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- Lauren Newton  Principal of Special Programs
- Cyral Miller  Director of Outreach Programs
- Charlotte Miller  Director of Human Resources
- Barney Schulz  Administrator for Business, Operations, and Technology
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A Message from the Superintendent
2011-2012

The 2011-2012 school year at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) continued to build upon the successes that have brought us so much national and international recognition as a top tier center of expertise. This past year also brought us much closer to the completion of the campus master plan that will bring our original 1916 facilities into the modern age. By the beginning of 2013, after almost a decade of school life in a construction zone, the entire rebuild of the campus will result in a physical plant that is proper match to the incredible educational work of our teachers and staff.

Among the attributes that sets TSBVI apart from most other special purpose schools of its type is the diversity of our service options and our commitment to serve the entire state of Texas, not just the students enrolled on our campus. This model of service gives the greatest possible return on the investment the citizens of our state have made in TSBVI since its establishment by the Texas Legislature in 1856.

TSBVI's campus-based, K-12 program is graduating and enrolling the largest classes in decades. The 2011-2012 group of graduating seniors was the largest anyone can remember, and going into the 2012-2013 school year enrollment was right back up where we left off the previous May. Our model of serving only those students most in need of our intensive expertise, and then returning those students to their home communities in a highly structured transition process designed to build upon each students newly gained skills at TSBVI, sets us apart from the vast majority of similar schools who tend to keep students enrolled for the majority of their school careers. While each student is enrolled at TSBVI, we are simultaneously working with the sending ISDs to build their local capacity to serve students locally. Through this model, more of the 9,000 students in Texas who are blind or visually impaired have an opportunity to attend school on our Austin campus.

Of equal importance to Texas is the variety of programs offered through our Statewide Outreach Technical Assistance and Short-Term programs. TSBVI Outreach Services have a major leadership role in improving services for all 9,000 students in the state regardless of where they attend school. Specialized training for teachers in the ISDs and ESCs is coupled with extensive parent-training efforts resulting in communities across the state increasingly able to successfully educate students at home. And for those students not enrolled in TSBVI campus-based K-12 program, our Short-Term Programs allow students from all over the state to come in for intensive week-long, weekend and summer programs designed to improve their academic success back home. Both Outreach and Short Term Programs functioned at full capacity in 2011-2012 and are delivering the best services in their history.
It is important to note two other key TSBVI contributions to the State of Texas and to the state of education nationally and internationally for blind and visually impaired students, are TSBVI's curricular publications and its website www.tsbvi.edu. These are the two most widely accessed resources of their type in the world from a single organization, and they are among the very best in terms of quality. Significant improvement were made to the website during 2011-2012, and the new curriculum for teaching blind and visually impaired students to travel independently, TAPS, was completed. This book is now on sale and will end up as a primary resource for teachers around the globe who want their students to move safely and purposefully through the environment.

Also unique to TSBVI is the decision by the state that our school should manage via contractual agreements the funding for the two university programs, Texas Tech and Stephen F. Austin that train new Teachers of the Visually Impaired. The end of 2011-2012 saw 50 or more of these new teachers filling much-needed positions in school districts across the state. On TSBVI’s campus, the Mentor Program matches these new teachers with veteran teachers from around the state. This is the key ingredient that helps ensure these new teachers are successful in jobs where they are often the only vision impairment specialist in the districts, and therefore lack a professional peer group of similar specialists.

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. Major re-construction of the campus began in 2008 and continued through the 2011-2012 school year. Virtually every building on the campus will be replaced with new construction by the end of 2012.

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 students in Texas who are blind or visually impaired, including those with deafblindness or additional disabilities, will have high quality educational opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and character to lead fulfilling and satisfying lives.

OUR MISSION

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will serve as a leading center of expertise and supports, working in partnership with schools, families and organizations to improve educational outcomes for students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with deafblindness or additional disabilities.
OUR PHILOSOPHY

♦ We believe in the strength, competence and potential for independence of students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with deafblindness or additional disabilities. All staff at TSBVI foster and celebrate these attributes every day.

♦ We believe that our important mission, established by the people of Texas through our legislature, is to serve all students in the state through collaboration with local educational teams. By doing so, TSBVI ensures that Texas as a whole receives the greatest value for its investment in the promising future of these children and youths.

♦ We believe that the extraordinary blindness expertise developed at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired since its founding in 1856, continues to grow in its leadership for the entire state. We are committed to using this expertise for innovations that will eliminate all barriers to learning.

♦ We believe that the State of Texas has established a statewide educational system for these students that is widely recognized as among the very best in the nation. TSBVI is honored to play a key role in the achievement of this recognition.

The Staff

In 2011-2012 the staff of TSBVI was comprised of approximately 376 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.
**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.

**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 2011-2012](image)

**Total Revenue $20,747,673**
ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2011-2012 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:

- 94% of Comprehensive Program students achieved moderate to substantial progress on every area of the core and expanded core curriculum in which they received programming.

- Student progress in 100% of the ten major instructional areas was rated as satisfactory, very satisfactory, or outstanding by at least 90% of parents, local school districts and students.

- 63% of students surveyed who graduated from TSBVI from the past 5 years were engaged in productive life activities (work, post-secondary education or training, child care, or volunteer activities).

- 100% of teachers and paraprofessionals met No Child Left Behind highly qualified standards.
OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Students participated in a wide variety of work training activities on campus including basic chores/introductory vocational activities, recycling, animal care, Wildcat Bistro, product embroidery, library assistants, Wildcat Coffee Shop, horticulture/farmers’ market sales, Wildcat Laundry Service and sound engineering.

- Students had work experiences in off campus settings such as the Department of Aging and Disability Services, Discount Electronics, Texas Coffee Traders, midwifery internship, Stubb’s BBQ, Gullett Elementary and KAZI Radio Station.

- Participation in an array of beneficial after-school activities for students including: Robotics Club, archery, rowing, stand up paddle boarding, Yearbook Club, yoga, dance, art, group games, spin biking, tandem biking, bicycle maintenance, Writer’s Workshop, Music Mania, goalball, Spanish Club, radio station, swimming, swimming lessons, music recording, scrapbooking, cooking & baking, international foods, Drama Club, Walking & Running Club, hiking, jewelry making, Pep Squad,
cheerleading, Gardening Club, Book Club and rock wall climbing. Also, students were given individualized instruction in self-directed leisure activities like beading, weaving, macramé, puzzles and clay modeling.

- Teacher Aide Joanne Rodgers was honored as the 2012 Principals of Schools for the Blind Outstanding Paraprofessional and Dorm Manager Michael Pollei was selected as the 2012 Principals of Schools for the Blind Outstanding Residential Life Staff Member.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN 2011-2012

- Students participated in statewide White Cane Day activities in downtown Austin.
- A parent weekend conference was held at TSBVI with 101 students’ families in attendance.
- The 2012-2013 Student Council provided the following fun activities for the student body as well as service projects for the community and school: a coat drive for local kids during the winter season; the third annual student talent show featuring 23 student performers; a Valentine’s Day dance and TSBVI’s first homecoming celebration. The students organized a wide array of fun activities during the week of April 16, including: spirit days, such as Pajama Day; maroon vs. gold wrestling exhibition; student vs. staff goalball tournament; pep rally; hamburger supper; and dance. The Council concluded the year by sponsoring an end of year ice cream social.
- A student holiday music assembly and play were held in the auditorium.
- Students traveled to the Mississippi School for the Blind in January to participate in the 2012 South Central Association of Schools for the Blind (SCASB) Wrestling, Cheerleading and Performing Arts Meet. The SCASB weekend kicked off with the Wildcat Choir singing “You’ll Never Walk Alone” by Rogers and Hammerstein, “Fix You” by Coldplay and “Bright Morning Star” by Will Schmidt. The Wildcat Classical Guitar Class played “El Chinanti” by Travis Marcum. The cheerleaders earned a second place trophy. The Wildcat Mascot placed second in her routine. Individual Wildcat wrestlers finished well including first place at the 160-pound class. The wrestling team finished second overall.
- Twenty-three students, ages 7-19, participated in the Regional Braille Challenge, at the Education Service Center Region 13. These enthusiastic students competed in Speed & Accuracy, Proofreading, Reading Comprehension, Charts & Graphs, and Spelling at this national competition sponsored by the Braille Institute. The students took first, second and third places in both the Apprentice and Varsity Divisions; first and second places in the Freshman Division, and third place in the Sophomore Division. Most importantly, all students improved their braille literacy!
- A total of 97 TSBVI students participated in the 13th Annual Sports Extravaganza for Blind and Visually Impaired Students in Irving, Texas. Students competed in track and field, goalball, beeper ball, and archery. TSBVI brought home more than 340 medals and ribbons. In the goalball tournament, 14 TSBVI students competed in the beginners’ tournament, with the girls’ team taking first place. The boys’ teams came in first and second place.
- Six students competed in the Youth National Goalball Tournament in St. Augustine, Florida. The students faced 24 other teams from throughout the United States and TSBVI boys’ team finished in fifth place.
- Of the 12 students who competed in the Lone Star Classic Goalball Tournament in Irving, Texas, TSBVI’s girls’ team won the gold. One of the boys’ teams won bronze and the other TSBVI boys’ team won gold.
- Students participated in a Red Ribbon Safe and Drug-free Schools assembly and poster contest.
- Black Heritage and Fiesta Day activities were held at the School.
- A senior banquet took place in the cafeteria followed by the junior/senior prom at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

**ENROLLMENT STATISTICS**

In the 2011-2012 school year, 171 students representing 115 local school districts throughout Texas were enrolled in the Comprehensive Programs of TSBVI.

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**ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2011-2012 COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS**

- Hispanic: 47%
- White: 32%
- Black: 20%
- Less than 1%
Our son does very well with y’all and we are pleased with his accomplishments. We feel as parents he can do so much more and know y’all will work to give us and him the tools he needs to better himself as he grows into a responsible adult.

I can’t say enough about the quality of education my son is getting at TSBVI, not to mention the friendship, caring, and the opportunities he has had to make a well-rounded personality. He loves TSBVI!

My son has been very happy at TSBVI for the last three years. Each year has been different and challenging for him. This year he has really enjoyed himself. He has become more independent, outgoing, a self-advocate and social.

Overall, TSBVI has been a wonderful experience. This was my son’s first year and he has done well. The staff has been caring and he has enjoyed getting to know all of the staff and new routines. His dorm instructors are super! He really enjoyed the off-campus activities – eating out program and shopping, etc.

My son has come a long way since starting at TSBVI. His self-esteem, social skills, accountability all areas have improved so much. This has been his best school year since kindergarten. To have this school, and my son to have this opportunity, is a blessing. All staff members have been nothing but pleasant and courteous. I look forward to him going again next year. And at the start of this year (his first year there) I didn’t even want him to go. It has been awesome. I can’t think of one single thing to change.

Words cannot express how thankful we are to have our son attending TSBVI. The changes we have seen in him are just amazing. His communication skills have opened so many new doors. The staff (both classroom and dorm) are remarkable! You can definitely see how much he has grown in the last three years. This would not have happened without our team! They obviously “get it”! Thanks again.

Everything is very positive. Teachers use positive reinforcement, motivation, and they keep encouraging the students to try. I did not see any negative attitudes from any of the staff. Wonderful, very refreshing to observe!

I have been learning how to do my routes and I’m learning how to make my bag lunch. I feel very good about this. My teachers and teacher aides are so nice.

During the conversations we have had with our student during ARDs, we have realized how he has grown and changed. The atmosphere you create there to meet his learning and living needs
has been very successful. His attitude is “observably” improved along with his general participation in life!

We are thrilled with our student’s progress while at TSBVI. The opportunities to learn skills in context of community are outstanding. Thank you so much for all of your hard work and support for this student. The reports sent recently were excellent and gave us detailed information regarding programming and performance.

Our student participated a few mornings a week in non-academic classes at TSBVI this year. She seemed to enjoy it very well. She had PE, fine arts, music and art. These areas facilitated her growth in her motivating subjects. There were adapted to her visual needs and helped her use her residual hearing to the maximum. Our school is very grateful for this opportunity to collaborate again this year with TSBVI. The family is also very pleased with her progress.

Our student seems to be much more confident since her placement at TSBVI. Staff are always informative and kind. Wonderful staff! She loves her teachers. She has improved so much since her placement in the fall. Her self-advocacy skills and confidence were very lacking while attending our school. It was very difficult to get follow through on skill building at home. She was unable to work on independent living skills, cane use, and appropriate social skills. I believe this placement was critical to her becoming successful in adult life. I believe now that she will have the confidence to advocate for independence. I thank the staff for inspiring her and working so hard to obtain these goals. They have made a HUGE difference in her life.

We are extremely pleased with our student’s progression while attending TSBVI. Any and all faculty and staff we have had contact with are personable and professional. He has shown such good progression towards his IEP goals and objectives each year. With your guidance and support he will become a responsible and productive member of the community in which he chooses to live. We look forward to next year and his accomplishments. Thank you for all you do for our student.

It is a privilege to work with professionals at TSBVI. The compassion and commitment towards our students and parents is appreciated. I am excited for my students who have the opportunity to visit and experience TSBVI. Thank you for your service.

This student in the EXIT Program has blossomed. Very happy with the expanded core curriculum you offer.

I very much appreciate the communication between TSBVI and our school. We have worked as a team to assist our student to have the best education and post high school future. The support of the TSBVI staff to her, her parents, and our school has been superior and a great experience. Congratulations to all!
SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

SUMMER SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

Summer programs serve students who are not full-time students at TSBVI during the regular school year. They emphasize those 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, Practical Academic Secondary Enrichment, Elementary Summer Enrichment, SWEAT (an exit level work program for academic students), WALIC (an exit level work program for practical academic students), and Life Skills Camp. 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, travel, responsibility and organization, and interacting well with others;
• Learning skills related to recreational activities and the creative arts;
• Participating in activities on campus and in the community; and
• Enhancing one’s sense of confidence and well-being, self-knowledge, and self-advocacy, which can grow 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 often the only visually impaired student in their school. The classes introduce them to empowering experiences and ideas related to living with visual impairment, and provide a socially supportive peer group that reduces 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 complement to the education they receive in their local districts.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2012 SUMMER PROGRAMS

1. Classes for academic secondary students are theme oriented rather than subject matter oriented. For example, students might take a class called “Radio Station Management” rather than “Introduction To Work,” or “Writers Workshop” rather than “Language Arts.” The students then practice academic and vision-specific skills within the context of these appealing, real-life settings (e.g., developing a budget, shopping for goods, writing documents to advertise products, evaluating effectiveness). In our 2012 academic secondary classes we offered a range of themes, serving 124 students in 14 different classes (described below).

2. Our practical academic secondary students also participated in theme oriented classes: “Art and Imagination”, “Career Education” and “Independence Exploration”. Within these real-life contexts they practiced a broad array of skills such as functional literacy and math, personal and domestic care, recreation and leisure, work, social skills, and self-determination. In summer 2012 we served 30 practical academic secondary students in eight classes.
3. Elementary summer enrichment classes were similar to secondary classes in structure: they provided opportunities for students to practice academic and vision-related skills in activities such as thematic units, music, community outings, self-care, shopping, cooking, arts and crafts, and recreational activities. Examples of classroom themes were: “Furry and Fabulous Friends”, “Oh the Places You'll Go...A Summer with Dr. Seuss”, “Let’s Get Cooking”, “Come to Your Senses”. Due to the large number of students transitioning to secondary programming, we provided not only our traditional two “Transition to Middle School” classes; we created two additional classes for middle school age students: “Going Places” and “Move on Up.” Our Field Day and final performance had an international theme, including the Olympics, and students were able to meet para-Olympic athletes. We served 95 elementary students in 13 one- or two-week classes.

4. 25 high-school students participated in paid jobs (stipend or minimum wage) throughout the Austin community (described below). They received intensive training in all aspects of work – such as getting a job, keeping a job, workplace protocol, specific job skills, managing money, traveling independently to work, and solving problems that arise at work. They also received training in independent living at home and in the community. This included managing a house or apartment; domestic skills such as cleanliness, cooking, shopping, recreation in the community; and achieving a balance between independence and interdependence.

5. 46 visually impaired students with severe multiple impairments, including deafblindness, were provided the opportunity to be away from home (often for the first time) in our Life Skills Camp, participating in skills of independent living and recreational activities in the community.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN SUMMER 2012

1. Secondary academic classes were offered in four major areas:
   - Fine Arts: Camp Fine Arts, Writers’ Workshop, Chorus
   - Physical Education: Individual Sports (for SBOE credit), Camp Challenge
   - Small Business Endeavors: Wildcat Catering, Radio Station Management
   - Adaptive Strategies and Technologies: Problem Busters (introduction to engineering), Community Independence, Middle School Enrichment (3), Web Design, Austin Adventures (2)

2. We continued our relationship with the Armstrong School of Music, contracting with well-known Austin musicians to teach and perform for our secondary students.

3. Our procedure is to offer a large variety of classes in our application form, and then provide those that best match actual student selections. Several classes were offered for Summer 2012 that did not receive enough applications to create a viable class: Rock Band, Space Weather, Math Adaptations for Math Success (academic classes); Adventure in Sports, and
Expedition Earth (practical academic classes). This was the second year that we tried to support the large number of Texas students who did not pass math tests, but it appears that they instead stay in their local districts for summer remediation classes. Additionally, it is our experience that students are not typically attracted to summer programs that are academic in nature.

4. During the summer of 2011, we piloted an increased number of one-week elementary classes, in an effort to serve as many students as possible. We learned from that endeavor that we lacked the resources to safely and appropriately support this increased student number, so we intentionally reduced the number of elementary students in 2012 closer to our typical enrollment size.

5. We again collaborated with Texas A&M University to offer an introductory engineering class called ProblemBusters. This summer’s focus was on design-and-build projects involving the understanding and harnessing of various forms of energy. Students designed devices to harness sustainable energy sources to perform useful tasks. This engaging class presented students with the kinds of critical thinking skills required to approach design problems. It was co-taught by a TSBVI science-math teacher and a professor from Texas A&M University who is interested in making the field of engineering available to learners who are blind.

6. Four classes of older elementary students learned about issues related to transitioning to Middle School. This is an especially difficult transition for students with visual impairments. Classes 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).

7. 25 high school students participated in jobs at the following community locations:

**SWEAT Academic (individual jobsites):** Open Door Preschool, KOOP Radio, Texas Coffee Traders, Faith Lutheran Child Development Center, Dragon’s Lair Bookstore, Umlauf Sculpture Garden, Open Door Preschool, Austin Public Library, Easter Seals of Central Texas Austin Humane Society

**WALIC Practical Academic (3-4 students per site):** Top Drawer Thrift Shop, Wal-Mart, Capital Area Food Bank, Department of Aging and Disability Services
ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 2012 Summer Programs, 320 students were served, representing 17 Education Service Center regions and 149 local school districts throughout Texas.

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**ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2012 SUMMER PROGRAMS**

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Summer Program Survey Responses from Parents and Local School Districts

It was our daughter’s first time attending the summer programs so for us it was a wonderful experience. She came home a different young lady. I really feel you are doing a great job. It was an experience of a lifetime for both our daughter and our entire family. Allowing her to have this experience has made us see so much more potential in her. Thank you and we hope to see you again next year.

I just wanted to thank you so much for allowing my daughter into your summer program. I think she grew several inches and emotionally matured so much during that 2 weeks. It was a program that also taught her compassion for others which is a life lesson I hope she never loses. Thank you so much.

You guys are doing a great job. My son lost his central vision 3 years ago and this has been a positive experience for him knowing there are others out there like him, he can be himself when he is there, he looks forward to going.

Attending TSBVI's summer program is very important for our son. The opportunities for self-advocacy, living independently and interacting with other students is crucial for his future. He enjoys attending and gains confidence with each visit. We can’t replace these experiences elsewhere in the state.

Thank you for the wonderful job that you guys do. My son has really enjoyed himself the last two years that he had attended, he can’t wait to go next summer!

My daughter loves this and will apply again. She appreciates the direction from staff as they seem to know just when she needs it. She loves the new friends she makes and the dorm jobs teach her so much that she does chores at home. Outstanding! Thank you. You have no idea what TSBVI means to our family.
Our son had a wonderful experience and hopes to go again. His sister hopes to get in next summer. This teaches kids how to live life without mommy and daddy holding their hands. Independence is so important.

My daughter had an awesome time. Thank you so much for having her. She is looking forward to next summer. You all are GREAT!!

My daughter had a great time at camp and cannot wait to return. She said the staff was very friendly and she enjoyed being in a place where she “could see everything”. Your program is a blessing to all students and families with visual impairments. Thank you so much!

I can’t think of any way you could improve! Wonderful program and staff! Thank you!

The teachers were very compassionate and caring. I wish all my son’s educators were that considerate of his success. Thank you to all the staff for a truly positive and rewarding summer experience.

The summer enrichment program has really helped my daughter. Not only has it helped her self-confidence but also has taught her to trust in other people besides her family to care for her. She loves going to “camp” every summer. She wants to pack the day after regular school is dismissed in May.

The program is outstanding and the teachers, administrators, and volunteers are much appreciated. Thank you. She has been 2 years now and loves it. Thank you for the opportunity.

Everyone was very polite and helpful. My daughter came home very motivated and wanting to write poetry. The camp was perfect for her. She said she would have enjoyed a longer visit. Thanks for all the great work!

The dorm activities and experiences are excellent, fun and full of learning experiences. The academic program can be more challenging. The dorm staff to student ratio is excellent. This ensures the safety of my child when all dorm kids had outings. The staff are all very responsible, thoughtful, helpful.

Everyone was just great to me, my son and family. Right from the start everyone was great. He would like to come back if possible to another program.

This was the first time for my daughter to attend. She came home displaying much more independence.

I thought it was great and not sure I would change a thing. My daughter had a wonderful time and can not wait to return next summer.

My student had such a great experience and wants to return. I really believe he saw that there may be opportunities out there for him that he never imagined.
SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

Our school year 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 near grade level, but need to learn special adaptive skills in order to access the statewide curriculum and fully participate in the learning and social environment. Between September and May, we offer brief, intensive classes, from three to five days in length, in areas such as adaptive technology, math tools and strategies, tactile graphs and maps, etc. In addition to working on the objectives for which they are 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 other peers with visual impairments 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 their educational, vocational, and social success.

TSBVI provides four types of short-term classes during the school year:

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 Short-Term Program staff and the local Teacher of the Visually Impaired. Parents may also contribute to the selection of objectives.

2. **Special topic classes**
   Classes are offered on specific topics pertinent to students with visual impairments. Special topic classes offered during the 2011-12 school year were:
   - Low Vision Tools and Strategies: Elementary
   - Low Vision Tools and Strategies: Secondary
   - College Prep
   - Accessible Math Tools and Strategies
   - Looking Good
   - City Travel
   - Elementary Tech for Tykes
   - Astronomy
   - Safe Driving with 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. Classes offered during the 2011-12 school year were:
4. Off-campus classes
Since the 2008-09 school year, Short-Term Programs has offered to travel to large districts or regional service centers to provide the on-site class “Low Vision on the Road.” The class teaches students with low vision about their vision, as well as strategies for maximizing use of vision. The four-phase program includes a distance education teacher training component, a student folder review, an on-site day for teachers and students, and continuing support to participating teachers on request. This year the program was provided in Abilene, Texas and served 10 students and 8 adults.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE 2011-2012 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

1. Students were instructed in a broad range of skills related to visual impairment, including tactile graphics; skills for independent living; math tools and concepts for nonvisual learners; low vision adaptations, strategies and use of optical devices; use of a portable notetaker; adaptations for accessing the computer keyboard and screen, and use of software for word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, email, and internet access; travel in the community; social skills and self-determination. Students were introduced to various adaptive technologies and strategies that are available to assist persons with visual impairments (both electronic and low-tech), and taught how to evaluate and match them to meet various needs that arise.

2. 93% of students met the objectives for which they were referred.

3. 95% of responding school districts, parents and students rated their experience in short-term programs as very satisfactory or outstanding.

4. Short-Term programs served a total of 199 students from across the state of Texas, ranging from the Panhandle, to the Valley, and from the western to eastern parts of the state. During this school year, we served students from 18 of the 20 educational regions in the state.
1. Short-Term Programs provides classes that are uniquely tailored to both visual and tactile learners. Students with low vision comprise approximately 85% of the academic VI population in Texas, yet their unique needs may not be fully addressed when resources are limited because they appear to “get by.” Also, their needs can be more difficult to determine than those of blind students because they vary so much from one student to another. We therefore offer certain classes that are specifically designed to serve students with low vision.

2. Short-Term Program 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 and training were provided in various locations:
   - “Seize the Moment: Video Documentation of Student Performance.” Envision Conference, St. Louis, MO. (John Rose)
   - “Effectiveness of Short-Term Programs at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired” presented at the Texas AER Conference, Houston, TX, March 2012, and at the biennial international AER Conference, Bellevue, WA, July 2012 (Dr. Rona Pogrund, Dr. Lauren Newton, Shannon Darst, and Cindy Bachofer)
   - “She Reads Funny: Psychosocial Aspects of Reading with Low Vision” presented at the biennial Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference, Louisville, KY, December 2011, the Texas AER Conference, Houston, TX, March 2012, and the biennial international AER Conference, Bellevue, WA, July 2012 (Cindy Bachofer)
   - Bachofer, C. “Let’s Go the Distance: Telescope Use in a Range of Environments” presented at the TSBVI Mentor Center, Austin, TX, April 2012.

3. New classes were added that infused various aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum:
   - “Tech for Tykes”: This class piloted a creative model for serving young elementary students who have difficulty attending, learning, remembering and being away from home during a traditional 5-day class. Students were required to attend three 3-day classes to work on a set of technology skills. The three classes were scheduled one month apart during the fall. The local Teachers of the Visually Impaired committed to work with our teacher before,
between and after the classes. This offered continuity, which is one of the most difficult challenges faced by staff providing Short-Term Programs.

- **“Astronomy”:** Astronomers from the University of Texas helped students explore the exciting field of Astronomy. They used tactile, kinesthetic, auditory and visual senses to explore concepts such as: navigating the sky, constellations, and patterns of stars; how rockets work; the solar system (the earth-moon system and search for other solar systems); the nature of light; large telescopes (the astronomer’s tool); and missions in space (exploring other worlds).

- **“In the Driver’s Seat: Introduction to Safe Driving with Low Vision”:** This workshop for students and their parents examined the complex array of facts needing consideration when evaluating whether a student will be able to drive. The number of referrals for this class (50 students referred for 20 openings) was more than double our typical referral rate, giving evidence to the importance of this topic. Nationally recognized speakers presented over the two-day program. Sessions included information from a low vision specialist and a certified driving instructor, as well as perspectives from young adult drivers who are visually impaired. Students who are not able to become drivers learned about accessing alternate forms of transportation. The class will be offered again in the 2012-13 school year.

4. Short-Term Programs staff completed a total revision of our online web site, greatly improving (a) clarification of the program, and (b) explanation and automation of the admissions and attendance procedures.

5. **After-school residential programming provided essential training and practice in areas of independent living, which academic students are often unable to receive during their busy school day. Instruction included:** planning, budgeting, shopping, and cooking related to meal preparation; using screenreaders and low vision devices to read in functional activities; using the internet to locate restaurants, menus, and other information; applying math concepts in practical activities such as shopping, measuring ingredients, making payments, calculating tax and tip; cleaning, setting the table, using table manners; understanding issues related to good hygiene; asking for information at stores; identifying bills and coins and effectively completing cash transactions; using appropriate etiquette in various settings; accessing public transportation; understanding effective inter-personal communication and conflict resolution strategies; and choosing appropriate community recreation-leisure activities. Healthy food (including discussion about nutrition), as well as exercise options, are encouraged and provided (e.g., swimming, canoeing, yoga, hiking, dancing, playground). Students are also encouraged to participate in some form of creative self-expression (e.g., art, music). Self-determination is encouraged and taught throughout all activities.

6. Procedures were implemented to use Google Docs for shared departmental information, including referrals and student tracking; ongoing work on current projects; individual student information; email distribution lists; forms and templates; meeting agendas; inventories; etc.
7. Progress was made in supporting students and their teachers after they complete participation in a Short-Term Program class. This is probably the most challenging aspect of providing a Short-Term Program.

- Created short video clips of students participating in instruction and shared them with local Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs).
- Developed an additional tool to use with local TVIs during our pre-attendance interviews, to ascertain the level of collaboration they are willing to participate in. This should help us apply our resources more efficiently and effectively.
- Worked with selected TVIs before, between and after their students attended a sequence of three classes to work on the same objectives (Tech for Tykes class).
- Increased frequency of phone communications with TVIs after students completed a class.
- Provided additional resources in final reports.
- Held telephone staffings with district personnel, family and Outreach regarding students who had attended several classes with no follow-up to maintain skills.
- Some high school students have communicated directly with Short-Term Program teachers regarding follow-up needs.
- Collaboration with TVIs, parents, and Outreach to resolve technology issues following attendance.

ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 2011-2012 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

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<td>33%</td>
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<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

During the 2011-2012 Short-Term Program school year, 199 students were served, representing 86 local school districts.

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PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR 2011-2012

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

Short-Term Program Survey Responses from Parents, Students and Local School Districts

We were beyond delight with the course. It was well prepared, organized and informative. The staff that I encountered were exceptional.

I am very thankful that my son had the opportunity to take part. I feel like he has greatly benefitted from being in an environment with peers who have some of the same difficulties that he does. His self-esteem seemed so much higher while he was there. He learned some very valuable tools that he will need for day to day activities.

It is good to see all that my child learns while she is there. She is so excited to tell us the things she did while there and always looks forward to going again the next year. We are totally satisfied with everything, and very pleased with the staff. Great program with amazing staff.

The staff is amazing and really connects with my daughter in way that other places can’t, she learns so much and really enjoys her time there. She has also had a hard time in the past connecting with kids her age, since she’s been attending these programs she has become a
new child. She now has tons of friends including lots of VI kids that has really helped her self-esteem. It’s a beautiful facility and the staff that I enjoy seeing at every program are awesome and so caring. I’m so thankful for this school and all the programs that are offered, it has really help my daughter in so many ways. Thank you.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of this program was going to several types of colleges around Austin. The staff showed us a variety of different kinds of colleges such as community and University. I think that this would give students a good overview of different kinds of education that they might receive on a college level. Thank you for a great program.

Just the fact that I don’t want to go home today. I feel like this place is heaven. I get a lot of help when I need it, as much as I need. The teachers know how to work with blind and visually impaired people. There is everything a blind person could want and need.

My student enjoyed meeting the staff and the other students. After attending, he showed renewed vigor for self-advocation when he is unable to see school materials clearly. He does not have any peers with VI in his grades so it was very useful for him to share experiences with others who share his challenges. I think this is critical exposure for him because as the curriculum gets more difficult, he will struggle to cope and feel he has a fair playing field. The more interaction with other VI students he has the better equipped he will be to deal with future challenges.

As a VI Teacher I am very thankful for the support these programs provide. It hard to be an expert in everything so these programs fill the gap.

What this student has learned at TSBVI has served as a launching pad for her to become more independent with technology and to continue making excellent progress her furthering her technology skills since her return to school. The TSBVI staff is always courteous. TSBVI’s teacher has been very knowledgeable and helpful in her instruction of the student and her follow-up with me.

When my student returned he told us that he had a wonderful time. He said he made friends and all of them are on his Face Book. He also commented that he didn’t want to return home and wanted to attend school at TSBVI. I knew that eventually that would happen but didn’t expect it so soon! AWESOME!! Learning that there are peers that have visual impairments as well and to be able to connect with them. He felt like he was understood and could relate to other people. Thank all of you for making this possible for our students. This trip for him was the key to see what was out there and the extra push to strive that much more.

Student provided extensive information based upon his experiences and reflection of the Special program. The student further stated that he hopes to be part of further TSBVI events. A very positive experience for this student! I as a TVI in the field was very pleased with the assistance by staff in regards to the logistical matters for getting the student to the TSBVI and assisting in filling out all support forms.

My student was very excited about her experience during the Iron Chef workshop and looks forward to returning in the future. The process to enroll her was easy to follow and I got a great amount of assistance from TSBVI staff when filling in all of the paperwork. As stated before the learning was extremely beneficial and practical for his daily usage.
OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired offers a wide range of 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:

(1) Developing and providing local, regional, and statewide training for parents, paraprofessionals and professionals;

(2) Consulting with educational teams regarding individual student programs;

(3) Developing and disseminating original reference materials;

(4) Providing information related to adapted materials, current research, technology resources, and teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments;

(5) Managing a loan program for assistive technology;

(6) Facilitating recruitment of new VI professionals and supporting teacher preparation programs;

(7) Implementing a Federally funded deafblind technical assistance grant and the statewide DB Census;

(8) Conducting a mentorship program for new VI professionals;

(9) 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 2011-2012 FISCAL YEAR

- 87% of Outreach customers rated the improvement of their knowledge and skills as very satisfactory or outstanding as a result of services received from the Outreach program.

- TSBVI Outreach Programs effectively build on the services and skills available at regional ESCs. Students with visual impairments and deafblindness represent extremely low incidence populations with diverse and unique needs. Districts typically are first assisted by their regional ESC VI consultant or Deafblind Specialist. Those professionals in turn may refer to the TSBVI Outreach Program. Outreach training is provided in coordination with the ESC for optimal regional follow up.

- In 2011-2012 the Outreach staff made 140 local visits for school consultation to districts and adult group home settings across Texas. Staff provided this intensive consultation support, often with multiple visits to a program, for over 85 students in 66 individual districts. These visits have documented success: 100% of respondents reported a positive change for the student, staff or family as a result of school consultation visits by Outreach staff.

- Requests for workshops and training were strong; TSBVI Outreach presented or facilitated 245 conferences and/or workshop sessions at local districts, at regional service centers, and at statewide and national venues for over 8000 participants. Use of
distance training tools continues to increase the numbers of people able to access training.

- This past year TSBVI was able to transmit videoconferences from our new building which gave TSBVI the ability to offer training not only via the TETN statewide system but also directly link with other systems. The Outreach Programs also provided new web based training with individual districts or wider locales. Videoconferencing and other distance connections allow participants to access training without the costs of time and travel. There were 22 distance events sponsored in 2011-2012.

- A brand new website, http://distance.tsbvi.edu/, linked to the main TSBVI webpage, provides a greatly enhanced venue for accessing anytime, anywhere training on VI and DB issues. Videos, courses, tutorials and more are being added to this site regularly.

- Distance instruction is valuable for introducing new concepts and building awareness, but less effective at fostering intensive skill development. Also, evaluation data clearly indicates higher levels of satisfaction with in-person workshops where questions can be answered immediately and more in depth training can occur. Therefore, the Outreach staff continued to present in person training at the local, regional and statewide levels. In the 2011-2012 year, Outreach presented on intervention strategies for students with deafblindness, adaptive tools for accessing math and science, assistive technology, job fairs for prospective VI professionals, presentations at family weekends around the state and the Quality Programs for Students with Visual Impairment series for local districts. TSBVI Outreach also co-sponsored a 2 day Active Learning conference in Dallas in collaboration with the statewide Low Incidence Disabilities ESC group.

- The nearly completed TSBVI campus facilities supported hosting the Southwest Orientation and Mobility Association Conference in Austin for the first time and a national conference with the National Family Association for Deaf-Blind.

- TSBVI is an active partner in professional development of new teachers of students with visual impairments and certified orientation and mobility specialists. TSBVI manages a comprehensive mentor program, with training and numerous Mentor Centers at the TSBVI campus, resources to support recruitment and retention of staff, and ongoing collaboration with university training programs.

- TSBVI expertise is well regarded: Staff were requested to present not only in Texas but across the nation and internationally this past year, with sessions presented via webconferencing or in person with participants in New Mexico, Missouri, New York, Washington, South Dakota and Mississippi as well as in Canada, Croatia, and Germany.

- Families have a long term impact on the outcome of their children with disabilities’ educational programs. In collaboration with the Educational Service Centers and the Division of Blind Services, TSBVI offered a 4-weekend personal family leadership training series for families of children with deafblindness and/or visual impairments in the central Texas area.
• This past year the TX Deafblind Project again collaborated with the Southeast Regional Deafblind Projects to facilitate a Teen Transition Institute and support a Texas family to attend. This partnership allows families and young adults to meet important new mentors from within this low prevalence population and develops new teen leaders in the deafblindness field.

• The Deafblind Project has collaborated with ESC 4 and two RDSPD programs in the Houston area to pilot a new training project to develop and recognize specialized teachers of students who are deafblind.

• The National Consortium in Deaf-Blindness developed recommendations on the use of interveners for students with deafblindness this past year that was presented to the Office of Special Education Programs. The Texas Deafblind Project staff actively participated in this national initiative and continues to help develop projects derived from this report.

• The TSBVI website continues to provide valuable information and support to people across the globe. In 2011-2012 there were over 1.8 million visitors, with over 5.4 million page views, to the web site from more than 200 countries. The site is one of the primary locations for VI information in Spanish, as the listing of countries accessing www.tsbvi.edu documents shows.
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR 2011-2012 FISCAL YEAR

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

Outreach Program Survey Responses from Parents and Local School Districts

Outreach Workshops

Incredible opportunity for parents as well as specialists and districts to come together and take a walk in our dual sensory impaired child’s life.

I found this training to be very helpful. I came with the intervener in the classroom and other team members and we learned a lot. In just a week’s time we have already implemented many things we learned.

The Outreach specialist and his team did a great job. As a parent I learned a great deal during the one day I attended. The facility is exceptional. Loved it. Great venue and wonderful people.

Thank you for the well thought out and executed interactive workshop. I gained lots of knowledge about writing, TEKS and the STAAR. The scoring rubrics are great tools. Great opportunities to share ideas with professionals.

The Outreach specialists are excellent presenters – very good teachers and complement each other relaying personal comments, stories and information – appreciate their truthful approach.
to utilizing bonding and relaxation techniques. Thank you for the videos and all the practice sessions and opportunities for feedback.

This is one of the best workshops I’ve attended in a while! We were actually learning the entire time. I feel like I walked away with new resources I can use right away.

This was my first conference and it won’t be my last. I have learned a lot and got to meet other parents and families that are going through the same thing as me. I had a great experience and enjoyed hearing everyone’s thoughts.

As a Dad I found this workshop very informative if not even enlightening for me and my wife.

Thank you this has been a wonderful building block for my child’s future success and mine as a parent advocating for my son. We are very grateful for this valuable opportunity. Meeting other parents and professionals has been so inspiring and thought provoking. Thank you again so much and we look forward to future involvement with TSBVI.

Everything in the presentation was great, information I wish I had years ago. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! This information give me hope for my son and many of the other low vision friends and family that we know.

Onsite visits

Very pleased with our visit with the Outreach consultant. Her approach was exactly what was needed. Very pleased with her knowledge, professional help and information.

The consultant was outstanding. Her consultation gave me hope that my son can have a successful future!

The consultants always bring so much knowledge with them to assist families and staff with current VI issues in the classroom. We are always very pleased and grateful for the service they provide.

Having the instructional tools we discussed in the meeting will help develop math skills by allowing material to be presented in a new and meaningful way that meets the need of the learner.

The Outreach consultant was very knowledgeable – truly helpful. There was great improvement in our knowledge and skills. We are using more braille and tactile and the student is doing wonderfully with them. I couldn’t have asked for more. She did a tremendous job.

Student and families as well as teachers, use the training from the Outreach consultant on a daily basis. The technology learned has enabled the student to expand her world and reach out to others. She has gained confidence and independence and uses tools that are appropriate.
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 TVI, the classroom teacher, orientation and mobility specialist and family in the delivery of instruction in the areas of the Core Curriculum and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). ECC programming includes independent living, career education, technology, Braille instruction, orientation and mobility, and low vision. Each guide contains assessment and instructional methodology.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011-2012

- A total of 5,048 publications were sold in fiscal year 2012. This includes print and Braille (4,854), videos (20) and CDs (174).
- Our publication *Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments* was the top seller at 785 copies.
- Almost 500 copies of the *TAPS Orientation and Mobility Curriculum* (166) including the *Assessment & Ongoing Evaluation* (333), and 332 copies the *Learning Media Assessment* publication were sold.
- Over 250 copies of the *Independent Living Assessment and Ongoing Evaluation* and 170 EVALS publications were sold.
- The third edition of *TAPS*, our O & M Curriculum guide, has been completed and is currently being marketed to the public.
- A curriculum for the EXIT* program is in development. Six of the ten modules have been completed.
- The *Career Education Handbook* is being updated.
- The curriculum department provides training, in Texas as well as out of state, on the use our publications.
- Curriculum for Practical Academics** Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies is being developed to prepare students for the STAAR End Of Course exams. AGS curriculum products are being used as the basis for some of these courses.
- The Curriculum Coordinator continues to evaluate and refine the performance indicator evaluation tools that guide IEP development and instruction for TSBVI students.
- The Curriculum department continues to provide support to classroom teachers in daily instruction, including the development of standards-based/measurable IEPs and appropriate curriculum.
- The Curriculum Coordinator continues to submit a report to TEA detailing the yearly progress made by our students as determined by our Performance Indicator Evaluations.
- The Curriculum department is continuing to employ TSBVI student workers to bind and package the publications we produce on campus.

*EXIT: students who have received credits for graduation and are working on skills needed for adult life

**Practical Academics: students who are functioning several years below their chronological age
TSBVI’s WEB SITE  www.tsbvi.edu

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 2011-2012 there were over 1.8 million visitors, with over 5.4 million page views, to the web site from more than 200 countries including Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada, Columbia, Argentina, China, Venezuela, India, and Australia.

The most visited pages were on central auditory processing disorders, sensory integrative dysfunction in young children, Preschool Children with Visual Impairments, The Sense of Smell: A Powerful Sense, teaching math to visually impaired students, downloadable braille materials, and teaching strategies.

The largest number of file downloads included the Outreach Services Catalog, the Math Continuum, Guidelines for Teaching Students with Visual Impairments, and See/Hear newsletter in English and Spanish.

BOND PROJECTS AND CONSTRUCTION DURING 2011-2012

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 began 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 the campus.

In the spring of 2008 construction was completed on a residential facility in the Pecan Grove, the Elementary Residential Complex and a new four-unit independent living (learning lab) facility. They were designed to facilitate learning for our students, provide a homelike environment, maintain a high level of security and provide the school and State with buildings that can be maintained for many years.

In 2009, work began on an additional seven residential facilities. Three of them were completed in 2009 for the fall semester and four were completed in early 2010. The units have been modified to include a number of new features including larger bedrooms, a new student study room and a dorm manager’s office. Operations-wise, the new facilities include more hard-floor surfaces than in the original, a simplified roof design and insta-heat hot water heaters.

The main instructional building, cafeteria, student activity center were completed in August 2010 and school started in these new buildings. The fine arts and pool were completed in the spring of 2011.
In August of 2009, the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) sought proposals for the career education, outreach, business/IT facilities and campus infrastructure utilities. In October, the TFC commissioners approved the recommended general contractor. The new business/IT building was completed in July 2010 and the Outreach/Conference Center was completed in October. The career education building was completed in June of 2012.

A contract for a new elementary school, gymnasium, track, greenhouse, warehouse/operations building, road, parking lots and utilities was signed in August 2010. The new warehouse/operation building was completed in October of 2011. The elementary school was completed in June of 2012. The gymnasium, greenhouse, horticulture/animal husbandry class room and track are scheduled for completion in late 2012 or early 2013.

The school has had multiple projects from multiple phases of the bond program occurring simultaneously and some of the earlier project are just now being completed. The reason for these delays was based on the ability to demolish buildings that were in use and a new space to move classes into new building under construction.

As we finish the major construction of building and facilities we now have the task of complete all those items which are needed to complete the project such as fencing, gates, coordinating life safety equipment, video surveillance equipment, landscaping, public address systems, networking, cabling, signage and the list goes on and on. The commissioning process really never ends as we find things that can be improved upon as we put into place the teaching of our students and their needs.

Keeping students and staff safe on campus and walking around construction zones has been very challenging but to date there have been no major incidents. Specific pedestrian routes were established to allow staff and students access to facilities. On occasion, routes change from day to day to allow vital construction to move forward. Students have received excellent training from staff to assure they follow the safe travel routes.
Volunteer Program 2011-2012

TSBVI has an active volunteer program with participation by many members of the Austin community both individually and in groups. TSBVI works with community groups who want to perform a community service and chooses to do so at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. During the 2011-12 school year, we experienced several wonderful group projects that benefited the students.

♦ 7th grade students from Hyde Park Middle School spent the morning of their Day of Service painting and doing maintenance on the TSBVI elementary riding playground.

♦ The Junior League of Austin recorded and scanned several hundred books for the library.

♦ Members of Delta Gamma Fraternity at University of Texas made tactile symbols, hosted a Thanksgiving dinner and a Valentine’s party for the students at their sorority house, and helped the students dress for the prom. Delta Gamma members at the University of North Texas made 135 Valentine’s Day cards for the students and several Delta Gamma chapters collect and send “box tops for education.”

♦ TSBVI participated in the United Way Day of Caring for two days in April in which volunteers from HEB and National Instruments worked on a brush clearing and beautification project.

♦ Gardeners from Austin Community Gardens work with TSBVI students in the garden.

♦ Volunteers pitched in and helped serve lunch to families and provided childcare at the 2011 Parent Weekend event.

♦ Future physical education teachers volunteered in the PE department, gaining valuable experience in working with visually impaired and mobility impaired students.

♦ Many bicycle riders from the community joined the students each Monday evening in early fall and late spring on the “Lend Your Legs” bicycle ride.

The individual volunteer program involves members of the community who choose to spend some time out of their personal lives to provide a service to students and staff at TSBVI. University of Texas students, people who live in the area around the school, and others who just have a desire to serve are among those who volunteer here each semester. Volunteers are placed as tutors or staff helpers in specific school or after school classes for at least an hour a week. Students and staff benefit from the program by getting help, often one-on-one, from a member of the Austin community. Volunteers benefit from getting to know our students and providing an appreciated service to the School.

During the 2011-12 school year 105 TSBVI volunteers logged in over 2730 hours working at TSBVI. Independent Sector, a leadership forum for non-profits, estimates the dollar value of volunteer time in 2011 as $21.79 per hour; therefore TSBVI benefited from over $59,000 worth of community volunteer time!
**TSBVI Major Donors 2011-2012**

$25,000
Professional Contract Services, Inc.

**Over $5,000**
Junior League of Austin
Delta Gamma Fraternity, University of Texas
Jim Durkel Memorial Fund (various donors)

$1,000 to $5,000
Point Venture Lions Club
Tailorbyrd Sanctuary Brands LLC

$500 to $1,000
Austin Downtown Lions Club
All Blind Children of Texas
St. Edward’s University
Xerox Corporation
Dallas Association for the Blind
Austin Council of the Blind
Memorial to Velia Valdez (various donors)
Brenda Boland Memorial Scholarship Fund (Schulz family)
Carolyn Myers
Carolyn Guthrie

**Items of Value**
United States Tennis Association (adapted tennis equipment)
Janet & Herman Harwell (Four-Wheel Surrey)
Marcus Cardwell (40 column braille display)
Debbie Louder (four violins)
University of Texas (80 character refreshable braille display)

**CONCLUSION**

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has a reputation second to none, and stays that way through a process of continuous improvement and innovation in all of its programs. The 2011-2012 school year was not without significant challenges due to construction, the implementation of new data management systems and other factors common to all schools. But in many important ways, TSBVI is not like other schools at all. We enroll students from all over the state and provide them with up to 12 hours a day of instruction. We provide residential and health services Sunday through Thursday nights, and then via buses, vans and planes send them home on Friday afternoon. On Sunday afternoon the job of returning them to campus starts the process all over again. Meanwhile, our Statewide Outreach Technical Assistance staff are planning and starting their weekly travels to every community in the state where one or more of the 9,000 students reside, or they are preparing video training broadcasts reaching an even broader audience from our Austin campus studio. And those buses and vans going around the state, they are also picking up and returning home students from the ISDs coming into our short term programs. In summary, 2011-2012 managed to reach in some important way every student with a visual impairment in the state, as well as their families and teachers.