Soaring Into the Future with the Teacher of DeafBlind Pilot
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Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired
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Soaring Into the Future with the Teacher of DeafBlind Pilot
Panel discussion
Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs

What is a Teacher of DeafBlind Pilot?

Figure 1 A young woman with DeafBlindness stands at a sink and smiles as her teacher participates in helping her wash a bowl.

From initial evaluation, to instruction, to ongoing assessment, the TDB plays a critical role in the provision of a free and appropriate education for students with DeafBlindness. They provide unique expertise that is not provided by the teacher of students with visual impairments nor the teacher of students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Why do we need TDBs?
Because DeafBlindness is not:
Deaf + Blind

DeafBlindness is:
Deaf x Blind
Teachers of Students with DeafBlindness are important because…

…the combined loss of distance senses is not simply a matter of adding the challenges of one disability onto another. Consequently, the educational issues related to DeafBlindness cannot be solved by simply adding another staff member to the team.

Knowledge about how the combined loss of vision and hearing affects students’ access to information and skills in designing and implementing instruction must be included in the IEP process.

As Robbie Blaha likes to say…”DeafBlindness is not an addition problem, it’s a multiplication problem.”
Isn’t that what interveners are for?

Interveners help to ensure that the accommodations contained in the student’s IEP are implemented in the classroom. They are not legally required to attend IEP meetings nor are they responsible for determining instructional content or writing goals.

Where to interveners go for support?

Figure 5 Bar graph illustrating resources interveners turn when they have questions about DeafBlindness. Responses from left to right are:
- I look up information myself-63.6%
- A specialist from our State’s DeafBlind project-55.6%
- Another intervener-33.3%
- A DeafBlind specialist from my school district-23.3%
- Classroom Teacher-18.6%
- A regional DeafBlind specialist-17.8%
- Other-22.5%
- Do not have a specific person or persons I can turn to with questions-11.6%
Building Sustainability

The proposed Alice Cogswell/Anne Sullivan Macy Act calls for each state to develop a plan on how it will provide qualified personnel to serve students who are blind, deaf, and DeafBlind.

What will Texas’s plan Be?

Where do I find a TDB?

The DeafBlind outreach team is currently in the final year of a two-year pilot project designed to provide training for TVIs and TDHHs to serve as a TDB for the IEP team.

We are developing a scope and sequence of training that specifically targets the Knowledge and Skills competencies for a qualified TDB outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

We have also developed a series of documents to help us measure the change in service delivery for students with DeafBlindness.

Building Capacity

How can we get a TDB on the IEP?

Beginning in 2017, TSBVI will provide coaching for staff from ESCs 4, 10 & 11 on how to train teachers in the TDB model. Once this “train the trainers” pilot is complete, these service centers should be able to then train those individuals already providing vision or hearing services in their districts to serve as TDBs as well. This will help to expand the understanding of the educational needs of students with DeafBlindness and increase the number of professionals serving as TDBs in our state.
All your questions answered

Figure 7 Screenshot TSBVI’s webpage for Teachers of students with DeafBlindness.

TSBVI is in the ongoing process of maintaining a website for TDBs. The site contains resources to help teachers, parents and administrators better understand the roles and responsibilities of the TDB’s on the IEP team. There are evaluation tools and articles for teachers currently serving as TDBs to use in developing educational programs for their students or to connect to other teachers and professionals. There is also an FAQ section dedicated to answering common questions about the need for and roles of TDBs in the state of Texas.
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Figure 3 TSBVI logo.

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Figure 4 IDEAs that Work logo and OSEP disclaimer.