Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs

PPAG is 15!

Outrageous!
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
Graphic shows the representatives at the PPAG: TVIs, O&M specialists, universities, administrators, parents, consumers, state agencies, TSBVI. Each entity is depicted as a circle which is pointing to the center: a circle labeled as "PPAG".
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