



# Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs

**PPAG IS 15!**

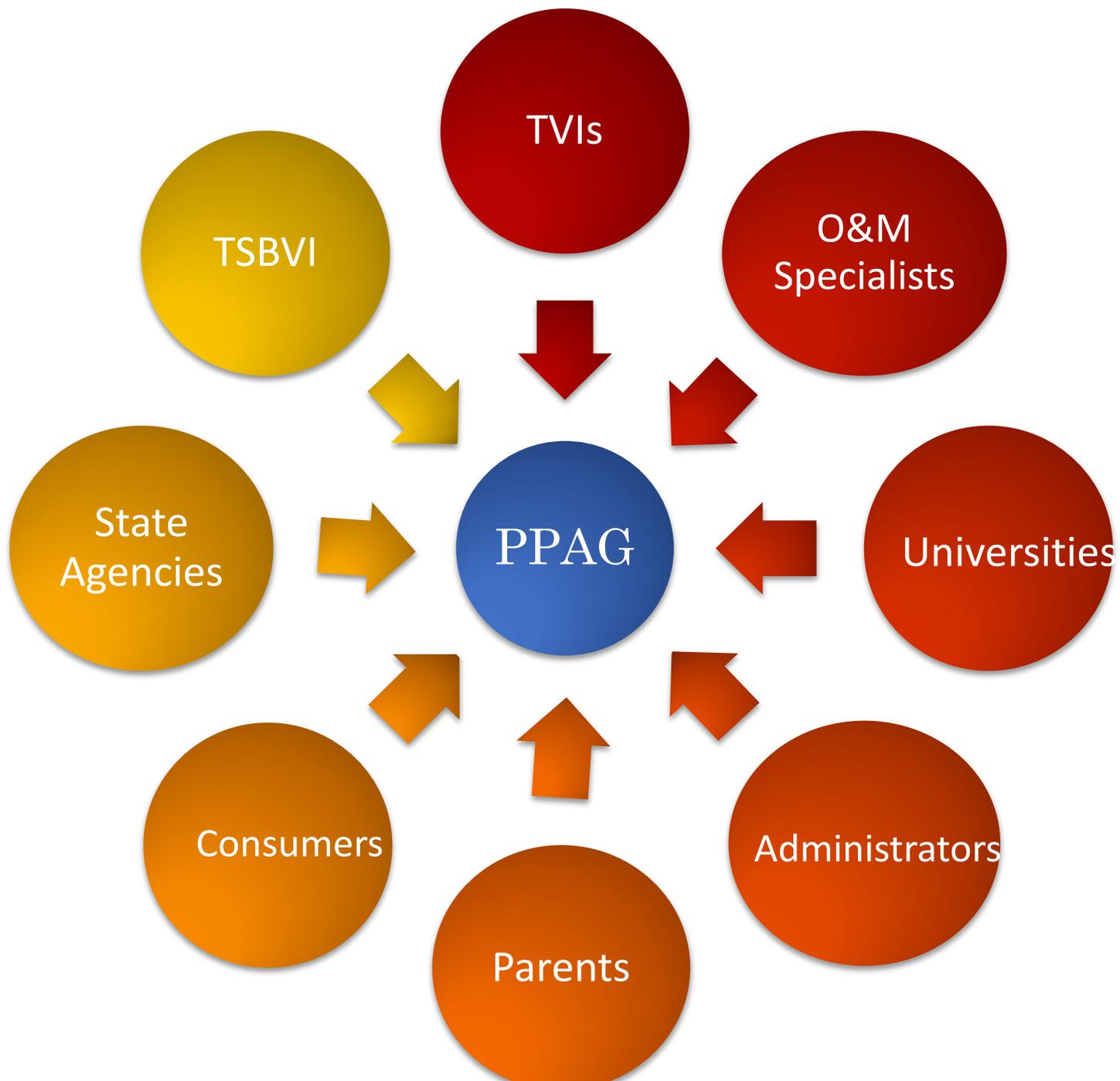
**Outrageous!**

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# WHO ARE WE?

- VI teachers O&M specialists
  - Districts and ESCs
- Administrators and supervisors
  - Large and small districts
- Parents
- State agency representatives
- University faculty
- Consumer organization





**The PPAG  
brings the  
players  
together**

# WHAT DO WE DO?

**Advise and support universities and districts on issues related to professional preparation and support of new VI professionals.**

- Identify and document need for VI professionals
- Recruit pre-service professionals
- Train pre-service professionals
- Mentor new VI professionals
- Assist administrators in identifying need and supporting their new VI professionals.
- Communicate with each other



# WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- Developed and implemented:
  - Systematic recruiting strategies
  - Coordinated instruction
  - Distance learning options
- Developed and implemented a mentor program for all pre-service professionals
- Secured a source of funding for training and mentoring



# WHAT HAVE WE DEVELOPED?

- Newsletters
- Video
- Brochures & documents
  - VI recruitment brochures
  - TVI brochure
  - O&M brochure
  - Learn to Move
  - Benefits of O&M



# ANYTHING ELSE?

- Job fair kits
- Mentor Activity Checklists
- Numerous data reports
- On-line and face-to-face mentor training
- Administrator's Toolbox
- 8 new fact sheets are in progress



# ANYTHING ELSE?

- Professional Development Log
- Braille Activity Cards for general educators
- O&M presentation materials for administrators
- Resources for the Expanded Core Curriculum (RECC): a web portal for new professionals



# WHAT HAS CHANGED?

- Increase VI professionals
  - TVIs by 93%
  - O&M specialists by 77%
  - Overall by at least 75%
- 15 years' worth of reliable data from & about VI professionals
  - Cited and used by VI professionals, state agencies, legislative staff, national organizations and others



# MORE CHANGES:

- Increase in cultural diversity of VI professionals
  - African-Americans by 100%
  - Hispanics by 88%
  - Asian by 100%
  - Overall by 92%
- Universities are able to select from the best applicants



# MORE CHANGES:

- Delivered the first VI-specific mentor program in country
  - 459 mentors trained since 1998
  - 959 VI professionals mentored since 2000
- In the past 12 months, Michigan Severity Scales have been downloaded 5,080 times.
- The RECC search page has had 3,000+ visits this year.



# HAVE REPRESENTED PROFESSIONALS PREPARATION

- TEA
- State Board for Educator Certification
- Educational Testing Service (ETS)
- *Dozens* out-of-state inquiries



# AND CONSIDER....

- No regulatory authority
- 2 staff members
- Dozens of participants...
  - who continue to come... like you!



**FINALLY,**

***Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.***

**Margaret Mead**

