Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
A Center for Educational Services for All Blind and Visually Impaired Students in Texas
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2007-2008
Managing Change While Keeping Quality High

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) spent this past year trying to shape the future as we move into what will certainly be a period of intensive change over the next four to five years.

The rebuilding and landscaping of the vast majority of our campus is something none of us working at TSBVI finds easy to grasp. Incredible opportunity such as this—to have wonderful new buildings and grounds—is fraught with worry about decisions made and about the logistics of school life in a massive construction zone.

In the long view, optimism, gratitude and the boundless creativity of our staff will do much to carry us through a time of unprecedented change. In the meantime, large and important decisions involving endless details begin to come together as construction starts in earnest soon after the 2008 Thanksgiving holiday. Our core planning team, involving many disciplines and roles, have worked smartly and tirelessly to make our new facilities enhance the quality of instruction and the student experience while attending TSBVI.

The longstanding issue of how to modernize some of our major information management systems for both students and personnel, involved much study and planning over the past year. Now we stand at the beginning of the implementation mode of launching systems that will bring efficiencies and accuracy that will make a noticeable difference in how we do the business of educating kids. Like our construction project, this will take time to perfect and to realize full potential.

As change goes, our experience is likely to be among the best due to the leadership that has emerged from all areas of the school. Our staff’s commitment to this wonderful place that we are lucky to work at is the engine that drives our pursuit of excellence and fuels our willingness to take the time to build something that will long outlive our tenure. The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is, and will remain, one of the most-admired resources in the world on the education of children who are blind or visually impaired.

William Daugherty
A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

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

The main functions of TSBVI include:

- To provide a free, appropriate public education that addresses the intense or specialized needs of visually impaired children and youth, including those with additional disabilities when the local district and parents agree that such services are not available in a local program.
- To conduct supplemental programs, such as summer and other short-term programs.
- To provide statewide services to parents of students, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies including training, consultation, technical assistance, and developing and disseminating materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology.
- To partner with Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin State University in preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired.

OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

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

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

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

The Staff

The staff of TSBVI is comprised of 446 full-time and part-time positions including classroom teachers, teacher aides, job coaches, related service staff including orientation and mobility instructors, speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, psychologists, behavior specialists, counselors, social workers, health services staff, residential staff who work with students after school hours, clerical staff, business office staff, admissions and records staff, technology staff, maintenance workers, groundskeepers, food service workers, custodial staff, transportation and security staff, among others.

The Board of Trustees

The School is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Board is comprised of three members who are blind or visually impaired, three who have experience working in the field of visual impairment, and three who are parents of a child who is blind or visually impaired. Public meetings of the Board are generally held 5-6 times per year.

Our Partnerships

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

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

**SOURCES OF REVENUE 2007-2008**

![Pie Chart showing Sources of Revenue]

- **General Revenue**: $18,402,354
- **Federal Funds**: $457,679
- **Appropriated Receipts**: $3,894,147
- **Interagency Contracts**: $1,023,572

Total Revenue $23,777,752

**COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS**

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

**Post Secondary Program**: This program, offered in partnership with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services – Division of Blind Services, provides training for students who are legally blind and have a regular State Board of Education high school diploma or GED. Students seeking this post-secondary experience are in need of remedial academic, independent living and work related skills training. They will cultivate the skills, attitudes and opportunities necessary to meet the demands of competitive employment and adult living.
ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR

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

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

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

- Expansion of career education services through increased number of community job placement partnerships.
- Participation in an array of beneficial after-school informal course opportunities for students including: Rowing, Yearbook Club, Yoga, Dance, Art, Group Games, Spin Biking, Tandem Biking, Writer’s Workshop, Music Mania, Goal Ball, Social Club, Movie Appreciation, Radio Station, Swimming, Homework Haven, Music Recording, Scrapbooking, Cooking & Baking, Walking & Running Club and Jewelry Making.
- Students participated in a wide variety of work training activities at 15 different businesses and organizations in the community including Goodwill, Capital Area Foodbank, Ecology Action, Austin Humane Society, Wheatsville Co-op Grocery, Dragon’s Lair Comic Books, Mr. Gatti’s Call Center, Chili’s Restaurant, Mainsprings School, Doubletree Hotel, Faith Lutheran Day School, Ice Bats Central Offices, Hope Alliance, Amazonia Tropical Fish Store and NYOS (Not Your Ordinary School).
- Lead Job Coach Mark Ramirez was honored as the 2008 Principals of Schools for the Blind Outstanding Paraprofessional.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN 2006-2007

- Students participated in statewide White Cane Day activities in downtown Austin.
- A parent weekend conference was held at TSBVI with 68 students’ families in attendance.
- Students participated in the Sports Extravaganza for Blind and Visually Impaired Students in Irving, Texas, which included goal ball, track and field and archery. Eighty-two students from TSBVI competed and brought home a record 328 medals and ribbons in the track
and field events. Twenty TSBVI students also competed in the Goal Ball tournament, with one of the varsity boys’ teams taking first place.

- Students participated in the Braille Challenge and Teen Leadership Summit along with other students in the Education Service Center, Region 13, area.
- Elementary students participated in learning activities with students from Redeemer Lutheran School.
- A student holiday music assembly and play were held in the auditorium.
- TSBVI hosted the fall South Central Association Schools for the Blind (SCASB) Conference meet where students participated in wrestling, cheerleading and performing arts. The TSBVI cheerleaders were awarded first place, and two TSBVI students placed first in their weight divisions in wrestling. In the spring, TSBVI traveled to the SCASB track and field and performing arts conference event in New Mexico.
- Students participated in a Red Ribbon Safe and Drug-free Schools assembly and poetry contest.
- A public presentation of the musical, “The Wizard of Oz,” was performed by students at the School for the community.
- Black Heritage and Fiesta Day activities were held at the School.
- Prom night 2008 was held at the Crowne Plaza in Austin followed by a Junior/Senior banquet.

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2007-2008 school year, 152 students representing 107 local school districts throughout Texas were enrolled in the Comprehensive Programs of TSBVI.

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ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2007-2008 COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

- Hispanic: 33%
- White: 48%
- Black: 16%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 3%

In the 2007-2008 school year, 152 students representing 107 local school districts throughout Texas were enrolled in the Comprehensive Programs of TSBVI.
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

SUMMER PROGRAMS

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

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

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

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2008 SUMMER PROGRAMS

- The largest recent growth in summer school participation has been in the number of secondary academic students served. In summer 2007 we served 123 students, reflecting a twofold increase over the number of students served in the same program in 2005. This increase is attributed in part to the new types of classes offered. During the summer of 2008 we were not able to serve as many secondary academic students because of our campus remodel and limited dorm space. Still, we served 109 students in this program, through 14 different classes (described below).
- 45 functional academic secondary students participated in classes that provided opportunities to practice and use a broad array of skills within meaningful daily activities, such as functional literacy and math, personal and domestic care, recreation and leisure, work, and self-determination.
- 90 elementary age students participated in programming. The classes provided opportunities to practice and use their current academic and vision-related skills in
functional activities such as thematic units, music, community outings, self-care, shopping, cooking, arts and crafts, and recreational activities.

- 25 students about to graduate from high school participated in jobs in the Austin community, and were taught skills related to independent daily living at home and in the community.

- 46 multiply impaired students with vision loss were given the opportunity to be away from home (often for the first time) and to participate in skills of independent living and recreational activities in the community.

**SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN SUMMER 2008**

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

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

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

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

- Individual high school academic students were assigned to community jobs in Austin at places such as: two childcare centers, a children’s hospital, a game store, two local hotels, and an advocacy nonprofit organization. Small groups of functional academic high-school students worked together at sites such as: The Austin Food Bank, Goodwill Industries, and WalMart. During residential time all these students participated in intensive instruction in skills of independent living and community participation.
ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2008 Summer Programs, 315 students were served, representing 151 local school districts throughout Texas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2004</th>
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<td>315</td>
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ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2008 SUMMER PROGRAMS

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<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5%</td>
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SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

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

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

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

3. **Independence Weekends:** Students participate in theme-oriented classes that provide opportunities to apply and practice skills of independent living, mobility, academics, self-determination, communication, recreation and leisure. This year’s themes were: Pets (elementary school), Texas Wildlife (elementary school), Camping (middle school) and Social/Recreational Activities, including senior prom (high school).

**ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2007-2008 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS**

- Students were provided instruction in a broad range of skills related to visual impairment, including Braille reading and writing; tactile graphics; skills for independent living; math tools and concepts for nonvisual learners (including Nemeth code); low vision adaptations; using a portable notetaker; technology adaptations for accessing the computer screen and using software for word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, email, and internet access; orientation and mobility; social skills and self-determination. Students were introduced to a wide range of adaptive technologies, both electronic and low-tech, that are available to assist persons with visual impairments, and taught how to evaluate and match them to meet various needs that arise.

- 99% of students met the objectives for which they were referred.

- 96% of responding school districts, parents and students rated their experience in short-term programs as very satisfactory or above.

- Short-term programs served a total of 152 students from across the state of Texas, ranging from the panhandle, to the Valley, and to far west and far east Texas. During this school year, students attended from 16 of the 20 educational regions in the state.

**SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS 2007-2008**

- Special Programs finalized its efforts to make classes more accessible to all Texas students by establishing both a fund to pay for transportation and the management functions needed for implementation. The impact of this support was a noticeable increase in willingness for many districts to refer students.
• Special Programs teachers are advanced professionals who are expected to support pre-professional training for future teachers, as well as inservice for current Texas teachers. In that capacity, presentations were made at two different conferences:
  ♦ Texas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TAER): “Teaching Microsoft PowerPoint and JAWS” (with Pat VanGeem, TSBVI Outreach)
  ♦ Texas Focus: “Making Math Accessible for Students with a Visual Impairment” (with Susan Osterhaus, TSBVI Outreach)

• Teachers from Special Programs also taught classes for the Texas Tech VI teacher training program in the areas of accessible math, accessible social studies, and issues of low vision.

• Teachers continued to acquire and refine their skills in teaching adaptive math and technology, areas of high referral.

• Special Programs staff further refined collaboration with the technology specialist at the Division for Blind Services to jointly prepare identified students for their DBS technology assessment, so that they will be wiser consumers and self-advocates when identifying the technology that will be of greatest benefit to them.

• New classes were added that focused on various aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum:
  ♦ Travel with Low Vision  This class focused on two important needs: (a) that students with low vision have unique needs that are often overlooked when focusing on services to blind children, and (b) that an important and often unmet need of these students is instruction of travel skills.
  ♦ Career Exploration  This class introduced students to various concepts related to work, with the goal of raising their consciousness and motivation, and helping them understand that different jobs require specific skills and preparation.
  ♦ Independence Weekend classes Two new themes were added: Texas Wildlife and Outdoor Camping.

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2007-2008 Short-term Programs, 152 students were served, representing 76 local school districts.

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<tr>
<td>SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS</td>
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<td>132</td>
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ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2007-2008 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR 2007-2008

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

SPECIAL PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR 2007-2008

- Percent of students attending short-term programs demonstrating progress:
  - 2006-2007: 100%
  - 2007-2008: 98.68%

- Percent of responding school districts, parents, and students rating the students’ experiences in the short-term programs as very satisfactory or outstanding:
  - 2006-2007: 96.19%
  - 2007-2008: 96.27%

- Percent of students whose school districts rated their learning experience at summer programs as very satisfactory or outstanding:
  - 2006-2007: 92.39%
  - 2007-2008: 94.05%

- Percent of students whose parents rated their learning experience at summer programs as very satisfactory or outstanding:
  - 2006-2007: 91.43%
  - 2007-2008: 96.83%
OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has an established Outreach Program that provides statewide services to families, school districts, regional education service centers (ESCs), and other agencies serving students with visual impairments and/or deafblindness including those with additional disabilities. The Outreach programs from TSBVI are the most comprehensive in the country and include:

- developing and providing local, regional, and statewide training for parents, paraprofessionals and professionals;
- providing consultation to educational teams regarding individual student programs;
- developing and disseminating original reference materials;
- providing information related to adapted materials, current research, technology resources, and teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments;
- managing a loan program for assistive technology;
- facilitating recruitment of new VI professionals and supporting teacher preparation programs;
- implementing a Federally funded deafblind technical assistance grant;
- conducting a mentorship program for new VI professionals;
- coordinating with the Education Service Center VI network to ensure accurate registration of students with visual impairments and distribution of adapted materials available through a Federal Quota account from the American Printing House for the Blind.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2007-2008 FISCAL YEAR

- Over 97% of Outreach customers rated the improvement of their knowledge and skills as a result of services received from the Outreach program as satisfactory or higher, of whom nearly 78% reported that improvement as either very satisfactory or outstanding.
- TSBVI Outreach Program increased the number of trainings offered via videoconferencing from 16 in the previous year to 25 this past year. This format allows VI professionals and related others to access high quality presentations without the costs of time and travel to a central location. Although many participants go to their regional ESC, increasingly local campuses have been able to access videoconferences directly.
- Use of videoconferencing for discussion groups as well as for more formal information delivery has expanded the formats available to nurture communities of practice among the often isolated VI professionals across Texas.
- There are limits to what can be taught effectively and the ability to practice new skills in the shorter videoconference instructional format. Evaluation data clearly indicates higher levels of satisfaction with in person workshops. TSBVI Outreach continues to offer local, regional and statewide trainings at sites around the state for options that allow more hands-on learning and interaction. In the 07-08 year, the Outreach program offered 231 presentations on a wide range of topics related to the education of students with visual impairments and/or deafblindness. This included a statewide conference for families and
professionals, training for new mentors, national training on analyzing district-wide programs for students with visual impairments, statewide training on the role of the Intervener, a specialized paraprofessional position in deafblindness, job fairs for prospective VI professionals, presentations at family weekends and many more related topics.

- Students with visual impairments and deafblindness represent extremely low incidence populations. The range of student needs is enormous. When districts have concerns on the appropriate program for an individual student, they turn to their regional ESC VI consultant or Deafblind Specialist, and those professionals in turn may refer to the TSBVI Outreach Program. In 2007-2008 the Outreach staff made 156 visits for school consultation around the state. Evaluations indicate that 94% of participants reported positive changes as a result.

- TSBVI Outreach launched three new initiatives in the past year: New levels of support were available specifically in the area of mathematics, transition for students with visual impairments, and orientation and mobility (O&M). TSBVI was able to provide training in math strategies for blind students who have struggled to succeed on standardized assessments; host a Transition Forum for participants from specialized schools around the United States; develop new guidelines for aligning the delivery of O&M services with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and pilot a revised O&M caseload analysis process. TSBVI is now able to provide ongoing leadership in these critical areas.

- Families are the long-term keys to success for students with disabilities. TSBVI Deafblind Outreach pioneered a family leadership training series that was expanded to families of children with visual impairments in the Valley in 2006-2007. During this past year, a new set of families in the Valley were participants. These families and those who had received training from the Deafblind Project in the past have become active members of school boards, created new parent support groups, advocated for increased services from related agencies, and become more involved in their own children’s educational programs.

- Families need opportunities to learn techniques they can apply at home. This past year, TSBVI Outreach sponsored 2 family workshops on how to use and encourage appropriate touch with VI and DB young children. Parents came with their children and a school team member to learn new strategies that support bonding and communication development. These weekends were extremely well received.

- The Outreach Programs are moving towards web-based training options, recognizing the increasing difficulty that VI professionals have had in getting released for training off campus. Training in the area of transition planning, motor development, routines and calendars for students with multiple disabilities and literacy are currently under development and will be ready for posting, with full accessibility options, in the next year.
TSBVI has an active volunteer program with participation by many members of the Austin community. One aspect of the volunteer program pairs TSBVI with community groups who want to perform a community service and choose to do so at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This occurs on both formal organized volunteer days, such as United Way’s “Day of Caring” in fall and spring, and less formal requests for a group to come work here on a specific time and day of their choosing. Temple Inland, Baker Botts and Team Quest were some of the companies who spent a day working on the TSBVI campus.

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During the 2007-08 school year, over 175 TSBVI volunteers logged in approximately 1950 hours working at our school. Independent Sector, a leadership forum for charities, estimates the dollar value of volunteer time in 2007 as $19.51 per hour. TSBVI benefited from over $38,000 worth of community volunteer time! Highlights during the year include United Way “Days of Caring” in September and April; a workday by 20 Cargill employees in January; and 21 high school students from Hill Country School in March, and several other small groups who volunteered during the year. Members of Delta Gamma Fraternity made tactile symbols, hosted a Thanksgiving dinner for the students at their sorority house as well as Valentine party, and helped the students dress up for the prom. The Austin individuals and groups who volunteer at TSBVI provide our students and staff with opportunities and assistance that is beyond measure.
OTHER SERVICES TO PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007-2008

- A total of 8503 publications were sold in fiscal year 2008. This includes print (7711), Braille (584), videos (41) and CDs (167). The *TAPS Assessment and Ongoing Evaluation* book was the top seller at 1378 copies. We also sold 1354 copies of *Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments*. Over 500 copies of the *Learning Media Assessment* were sold.

- Over 200 of the following publications were sold: *Independent Living Curriculum; Independent Living Assessment and Ongoing Evaluation; Low Vision Resource Guide; TAPS (O & M) Curriculum; Teaching Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments; and Assessment Kit, Parts 2, 3 and 4.*

- The sales numbers on our three newest publications were: *Better Together, Building Relationships with People who Have Visual Impairment and Autism Spectrum Disorder* - 138; *Empowered, An Activity-Based Self-Determination Curriculum* - 376; and *EVALS, Evaluating Students with Visual Impairments* - 713.

- Curriculum for Practical Academics Science and Social Studies is being developed.

- An update of the *TAPS, O & M Curriculum* book was begun.

- An autobiography by Dr. Phil Hatlen is almost complete.

- Development continued on a Practical Academics Health Curriculum in coordination with the School Health Advisory Council.

- The Curriculum Coordinator continues to evaluate and refine the performance indicator assessment tools that guide IEP development and instruction for TSBVI students.

- The Curriculum department continues to support classroom teachers in their instruction.

- The Curriculum department is continuing to employ TSBVI student workers to bind and package the publications we produce on campus.
The School hosts a web site that is recognized throughout the world for content concerning visual impairment and the education of blind and visually impaired students. The entire website is accessible to blind and visually impaired persons.

In 2007-2008, there were over 4.8 million visitors to the web site from more than 200 countries including Mexico, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Argentina, Spain, Peru, the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, Italy and New Zealand. The most visited pages were on sensory integrative dysfunction in young children, non-verbal communication, teaching math to visually impaired students, central auditory processing disorders, downloadable braille materials, and teaching strategies. The largest number of file downloads included the See/Hear newsletter in English and Spanish, the Vision Anomalies Handbook, the Math Continuum, and the Algebra 1 Nemeth “Cheat Sheet”.

BOND PROJECTS AND CONSTRUCTION DURING 2007-2008

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

In 2007 construction started on a new duplex residential facility in the Pecan Grove, the demolition and replacement of the Elementary Residential Complex and a new four-unit independent living (learning lab) facility. These projects were completed in the spring of 2008. The buildings included many recommendations made by residential staff, instructional staff, OT/PT professionals, administration and operations staff. They were designed to facilitate learning for our students, provide a home type environment for the children, maintain a high level of security for all individuals and provide the school and State with buildings that can be maintained for many years.

Design and construction of this first residential project provided challenges that gave the school the opportunity to be creative and resourceful. Initially the construction phase of the project came in over budget but with value engineering came a thoughtful process that reeled some of those costs in and the first residential project was completed as scheduled in the early summer of 2008. In addition to the living quarters, a new elementary play ground was built that provides children with challenges, allowing them to feel and hear different sensations such as water, sound, different plant types, different types of ground cover, climbing structures and swings.

The next project, the early parking package, will provide additional parking during construction as well as address long-term needs. Designs and plans were produced quickly but Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) did not receive a single qualified bid and an open order contract was negotiated in August and approved by the Commissioner Board. The project begun in late September 2008 and was completed in October in time for the main instructional building project to start in November.
In July 2008, TFC sought proposals for the main instructional building, cafeteria, fine arts facility, natatorium, and student activity center. There were a number of addenda issued prior to the dead line for proposals. TFC had received little interest from prospective general contractors and it was decided to recall these documents and have the architect resubmit the specifications and drawings. In August these documents were reposted by TFC and proposals were accepted, evaluated and negotiated in September. In October, the TFC commissioners approved the recommended general contractor and in November construction will start on this major project, with completion scheduled for June 2010 and demolition of the Main Instructional Building approximately three months later.

In August 2008, architectural proposals for the next phase of work were received and evaluated, firms were interviewed and a recommendation was made to hire Graeber, Simmons and Cowan (GS&C), an Austin firm. This phase includes the rest of the residential duplexes to be built, the interior build out of the Health Center in the Student Activity Center, the new Outreach and Conference Center, Vocational Center, site utility upgrades, covered walkways, OT/PT facilities, security master plan, landscaping master plan, irrigation and non-potable water system. Because some of the OT/PT facilities will be located in existing buildings such as the Elementary School or Gym, they will receive some remodeling as well.

Elementary Residential Complex (ERC)
Elementary Residential Complex Playground
with Recycled Tire Ground Cover

Playscape

Swings with Adapted Seats

Water Play Area

Sensory Musical Center

Building 650

Gate to Four Unit Studio Apartment (FUSA) Building 640
Volunteer Program 2007-08

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TSBVI Major Donors 2007-2008

Over $10,000
Professional Contract Services, Inc.

Over $5,000
All Blind Children of Texas
Delta Gamma Fraternity

$1,000 to $5,000
Austin Council of the Blind
Austin Downtown Liona Club
Point Venture Lions Club
Saberex Group, Ltd.

$100 to $1,000
John Coleman
Bill Daugherty
John De La Garza
Employees of Centex, Inc.
Event 360 Inc.
Michelle Goodwin
Debbie & Gary Jacobs
Arthur and JoAnn McLendon
R. Ramanathan
Texas Association for the Blind
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Paula Wright
Rolland & Nancy Zachgo
Cash donations to the drama department

Gifts in Kind
Kelly Davenport
Miles Fain
Freescale Semiconductor
The O’Donnell Family
T.N. Skiles
United Heritage Charity Fund
Neil Webber

CONCLUSION

We are proud of our School and its accomplishments. We change lives. We look forward to our next 150 years of service. Most of all we are grateful to the parents, colleagues, and legislators who continue to support the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.