeting the EIA568 standard. A wiring connection for telephones is also included. One TI circuit provides interface with General Services Commission network, the other connects through Educational Service Center. GSC provides domain name services and routes the TCP/IP network traffic from TSBVI to the Internet. This circuit also routes all incoming electronic mail, host telnet connections, FTP and production data traffic to other agencies. All remote printing from the
USAS system is accomplished over this link and TSBVI uses the link to upload and download data files to the USAS via FTP. The T1 connection to region XIII handles workstation traffic for video conferencing and serves as a backup T1. A DSL circuit provides web browsing (http) transport. A 24 channel PRI circuit connected through a video gateway router, provides the ability for ISDN dial-up from any client location on campus for high-frame video conferencing.
## IR Policies and Practices Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Provide Brief Summary/Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IR Priorities</td>
<td>Priorities for administrative systems are determined at the administrative management level with planning and coordination through the Technology Services Department. Responsibility for the integration and coordination of information resources is at the department level. The Technology Services Department is responsible for enterprise-wide technical design, integration, and coordination. Instructional priorities are determined by a committee that consists of the key instructional staff that establish budget, develop instructional goals, and determine instructional protocols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR Planning Methodology</td>
<td>Planning priorities are identified by the relevant department or task force and the input is provided to the Technology Services department for incorporation into technology plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance Practices</td>
<td>New software systems are designed and developed within a multi-disciplinary design team and this approach examines risk as part of the process. Generally, the System Life Cycle methodology is followed for the development of new software. Development of secure student administration systems within adequate protection of sensitive or confidential data is required. TSBVI subscribes to its mandate to serve as an accessible environment in regard to its information systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Computer Replacement Schedule</td>
<td>TSBVI computers are replaced on a 3-year cycle. Laptops are replaced on a 2-year cycle. Annually, criteria are established for minimum capacities. In preparation for each school semester the existing computers are reviewed according to those criteria and a replacement list is prepared. Configurations for the computers to be purchased are selected on a price-performance basis. Competitive, negotiated, quotes are obtained and equipment is purchase and deployed according to the replacement list. Computers that are considered outdated are removed from service. Computers that are old, but still viable are reassigned to locations that have less demanding requirements. All desktop computers are purchased with a three-year on-site warranty. Laptops are purchased with a two-year warranty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>The technology item is researched and specifications are developed. Potential vendors are identified from the QISV, HUB, and other sources. Quotes are obtained and the requisition is routed for departmental approval and identification of funding source. The requisition is then routed to the IRM who validates that the purchase is consistent with the agency's IR strategy and in some cases a critical review is prepared. The package is then routed to the Superintendent who considers the information and approves or disapproves the purchase. The requisition is then routed to the purchasing department for procurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Recovery/ Business Continuity Planning</td>
<td>In the event of a catastrophic disaster, it is anticipated that a VAX computer could be leased and installed within an acceptable time period. Servers could</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
be acquired and configured within a reasonable timeframe. Archived backup data could restore the system to normal operation. In normal operation, a complete backup of all VAX data are made each evening and stored in a off-site location. A redundant backup the TSBVI web site is maintained at all times. Backup of desktop data is departmental responsibility. All networked servers utilize RAID technology to limit data loss due to disk failure. Agency plans to explore use of the WTDROC to provide redundancy fail over services for the TSBVI Website and other agency-critical services such as email.

Data Center Operations

Legacy administrative systems have been implemented within the VAX/VMS environment. The School has migrated major functions such as printing, file sharing, and user validation to the Windows NT environment. Desktop configurations are based on Windows98/2000 with TCP/IP as network transport. Macintosh computers communicate over Encapsulated Appletalk over Ethernet. Terminal emulation is provided by software on PC client computers to communicate with the VAX. Access to USAS, USPS, and SPA is accommodated by 3270 terminal emulation on desktop computers. All queued printers support Postscript Level II and the Adobe Postscript drivers are used for all printers, See Figure 2, Agency Platforms, Systems, and Telecommunications.

Standards

Software Development

Applications on VAX/VMS that are written in the COBOL language with conventional indexed sequential and/or relational database (Rdb) file structures, RALLY, and Datatrieve software will be re-written. For departmental level development, several systems are written in Filemaker Pro for its ease of use and simplified forms-based development. Some departments also use Microsoft Access. For enterprise development, use of the Java language in the J2EE standard is underway. By using this enterprise development architecture, it is our intention to deploy systems that are accessible by all client configurations such as PC or Macintosh computers running a web browser, conventional or assistive PDA device, cell phone, or by single-threaded TTD. Although this model is more complex to deploy and staff have had a significant learning curve, we feel that it is our responsibility to establish systems that can be used by all visitors and can serve as an example of how to build a scalable, open, and object-oriented application to meet accessibility laws and expectations.

Office Automation

TSBVI has standardized on Microsoft Office suite for PC and Mac. Use of this product-set enables easier sharing of files between the PC and Macintosh systems in use at TSBVI and our service constituency.

Software licenses

Centralized license compliance is the responsibility of the Information Resources Manager. Department license compliance is the managed within the individual departments. Required H.B. 1895 legislative software audit
reporting is the responsibility of the internal auditor. In consideration of an internal audit performed in FY2002, efforts are underway to reevaluate the software management program at TSBVI. This process is to be completed and the new program in place by September 1, 2002. Responsibility for required H.B. 1895 legislative software audit reporting will be decided as part of the software management program.

Standards Development Performance and operational standards for technology is developed from collaborations of individuals assembled for the particular task or objective.

Development Methodology Most administrative planning is performed within a Task Force or management team context. The planning model for instructional technology is through committees that consist of instructional technology teaching staff. For school-wide planning within the management team; technology policy, application development implementation, distance education, and budget planning, the agency Information Resource Manager is represented by the Director of Business, Technology, and Operation. The Director of Technology Services and members of his staff make recommendations to the management team on school-wide technology issues.

Change Control This is part of the development process. Typically, due to the specialized nature of application at TSBVI, minor system modifications and enhancements are made after the software system has been used for several months. Promotion of software is enable through journalized audit accounts for technical staff.

Security TSBVI complies with state and professional standards to secure information from unlawful access and follow established state reporting guidelines. Access to confidential student records is limited to those individuals who have been authorized by school administrators. Various software tools and structures monitor VAX system security. Security considerations and guidelines are reviewed with new computer users in conjunction with system training.

Geographic Information Systems NA

Resource Use Video conferencing is in place at TSBVI. Videoconferences take place on a regular basis and additional content programs are under development to use this new technology. For TSBVI computers, voice synthesis is commonplace. Speech recognition systems assist students with impaired dexterity.

Contract/Consultant Hardware contracts are maintained on VAX components that are too heavy to easily transport to local repair depots. Other school components are self-maintained. Professional consultants are used for specific purposes within the context of assisting in-house Technical staff to assist in the development of applications and provide a peer review context.
Interagency Information Sharing

This is primarily limited to E-mail and transport of data files to/from USAS and USPS data systems. A school official authorizes public release of TSBVI data to maintain confidentiality. Electronic data is shared for special purposes such as criminal history checks. Sharing school student data with TEA for the PEIMs system is under consideration.

Training and Continuing Education

Training is provided to technical staff by attending various seminars and conferences. Due to the specialized nature of adaptive technology application at TSBVI, training often entails out-of-state travel to obtain information. Instructional technology staff are responsible for training other TSBVI and statewide ISD staff in these specialized areas. The Systems Support Specialist provides training to staff in TSBVI proprietary software, Microsoft Office, and the network environment. There are efforts underway to explore the use of web technology to present tutorial and content information within a browser context. The varied scheduling of TSBVI staff present unique challenges to assess the level of the employee's technology skill and design relevant training to all staff.
### Figure 1. Categories of assistive technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistive Technology for Low Vision and Blind Users</th>
<th>Function Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screen Reader Software</td>
<td>Allows users to navigate through windows, menus, and controls while receiving text and limited graphics information through speech output or Braille display.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille Display</td>
<td>Provides line-by-line Braille display of on-screen text using a series of pins to form Braille symbols that are constantly updated as the user navigates through the interface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text to Speech</td>
<td>Used with a Screen Reader, converts electronic text into speech via a speech synthesizer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical Scanner</td>
<td>Imports print materials into a computer and through a word processor, the data can be saved, read on screen with or without large print or with speech or Braille output, edited, and printed in regular print, large print or Braille.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille Notetaker</td>
<td>Provides for Braille input with speech or Braille output for word processing, calculations using the calculator functions, interface with a computer and Braille or print output. These devices can be used as the speech synthesizer for desk or laptop computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)</td>
<td>Through a camera system this device magnifies print and other materials up to more than 30 times. It can be used with computers allowing for split screen images to view simultaneously the materials from the computer and CCTV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille Translation Software</td>
<td>Translates and formats text and word processing files into Braille. Allows easier production of Braille materials. Can be used in conjunction with scanners and internet materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen Magnification</td>
<td>Provides magnification of a portion or all of a computer screen, including graphics and windows as well as text. Allows users to track position of the input focus. Comes with some speech output to assist users.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistive Technology for Hearing Disabilities and Deafblindness</th>
<th>Function Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)</td>
<td>Provides a means for users to communicate over telephone lines using text terminals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Captioning</td>
<td>Provides text transcription of spoken material on video media. Important computer applications include distance learning, CD-ROM, video teleconferencing, and other forms of interactive video.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FM Systems
Provides an increased volume level for speech reception while blocking out other environmental sounds through use of a microphone by the speaker and earmolds by the listener. FM signal transmitted directly from microphone to earmold speakers.

Refreshable Braille TDD
For individuals who are deafblind, this device provides Braille output and input for communication with another TDD or the telephone deaf relay system.

ShowSounds
System utility provides visual translation of sound information. Nonspeech audio such as system beeps would be presented via screen flashing or similar methods. This capability would be provided by the operating system.

Assistive Technology for Physical Disabilities

Function Provided

Alternate Pointing Device
Gives users with limited or no arm and hand fine motor control the ability to control mouse movements and functions. Examples include foot operated mice, head-mounted pointing devices and eye-tracking systems.

On-Screen Keyboard
On-screen keyboard which provides the keys and functions of a physical keyboard. On-screen keyboards are typically used in conjunction with alternate pointing devices.

Alternative Input Devices
Devices such as touch windows, alternative keyboards, switches for input, and scanning software provide alternative means of input for individuals with physical or cognitive limitations.

Switch Toys
Action toys that have on/off external switch capabilities to assist students in learning cause and effect.

Augmentative Communication Devices
Computerized communication devices that can be programmed to speak words or phrases to be selected by an individual who is unable to use their voice to speak.

Word Prediction Software
Predictive software speed typing by predicting words as the user types them, and offering those words in a list for the user to choose.

Speech Recognition
Allows the user with limited or no arm and hand fine motor control to input text and/or control the user interface via speech.
## Figure 2. Agency Platforms and Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Operating System</th>
<th>Database Mgmt. System</th>
<th>Capacity/Size/Count</th>
<th>Comments/Descriptive Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainframe</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minicomputer</td>
<td>Digital Equipment Corporation</td>
<td>VMS 6.1</td>
<td>Rdb/Oracle</td>
<td>5 VUPS 50 concurrent processes</td>
<td>VAX 4000-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN Servers (Central)</td>
<td>Intel-based, migrating to Unix-based (see figure 3)</td>
<td>Windows NT 4.0, Sun Solaris</td>
<td>DB2, Access, FileMaker Pro</td>
<td>Various, 7 servers</td>
<td>Used for Web site, printing, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN Servers (Remote)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN Client/Work-stations (Central)</td>
<td>Mac</td>
<td>Mac OS x</td>
<td>Filemaker Pro</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN Client/Work-stations (Central)</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Window98/2000</td>
<td>Foxpro 2.6, Filemaker Pro, Access</td>
<td>300 Desktops</td>
<td>All desktops on Windows networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN Client/Work-stations (Remote)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standalone PC Workstations</td>
<td>PC Laptops</td>
<td>Windows 98/2000</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standalone MAC Workstations</td>
<td>Mac Laptops</td>
<td>Mac OS</td>
<td>Filemaker Pro</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 3. Server Configuration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Capacity/Size/Count</th>
<th>Comments/Descriptive Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gigabit Backbone Data Switches</td>
<td>Cisco 6500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10Mbps, each hub is its own bridged segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hub Routers &amp; Switches (Remote)</td>
<td>Cisco Catalyst 2900 XL</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100MB - Migrating to this architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP Routers</td>
<td>Cisco MC3800 Cisco 1700 Cisco 2600</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Gateway</td>
<td>Cisco IP/VC 3500</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewall/Security</td>
<td>Cisco PIX</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Bandwidth Analog</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Bandwidth Digital 56K or less</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Bandwidth Digital T1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Services Commission Telecommunications Division, Education Service Center XIII for Video Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Bandwidth ISDN (PRI)</td>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Scheduled for implementation in Summer 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTE/End User Equipment Arrangement</td>
<td>Workstations, LANs, Mainframe Devices, Other</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Protocols</td>
<td>TCP/IP, Appletalk, NetBEUI (limited), Telnet, FTP, HTTP, Ethertalk, DECnet, H320 video</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Service Provider</td>
<td>Texas Building and Procurement Agency, Education Service Center XIII, Southwestern Bell</td>
<td>2 T1 Circuits, 1 ISDN PRI, DSL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Network</td>
<td>Education Service Center XIII for Video Network, ESCONETT</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 3. Server Configuration  (under construction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Server Name</th>
<th>Manufacture Model</th>
<th>Server Function</th>
<th>Operating System</th>
<th>CPU</th>
<th>Storage Capacity</th>
<th>RAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louis</td>
<td>Gateway ALR7200</td>
<td>Primary domain controller</td>
<td>Windows NT v4.0, Service Pack 5</td>
<td>Intel P3 450MHz</td>
<td>7GB, RAID1</td>
<td>256MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>Gateway ALR9200</td>
<td>Intranet, Email, Server</td>
<td>Windows NT v4.0, Service Pack 5</td>
<td>Intel XEON 400</td>
<td>37GB, RAID5</td>
<td>512MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berthold</td>
<td>Gateway ALR9200</td>
<td>Application Server, DB2, WebSphere</td>
<td>Windows NT v4.0, Service Pack 5</td>
<td>Intel XEON 400</td>
<td>37GB, RAID5</td>
<td>512MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy</td>
<td>Wallingford</td>
<td>Filemaker Pro Server</td>
<td>Windows NT v4.0, Service Pack 5</td>
<td>Intel P3 450MHz,</td>
<td>19GB, RAID1</td>
<td>130MB</td>
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<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Gateway ALR7200</td>
<td>Distance Education Web-based Courseware server</td>
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<td>Intel P3 350MHz</td>
<td>54GB, RAID1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Texwide</td>
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<td>Web Site Server</td>
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<td>Helen</td>
<td>Gateway ALR7200</td>
<td>Video Server</td>
<td>Windows NT v4.0, Service Pack 5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sun Cluster</td>
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