

AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

For the Fiscal Years 2013-2017 Period

by

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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Michelle Goodwin, Vice President	2013	Fort Worth
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July 1, 2012

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Governor Rick Perry's Vision for Texas *

Over the last year, families across this state and nation have tightened their belts in response to the economic challenges. Government should be no exception. As we begin this next round in our strategic planning process, we must critically reexamine the role of state government by identifying the core programs and activities necessary for the long-term economic health of our state, while eliminating outdated and inefficient functions. We must set clear priorities that will help maintain our position as a national leader now and in the future by:

- ◆ Ensuring the economic competitiveness of our state by adhering to principles of fiscal discipline, setting clear budget priorities, living within our means, and limiting the growth of government;
- ◆ Investing in critical water, energy, and transportation infrastructure needs to meet the demands of our rapidly growing state;
- ◆ Ensuring excellence and accountability in public schools and institutions of higher education as we invest in the future of this state and ensure Texans are prepared to compete in the global marketplace;
- ◆ Defending Texans by safeguarding our neighborhoods and protecting our international border; and
- ◆ Increasing transparency and efficiency at all levels of government to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse, ensuring that Texas taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money to keep our economy and our families strong.

The Mission of Texas State Government *



Texas State Government must be limited, efficient, and completely accountable. It should foster opportunity and economic prosperity, focus on critical priorities, and support the creation of strong family environments for our children. The stewards of the public trust must be men and women who administer state government in a fair, just, and responsible manner. To honor the public trust, state officials must seek new and innovative ways to meet state government priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

Aim high ...we are not here to achieve inconsequential things!

The Philosophy of Texas State Government *

The task before all state public servants is to govern in a manner worthy of this great state. We are a great enterprise, and as an enterprise we will promote the following core principles.

- First and foremost, Texas matters most. This is the overarching, guiding principle by which we will make decisions. Our state, and its future, is more important than party, politics or individual recognition.
- Government should be limited in size and mission, but it must be highly effective in performing the tasks it undertakes.
- Decisions affecting individual Texans, in most instances, are best made by those individuals, their families, and the local governments closest to their communities.

* From *Strengthening our Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government*, March 2012 developed by Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

- Competition is the greatest incentive for achievement and excellence. It inspires ingenuity and requires individuals to set their sights high. And just as competition inspires excellence, a sense of personal responsibility drives individual citizens to do more for their future, and the future of those they love.
- Public administration must be open and honest, pursuing the high road rather than the expedient course. We must be accountable to taxpayers for our actions.
- State government has a responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars by eliminating waste and abuse, and providing efficient and honest government.
- Finally, state government should be humble, recognizing that all its power and authority is granted to it by the people of Texas, and those who make decisions wielding the power of the state should exercise their authority cautiously and fairly.

State Government Goal and Benchmarks Relevant to TSBVI

State Government Priority Goal for Education in Public Schools

★ Academic Students ★

To ensure that all students in the public education system acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsible and independent Texans by:

- ◇ Ensuring students graduate from high school and have the skills necessary to pursue any option including attending a university, a two-year institution, other post-secondary training, or enter the workforce;
- ◇ Ensuring students learn English, math, science and social studies skills at the appropriate grade level through graduation; and
- ◇ Demonstrate exemplary performance in foundation subjects.

* From *Strengthening Our Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government*, March 2012, developed by Governor Rick Perry and the Texas Legislative Budget Board.

State Education Benchmarks for Public Schools Adapted by TSBVI

- * Percent of students who achieve moderate or higher progress in the foundation subjects of reading-language arts, math, social studies, science, and in the expanded core curriculum for visually impaired learners: independent living, orientation and mobility, social skills, vocational skills, and technology
- * Percent of students from third grade forward who achieve moderate or higher progress in reading and math, and other general curriculum subjects that might be included in each student's individualized education program (IEP)
- * High school graduation rate
- * Percent of recent high school graduates enrolled at a Texas college or university
- * Percent of high school graduates receiving other post-secondary training
- * Percent of students who demonstrate satisfactory performance on the annual state assessments

VISION OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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 productive and fulfilling lives.

MISSION OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

- ❖ 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.

EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Overview of Agency Scope and Functions

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is established as part of the public education system to serve as a special school in the continuum of statewide alternative placements for students who have a visual impairment. The School operates a regular school year program for students with serious vision loss who need specialized and intensive services related to their visual impairments. The School also conducts supplemental educational programs in summer sessions and short-term programs. The School also serves as a statewide training and materials resource to parents and to the professionals who serve these children.

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) has adopted the following Strategic Goals to accomplish its legislatively assigned mission:

STRATEGIC GOALS: TSBVI will be a leader in providing statewide services and resources:

- A. Students with visual impairments will demonstrate knowledge and skills to lead vocationally, personally and socially satisfying lives.
- B. Students with visual impairments will have access to quality education based on appropriate assessment, curriculum and instruction.
- C. Students with visual impairments will receive a quality education from qualified professionals and trained staff.
- D. Parents of blind and visually impaired students will have a thorough understanding of the impact of their child’s visual impairment and instruction in specialized skills needed to maximize learning.
- E. Partnerships will be developed so that students with visual impairments have appropriate available quality services.
- F. TSBVI programs and departments will receive high quality products and services from qualified, trained TSBVI administrative and support staff to accomplish the mission of the School.
- G. Students and staff will learn and work in a quality state-of-the-art campus.

◆ *Statutory Basis* ◆

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.021 - 30.024

These sections of code establish the purposes of the School, its governance by a nine-member board, and specific provisions related to the School’s superintendent and its employees.

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.025

This section establishes the funding sources for the School, including funds appropriated by the Legislature, allocated by the Texas Education Agency, contracts, gifts, and the Foundation School Program.

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.003

This section requires each school district that has students enrolled in the regular school year at the School to share in the cost of the students’ educa-

tion based on each district’s total student enrollment and its maintenance and debt service taxes.

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE §30.004

Local school districts are required to provide information about the services available from the School to the families of students who are blind or seriously visually disabled.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

EDUCATION ACT (I.D.E.A.): 20 U.S.C. §1400 ff; 34 C.F.R. §300 ff

This federal law and its accompanying regulations require the provision of a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to all children with disabilities in accord with a written “Individual Education Plan” for each student. It also provides for parent participation in this process and guarantees certain due process rights to

the student and to the family of a student with a disability.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The School is required to meet the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act. This law emphasizes student achievement, assures that teachers are highly qualified, and promotes parent involvement in their child’s education.

19 TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE - EDUCATION. T.A.C. §89.1085

This particular section of Administrative Code for Education (Commissioner’s Rules) specifies the functions and admission procedures for the School. It emphasizes the ongoing responsibilities of the students’ local school districts to plan for students return to their local school, family, and community.

◆Historical Perspective◆

- 1856 The School was established by the Texas Legislature as the Blind Asylum. The first classes met at the residence of Mr. W. L. Hill who leased the premises for the purpose of establishing a school for the blind.
- 1858 The School moved to its first real campus known today as the “Little Campus” in the Nowotny Building of the University of Texas - Austin. The School was later renamed the “Texas Institution for the Blind”.
- 1865 The School closed for one year because of political upheaval. General Custer and his men occupied the campus facilities during this time.
- 1887 The Institute for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Colored Youth was established on Bull Creek Road in Austin.
- 1915 The School’s name was changed to the Texas School for the Blind.

- 1917 The School moved to its present 45-acre campus on West 45th Street in Austin.
 - 1965 The Texas Blind, Deaf & Orphan School for African-American students was integrated into the Texas School for the Blind.
 - 1972 A special program for deafblind children was initiated in response to the needs of children affected by a statewide outbreak of rubella. The program was begun at a separate campus, formerly the Confederate Widows’ Mansion, on West 38th in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Austin.
 - 1975 The Texas Legislature enacted H.B. 1673 adding statewide responsibilities to the School’s enabling statutes and mission. Governance of the School was transferred from the Texas Education Agency to a subcommittee of the Texas State Board of Education.
- U.S. Congress enacted the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, significantly impacting the provision of special education services to children, guaranteeing a free, appropriate public education to all handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. One effect on the School was an increase in the number of children with multiple disabilities requesting the services of this school.
- 1981 The governance of the school was transferred to a separate nine-member school board whose members are appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate.
 - 1982 The Deafblind program moved onto the main campus of the School.
 - 1989 The School was given its current name, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in order to reflect more accurately the population it serves.



- 1990 The School consolidated and expanded its outreach services into a separate division.
- 1994 Summer school programs were expanded to include multiple sessions with varying focuses and durations in response to needs expressed by the parents and educators of visually impaired children in public schools.
- 2000 The School initiated a series of new short-term programs during the regular school year. Students who attend their local public school came to TSBVI for week-long and weekend programs to acquire skills in living independently and using specialized computer technology.
- 2002 A post-secondary program for graduates of public schools was initiated in collaboration with the Texas Commission for the Blind (now the Division of Blind Services within the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services). The program focused on preparation for independent living, work, and higher education.

TSBVI collaborated with Stephen F. Austin University and Texas Tech University to initiate a Teacher Preparation Consortium producing future teachers of blind and visually impaired students in Texas.
- 2005 The 79th Legislature appropriated \$36 million for major renovations of the School's aged buildings.
- 2007 The 80th Legislature appropriated \$68 million dollars to renovate and replace the remaining School's facilities.
- 2009 Students moved into new dormitories replacing almost century-old buildings.
- 2010 Major phases of school construction will be completed: main school building, library, auditorium, cafeteria, dormitories,

recreation center, health center, and swimming pool. A new facility for the Outreach program, business office, and a technology center will be completed on-time and on-budget.

- 2012 A new elementary school and career education facility will open with the start of the 2012-2013 school year. Construction on a new gym is now in progress. This will complete all major construction of new facilities.

◆Affected Populations◆

- * Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind children and youth of school age who are Texas residents;
- * Secondary and elementary school teachers and other professionals throughout Texas in either regular or special education who serve students with blindness and severe visual impairment;
- * Parents of children with a visual impairment, including children with additional disabilities;
- * State and local agencies serving children with a visual impairment. (Examples: Local school districts and special education cooperatives, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Regional Education Service Centers).

◆Main Functions: Direct and Outreach Services◆

- * 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 school 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 with visual impairments, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies. These services include training, consultation, technical assistance, and developing and disseminating materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology.
- * To provide information about instructional resources and materials, including educational technology, related to teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments.
- * To lend educational and technological materials for student use to school districts and regional education service centers.
- * To partner with Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin University in preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired.
- * To cooperate with public and private agencies and organizations serving students and other persons with visual impairments in the planning, development, and implementation of effective educational and rehabilitative service delivery systems.
- * To serve as leaders in the use of distance learning for teachers, parents, and students.

◆Public’s Perception◆

To the state’s educational system, we are:

- * a valuable educational resource for direct services to children with blindness and visual impairment;
- * a partner with local school districts and regional education service centers, building local capacity to serve students with visual impairments in their home communities;
- * a center of information and training for the education of students with visual impairments;

- * a leader in the use of technology, distance learning, and curriculum development; including the use of Web-based information systems for data collection, analysis, and dissemination;
- * through publications and a website, a source of expert information for all teachers, administrators, and parents in the state;
- * a source of expert consultation regarding the educational needs of individual children;
- * a significant option within the legally required array of services for blind students;
- * an opportunity for student teachers and interns to acquire the skills necessary to become effective teachers, therapists, social workers, orientation and mobility instructors, and other professionals knowledgeable in the field of visual impairment and blindness.

To blind and visually impaired youth, we are:

- * a school staffed and equipped to meet their specific needs related to their visual impairment;
- * an opportunity to learn the intellectual, social, independent living, and vocational skills necessary to become independent and effective citizens.
- * a source for expertise in learning for all students statewide.

To parents of blind children and youth, we are:

- * a source of information about the impact of vision loss on learning, and the potential educational needs of students because of vision loss;
- * a source of assistance and training in how to enhance the life opportunities for their children
- * a safe and caring environment which provides their children with their best chance for



acquiring the skills necessary to live as full a life as possible.

- * a source for training in how to advocate for their children.

To the general public, we are:

- * a source of information on blindness and teaching children with visual disabilities;
- * a source of information on where to obtain services related to visual loss;
- * a source of information about the capabilities and needs of blind and visually impaired persons;
- * a well-established campus which does “good things” for blind children in a caring and non-institutional way; a good neighbor.

Organizational Aspects

◆Size and Composition of Workforce◆

The staff of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is comprised of 376.17 FTEs including budgeted full- and part-time employees and substitute staff. Of these, 326 are classified and one, the Superintendent, is line item exempt. The remaining are teachers, principals, counselors, and other educational positions that, by statute (Texas Education Code 30.024(b)(1)), are paid in accordance with Austin Independent School District pay scales for comparable positions.

Among the classified positions, the single largest staff group (136 positions) consists of residential instructors. Classified as Resident Specialists, these are the staff who provide care, instruction, and supervision of students in their non-school hours. Other classified positions range from nurses to maintenance mechanics, from accountants to information technology specialists. The campus-based workforce is a small community with nearly every occupational field represented.

The ethnic composition of the regular staff is as follows: White – 74%; Black – 10%; Hispanic – 13%; and other minorities – less than 3%. Women are 67% of the work force.

◆Organizational Structure and Processes◆

Governance. The School is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Board is composed of three members who are blind or visually impaired, at least one of whom has received educational services related to the blindness or visual impairment; three members who are working or have worked as professionals in the field of delivering services to persons who are blind or visually impaired; and three members, each of whom is the parent of a child who is blind or visually impaired, and at least one of whom is the parent of a child who, at the time of the parent’s appointment, is receiving educational services related to the blindness or visual impairment.

Executive Administration. The Board of Trustees appoints the Superintendent as the chief administrative officer of the School. The Superintendent administers all the School’s programs and services through the School’s instructional Comprehensive and Special Programs, the Outreach Program, and central administration.

Instructional Programs – Comprehensive. The Principal for Comprehensive Programs supervises the instructional and residential programs for students enrolled in the regular school year program. This program contains six components:

- Academics** – for students who are functioning within two years of their grade level;
- Elementary Concepts** – for students 6-12 years of age who may have additional impairments;
- Practical Academics** – for students 12 years of age and older who are functioning more than two years below their chronological age, with

at least kindergarten equivalent reading, writing and math skills;

Basic Skills – for students ages 6-22 who have visual impairment combined with other disabilities, who have difficulty generalizing skills to new situations, and who learn best with the support of consistent routines and meaningful, functional activities;

EXIT (Experiences in Transition) – for Practical Academic students ages 18-22 who need programming that focuses on transitioning young adults from school to adulthood, in an environment that more closely replicates the adult environment in which they will be living;

Post Secondary – for students who have graduated from public school after completing the state’s regular curriculum and are in need of additional academic, independent living and work-related skills.

The Principal directs schoolwide functions related to admissions, student data management, registration, Medicaid reimbursement, and the Health Center.

Instructional Programs – Special Programs.

The Principal for Special Programs supervises all summer programs and develops and provides short-term programs during the school year for blind and visually impaired children enrolled in Texas public schools. 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 a variety of summer programs.

Short-term Programs includes 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 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.

Outreach Administration. The Director of Outreach coordinates statewide services that are provided to parents and professionals through training, consultation, and technical assistance.

Central Administration. The Director of Human Resources oversees personnel issues and agency-wide staff development. The Administrator for Business, Operations and Technology is responsible for managing fiscal resources, the physical plant, and administrative technology.

Management Style. The management style of the School is most accurately characterized as participative. The School has adopted a “site-based decision making” model for planning, implementing, and evaluating its strategic planning and continuous improvement. All stakeholders are involved in this process through the school wide Instructional Planning Council, annual surveys, ongoing contacts with regional education service centers and related agencies, and various consumer and advisory councils, including a student council.

Policy-Making. Policies are established by the School’s Board with assistance by an educational policy service provided through the Texas Association of School Boards. This service allows the School to consider the applicability of legally based and model school policies as developed by legal and educational policy experts, then adapt and adopt those that are appropriate.

◆ *Geographical Location of Agency and Service Populations* ◆

The School has a single location in Austin that serves students from throughout Texas. Student enrollment in regular year programs, special programs and summer programs represents the entire geography of Texas. Approximately 60% of TSBVI's students are referred from the larger metropolitan areas along the IH-35 and IH-10 corridors; the others are referred from smaller school districts throughout the State.

Outreach services are provided on a statewide basis by linking with the regional Education Service Centers. In this way TSBVI provides services that match regional needs identified through the Educational Service Centers, including the specific needs of Texas counties in east Texas and along the upper and lower Rio Grande valleys.

◆ *Human Resources Strengths and Weaknesses* ◆

Staff Quality. We continue to believe that our greatest human resource strength is a staff that is deeply committed to a high quality, individualized education for visually impaired students. The professional staff of the School represents an unequalled concentration of knowledge, skill, and expertise in the field of education of the visually impaired. Although special education teachers in general and teachers of the visually impaired in particular are in great demand, TSBVI has been relatively successful in attracting professional staff, in part, we believe, because of the reputation of existing staff. Our strength in attracting qualified staff is more important than ever due to the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act that students receive instruction from "highly qualified" teachers.

Paraprofessionals, including teacher aides, job coaches, and residential instructors, are very important to student learning. Students spend more than half of their hours at the School participating in the residential program. The

School continues to face challenges in recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals due in large measure to low salaries, but in recent years the compensation for the residential instructor series has been bolstered due to an Exceptional Item Request approved by the Legislature in fiscal year 2009. The School is currently reviewing compensation strategies for other groups of employees as well.

The problem of recruiting and retaining well-qualified employees applies to other groups of employees, particularly nurses, office staff, technology staff, and support staff in skilled trades such as maintenance workers, electricians, plumbers, and similar groups.

Highly Qualified Teachers. We have been successful in meeting the challenge of employing adequate numbers of teachers certified in the education of visually impaired (VI) students by building strong relationships with the universities in the state that prepare students to become teachers of the visually impaired, particularly Texas Tech and Stephen F. Austin universities. However, the need for additional teachers of visually impaired students (TVI's) will continue to grow. In addition to need based on expected student growth, it is anticipated that at least 14% of VI professionals will be leaving the field within the next three years.

Staff Development. We have both strengths and weaknesses in the area of staff development. We provide regular training in basic and required areas such as New Employee Orientation, EEO, CPR with AED, defensive driving, first aid, blood-borne pathogens, and other safety areas, but TSBVI serves a complex student body requiring the school to dedicate much time and resources to staff training. A special focus of staff development efforts at TSBVI is in the area of behavior management. Our direct care staff receive two full days of Mandt training in relational, conceptual, and technical skills in behavior support at or near the beginning of their employment and annually have a half day of review. We have also distilled

the statewide training (Texas Behavior Support Initiative) into a two and one-half hour training that is applicable to our population of students. We are also continuing to provide a yearlong training program in Foundations in Visual Impairments to paraprofessional and professional staff who are not certified teachers of the visually impaired.

The instructional and residential programs provide staff development training throughout the school year related to curriculum and instructional methods aimed at improving student learning.

A significant limitation in the area of staff development is the fact that we have only one full-time position assigned to this function, and that position is also responsible for coordinating all training and documentation, training staff, administrative duties of scheduling and multimedia production, tracking employee certifications, and a variety of staff and community involvement activities. It is often necessary to call on the skills of staff who are not primarily trainers in order to expand the offerings of staff development.

One of the most critical goals in the area of staff development is in utilizing technology to a greater extent to develop and deliver video conferencing and computer-based training, including webcasts, online training, and video vignettes. We are currently using intranet-based training for the two-year refresher training on EEO and sexual harassment, but most of the School's high tech training options are available through our Outreach program to educators around the state rather than being aimed at our own staff.

To accomplish this goal, we must devote substantial resources to make the initial investment necessary to eventually expand the scope of our training through technology. Upgrading and expanding the training offered to staff will ensure we will reach larger audiences in a more effective and convenient manner than traditional instructor-led training.

Workforce Diversity. Attracting a culturally diverse workforce at professional and administrative levels continues to be a challenge for TSBVI. A major difficulty in this area is that the largest subgroup of our professional staff is made up of teachers of the visually impaired. The VI teaching certification is also the credential required for most of the high level administrative positions, yet it is known that there is a very small number of minorities in Texas who hold this credential. For this reason, recruiting VI professionals is often challenging. To combat this problem, we are actively involved in partnerships with the universities in Texas that offer the VI teaching credential, which will have the effect of making VI certification accessible to a larger and more diverse segment of the population. Additionally, a diversity initiative committee was established in 2009 with the goal of increasing diversity at TSBVI, particularly in professional positions. The committee is focused on a two-pronged recruitment strategy that seeks to increase diversity by raising awareness internally and externally. Internally, TSBVI aims to raise awareness of the visual impairment teaching field as well as the orientation and mobility field with existing paraprofessional staff by posting flyers on educational assistance, scheduling informal discussions, and offering mentoring opportunities. Also, since 2009, TSBVI has scheduled cultural sensitivity training for all employees on an annual basis. Externally, the following proactive efforts are aimed at attracting a more ethnically diverse population to the profession: Attending job fairs at colleges and universities with predominately large minority populations; producing recruitment brochures and other marketing materials; arranging speakers to make presentations in college classes; posting job vacancies on the Minority Faculty Applicant Database; meeting with the University of Texas to talk about volunteer opportunities; revamping the internet to use as a marketing tool for recruiting purposes; offering one-week internships three times a year to students at predominately minority colleges to generate interest in the visual impairment career field.

Compensation. Despite budgetary constraints, we do have the responsibility for administering salary matters in the most equitable way possible. To that end, we have given budgetary priority to continuing to fund previously established career progression programs. We were also able to award merit increases on a limited basis this fiscal year as well as equity adjustments to residential staff. Human Resources is exploring ways to further improve compensation, including further development of career ladders tied to education advancement and training completion and using both merit raises and equity adjustments to elevate salaries within pay groups.

Turnover, Retirement, and Succession Planning. Our turnover rate for fiscal year 2011 as reported by the State Auditor's Office was 17.5%, including interagency transfers, compared to 16.8% turnover statewide, excluding interagency transfers. TSBVI's prior fiscal year's rate was 18.7% for FY 2010.

Figures from fiscal year 2012 thus far reveal that retirements have decreased since last year. Compared to 10 retirements in fiscal year 2011, we have only four retirements this fiscal year so far. Retirement-related attrition is a concern because many of our retirees have returned to work but will terminate permanently in the next five to ten years. As a result, succession planning and documentation of institutional knowledge remain high priorities. These issues are discussed more thoroughly in Appendix E., Strategic Staffing Analysis and Workforce Plan.

Strength of Policy. TSBVI is fortunate to have as a resource the policy reference service provided by the Texas Association of School Boards. The material from this service provides the framework of human resources policies applicable in a school setting. We are then able to customize the policies by adding applicable provisions for state employees and provisions reflecting the decisions of TSBVI's board and administration.

◆*Capital Asset Strengths, Weaknesses and Capital Improvement Needs*◆

Facilities, Furniture, and Equipment

The primary capital strength of the School is its campus and the major building construction project currently underway.

The School has a 45-acre campus centrally located in Austin that provides students with many opportunities to develop skills necessary to work and live in a community. The TSBVI campus consists of twenty nine structures located on approximately forty-five acres of land owned and maintained by the School. The buildings range in size from 1,000 square feet to 71,000 square feet for a total of 370,000 square feet. There are classrooms, student housing, independent living facilities, gymnasiums, a natatorium, an auditorium, a library, a health center, administrative offices, food preparation, cafeteria facilities and operations/warehouse facility.

The School has developed a comprehensive Master Facilities Plan in collaboration with the Texas Facilities Commission to guide this major capital project. The school is currently replacing all building built between 1916 and 1986 except for three: a two-bedroom cottage, the superintendent's residence and a two story operations building. The project is 90% complete.

The school's primary capital weakness was a lack of quality buildings, furnishings and equipment that have now been replaced.

Vehicles

TSBVI owns, operates, and maintains more than 26 vehicles, 25 of which are buses or vans used to transport students in the educational and residential programs. The other vehicle is used by maintenance, the warehouse, and food services. The School has a long-range plan for the replacement of vehicles that complies with the

guidelines of the State Fleet Management Program.

The School's vans and school busses accrue high mileage due to transporting students to and from their homes on weekends and holidays, and to and from students' work and learning sites in the community. Although fuel is not a capital cost, one cannot consider vehicles without being mindful of the rapidly increasing fuel costs that will be of budgetary concern in the coming biennium.

Instructional Technology and Equipment

Capital investments are necessary to provide access to students for electronic and other assistive technology designed specifically for people with visual impairments if they are to have an opportunity to succeed at school and on the job, and are to acquire the knowledge and skills to become responsible and independent Texans. The specialized technology and equipment enables our students to enjoy nearly the same access to information as their sighted peers and family members. The School must continue to acquire new computers, software, and electronic devices to ensure that students have access to instructional materials, the internet, auditory and braille media, and general information. Examples include portable electronic braille devices with speech and computer output; communication devices for children with multiple disabilities, deaf blindness, speech impairments, and other mental or physical disabilities; and closed-circuit television (CCTV) setups that enable low vision students to view regular print, pictures, and other items enlarged on a video monitor.

The School maintains a loan program to provide electronic technology and software to students in local schools as part of the "Technology Loan Program" operated by TSBVI. The 80th Legislature (2007) appropriated critically needed funds for instructional technology needed by blind

and visually impaired students. Budget reductions in the current biennium resulted in the loss of nearly half of the 2007 allocation.

Technology Staff Development and Distance Education

Additional capital expenditures are needed to meet the pressing need for staff training to address specific skill areas required for deployment of adaptive technologies in classroom and in residential instruction. Resources are also needed to ensure that there is adequate training for administrative, and support staff in the use of technology.

The School will allocate capital resources to support distance education capacity to enhance the learning of children with visual impairments throughout Texas. The vast majority of the nearly 9,000 visually impaired children of Texas are served indirectly by the School by supporting them and their teachers and other VI professionals in their home school districts. Distance learning technologies allow the school to provide valuable information about curriculum, materials, technology, teaching strategies, and training to VI education professionals, parents, school districts, and agencies. The Outreach department continues to exploit every means possible to educate professionals and provide services to support local district instructional programs. Such technology can provide information, training, and follow-up, and also dramatically reduce the time and associated costs of travel making service delivery much more efficient. Distance education for the students, teachers, and related professionals we serve is very cost effective. The school needs to continually assess, and when appropriate, deploy, new and emerging technologies to be a leader in distance education in meeting the educational needs of our students.

Infrastructure Technology

The network is the most critical component of our technology infrastructure. A modern and robust

network infrastructure is required if TSBVI is to more fully support and exploit the statewide priorities for the 2012-2016 State Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management. The School had an aging network infrastructure that was no longer capable of supporting the school in its mission. This critical weakness is now being remedied by replacing our fiber network infrastructure as part of our ongoing campus renewal project. These updates have provided increased network reliability at reduced costs, and enable us to better meet increasing demands for bandwidth to support educational video and conferencing that were stressing the capacity of the network.

New and updated software is required to support the various functions of the staff and administration in conducting school business. The Human Resources function of TSBVI has long been in need of modern management systems support. The current mix of small scale legacy systems, spreadsheets, and paper is an impediment to efficient and effective operation.

The school has been unable to pursue solutions on its own while awaiting the Project One, Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS), now in development and early deployment stages by the Office of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. The CAPPS system holds the promise of meeting the needs of TSBVI with respect to HR/payroll and financial functions while providing additional transparency and security, and complying with our requirements concerning accessibility. This system would also further the vision and guiding principle of the 2012-2016 State Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management and align well with the statewide priorities laid out in the plan. The problem facing TSBVI is that we have no budget for implementing the CAPPS system and implementation will almost certainly require an exceptional item request to secure the required funding.

The requirements of federal and state government for electronic documents related to school data, accounting, budgeting, and grant applications require ongoing maintenance and upgrades of equipment, of the technical environment, and of software applications. Software applications to manage student data and personnel record keeping have been deployed in planned phases.

There continues to be a pressing need to ensure that deployed software applications are compatible with accessibility applications and hardware used by staff with blindness or visual impairment.

TSBVI needs to continue enhancements of the TSBVI web-site. The school's Web site, www.tsbvi.edu, has been tremendously successful and is considered one of the best resources for parents and professionals involved in the education of the visually impaired. The web site receives more than three million individual visits annually. Many departments, particularly Outreach and Curriculum, use the Web site as a critical element of service delivery. Continued development of the Web site is indicated with expansion of web features to provide information interchange with consumers. TSBVI is currently working with the official Texas government website (www.Texas.gov) to enable the payment gateway so that curriculum can be efficiently and securely ordered over the internet. The recent re-design of the TSBVI website has made it much easier and efficient to manage the large volume of content available on the site.

◆Agency Use of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) ◆

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been making good faith efforts to award purchase contracts to certified HUBs. We are using the automated HUB directory provided by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts as the primary reference list to identify minority and women-owned businesses. On each purchase order over \$5,000 the School requests at least one bid from a minority-owned business and at least

one bid from a woman-owned business. For purchase orders in amounts less than \$5,000, purchases will be made from HUBs, provided that they are able to provide the goods or services required and they provide the best value for the State.

◆ *Key Organizational Events and Areas of Change and Impact on Organization* ◆

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is Texas' most comprehensive source of expertise on the education of children who are blind or visually impaired, including those who are deafblind or have additional disabilities. In fact, TSBVI is nationally and internationally recognized as one of the very best schools of its type in the world. This reputation was achieved because of a key strategic decision made by the school: to serve not only the students enrolled on our campus in a model program, but to share our resources so that every student in the state has an enhanced opportunity to succeed in their education regardless of where they attend school.

During the next biennium TSBVI intends to improve and modernize the delivery of all of its services in order to best meet the needs of our state. Our new, state-of-the-art campus, to be completed in the spring of 2013, marks an obvious opportunity to begin leveraging the programmatic capacities the facilities can provide. In order to place these improvements in context it is important to note how TSBVI carries out its mission within the statewide system. TSBVI has deliberately organized itself to build local capacity in school districts across the state on balance with efforts to develop and maintain a state-of-the-art campus-based program. To do this we:

- ◆ Coordinate and provide funding for the two universities (Texas Tech and Stephen F. Austin) that train teachers from the ISDs to become certified as Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS).

- ◆ Manage the statewide student census used to draw down federal funds for textbooks and specialized materials, and then manage the distribution, circulation and training on the use of these resources.
- ◆ Manage the technology loan library that allows the ISDs to evaluate and train their students in the use of assistive technology so that districts can make informed purchases.
- ◆ Develop, publish and market extensive curricular materials used by all ISDs as well as nationally and internationally. TSBVI is the largest producer of this type of specialized educational materials in the world.
- ◆ Provide daily technical assistance both on-site in the ISDs and through broadcast technologies that promote data-driven, educational best practices.
- ◆ Lead family trainings statewide with partners from DARS and the Regional Education Service Centers so that families are more informed and engaged members of their child's local educational team.
- ◆ Provide multiple, week-long (fall/spring) and summer programs on the TSBVI campus so that students enrolled in their ISDs have opportunities for intensive services that address specialized areas of learning, i.e. technology adapted for the Blind, that helps them succeed back at the local level.
- ◆ Manage the website www.tsbvi.edu that is the most frequently accessed resource on the education of children who are blind or visually impaired in the world.
- ◆ Provide a mentorship program where new teachers from across the state come to TSBVI to observe and learn best practices in this highly specialized area of education.
- ◆ Provide highly specialized and intensive educational services on our Austin campus for students whom, for a variety of reasons, are determined by their local educational team to

need a time-limited enrollment at TSBVI in order to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education as required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Under this array of supports TSBVI has provided great value to Texas, and has played a major leadership role in the development of a statewide system of services to both children and adults with severe visual impairments that is widely recognized in the U.S. as a model of effective practice. The primary partners in this system are TSBVI, the ISDs, the Education Service Centers, DARS/DBS, and the two university teacher training programs. Collaborative efforts by these partners continues to grow every year, and it is fair to say that TSBVI is the most consistent and effective member driving the agenda of continuous statewide improvement.

Both the external and internal assessment of trends and needs are currently driving a major change agenda at TSBVI to ensure that all of the activities mentioned above continue to grow and improve. A key change initiative with the working title of the Service Delivery Model aims to ensure that all three of our instructional program arms (Campus-based K-12; Special Programs—short term and summer; and Statewide Outreach Technical Assistance) are working in unison to address emerging statewide issues. In general, the Service Delivery Model initiative aims to more effectively serve only those students in the K-12 campus program who are most in need of our services; to return them to their ISD's as soon as they are ready to be educated in the less resource-intensive environment of general education, and to support their ISDs and families through outreach training and through the provision of specialized short courses and summer programs so that these students receive additional specialized training.

Among the challenges driving key improvement considerations at TSBVI are:

- The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) with non-disabled peers. TSBVI is giving increased focus to serving only those students in our K-12 program who need a time-limited enrollment on our campus in order to receive a FAPE. Upon enrollment, TSBVI immediately begins a planning process with the ISD educational team to return the student to the ISD—the presumptive LRE—as soon as the student's skills and the ISD's ability to provide a FAPE locally are properly aligned. This differs significantly from the vast majority of state-operated Schools for the Blind in the U.S. that tend to hang on to enrolled students for many years without due diligence on the FAPE and LRE issue. The approach TSBVI is taking is both labor and travel intensive as we try to free our teachers to do on-site visits in the ISD to help them build capacity. The use of substitutes to cover classes for this purpose continues to rise. By efficiently moving students in and out of TSBVI, and then supporting them locally with our outreach services and short-term and summer programs, TSBVI aims to ensure that all Texas students needing our services have an opportunity to access them. Without this movement in and out, TSBVI would soon reach its classroom and residential capacity.
- The state's economy and its impact on school funding appear to be causing the ISDs to not post and fill positions for TVIs and COMS even when caseloads would indicate a need. This is very concerning because students with visual impairments require extensive specialized supports in order to receive an adequate education at the local level. Some estimates indicate that as many as 50% of these highly specialized educators who are employed

have reached retirement age. In its oversight role of the state's two university teacher training programs, TSBVI is carefully monitoring this situation to ensure Texas has an adequate number of new teachers to replace those who may retire or otherwise leave the field. There is reason for concern that some districts may opt to try and enroll students in TSBVI who might be able to succeed at home were there a TVI and COMS. Such enrollments run counter to the FAPE and LRE issues mentioned above. Additionally, this situation puts excessive stress on the capacity of our Statewide Outreach Technical Assistance team as ISDs request our help due to their lack of certified staff. Considerable attention will be directed to helping the ISDs give due consideration to hiring new TVIs via a caseload analysis of their current student population and personnel. A model developed and supported with training by TSBVI for the ISDs named Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired, gives the ISDs tools to conduct this analysis. This is a key activity to ensure that Texas' investment in training new TVIs and COMS meets its goal of having sufficient education specialists to provide a FAPE to all kids in the state.

- Teachers in the ISDs are being given less and less time for training due to budgetary constraints. TSBVI is working diligently on the development of new distance training technologies (web and broadcast) to get training to teachers in a way that is not dependent on travel or on date-and-time specific events. Additionally, these same technologies are going to play a major role in our efforts to prepare ISD's for the return of their students once they are finished at TSBVI. This is a major initiative for which we have limited expertise. We are currently under-resourced in this area, primarily with AV specialists. TSBVI will have to shift

personnel within our current resources or seek funding and/or additional FTE to address this issue.

- TSBVI has reached the point where our data management needs are far exceeding our current capabilities. The school has launched a process to catalog all of our data system needs in our education, administrative and operational arms. On the education side, TSBVI has struggled with off-the-shelf commercial software packages to handle the extensive data we keep on both the general education and special education components of the school. Trying to make these packages meet the specialized nature of TSBVI's work has been extremely labor intensive and only partially success. We are in the process of abandoning the current special education software, and purchasing a new one on the market that is a better fit for us. Data systems to manage student records, medical information and others are in the works now. TSBVI will likely need to explore the purchase of the PeopleSoft system on the human resources side in order to be prepared for what we understand to be the shift at the state level to a new platform. Our Information Resources Director primarily deals with hardware and keeping existing systems operating, and it appears we need a fairly sophisticated data management professional to lead us on the development or informed purchase of databases.

◆*Use and Anticipated Use of Consultants*◆

Included in this section are professional services obtained from external providers. The School makes little or no use of consulting services defined as the service of studying or advising a state agency under a contract that does not involve the traditional relationship of employer and employee.

Board of Trustees. The Board historically contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to provide policy guidance and continuing education for board members.

Outreach Services. Consultants are retained to provide specific training and technical assistance to support Outreach services to local school districts and parents. An example might be the use of a consulting occupational therapist to conduct training for parents and professionals to teach eating and dressing skills to blind children with additional disabilities. Most of these consultants are paid with federal funds specifically earmarked for outreach purposes. The level of consultant use will remain constant in the coming biennium.

Medical Services. The School contracts with local pediatricians to provide diagnosis and treatment for students brought to the School's Health Center in a daily morning clinic. From time-to-time the School also engages consultant services from a psychiatrist and dietician.

Curriculum Development. Occasionally, the Curriculum Department might employ a consultant to help develop instructional methods and materials in a very specialized area of education for blind children. The School primarily uses its own staff for curriculum development, using release time or stipends when possible.

Fiscal Aspects

◆ *Size of Budget and Method of Finance - Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013* ◆

FY 2012 Appn Alloc.	A.1.1	A.1.2	A.1.3	A.1.4	B.1.1	C.1.1	D.1.1	D.1.2	D.1.3	TOTAL
METHOD OF FINANCE	Classroom Instruction	Residential Program	Summer & Short Term	Related & Support	Technical Assistance	Educ. Salary	Central Admin.	Other Support	Facility Constr.	FY 2012
Gen. Rev. Operating										
Regular Appropriation	3,176,777	3,391,900	812,193	2,706,448	809,640	0	1,773,615	1,663,669	0	14,334,242
Total, Gen. Rev. Oper.	3,176,777	3,391,900	812,193	2,706,448	809,640	0	1,773,615	1,663,669	0	14,334,242
G.R. - Capital Budget	(4175)	(4176)	(4174)	(4177)	(4178)			(4173)		
Technology Upgrade								0		0
Instructional Materials	80,500	15,000	10,500	17,500	26,500					150,000
School Transportation				217,232						217,232
Total, GR-Capital Budget	80,500	15,000	10,500	234,732	26,500	0	0	0	0	367,232
TOTAL, GENERAL REV.	3,257,277	3,409,900	822,693	2,941,180	836,140	0	1,773,615	1,663,699	0	14,701,474
Federal Funds										
USDA - Lunch & Breakfast				53,000						53,000
Medicaid (SHRS)				500,000						500,000
Medicaid Admin. Claims				140,000						140,000
IDEA-B Formula					125,503					125,503
Region XI - Statewide Serv					341,936					341,936
IDEA-D Deafblind					575,000					575,000
Title I-A Improv. BasicProg.	38,292									38,292
Title I-D Technology	352									352
Title III-A Teacher Training	6,634									6,634
Fund 148 - Teacher Prep					900,000					900,000
Fund 148 -Outreach Teacher					98,856					98,856
Fund 148 - Short Term Prog.			148,367							148,367
Total, Federal Funds	45,278	0	148,367	693,000	2,041,295	0	0	0	0	2,927,940
Appropriated Receipts										
Meal Ticket Sales				25,000						25,000
Conference Registrations					66,535					66,535
Per Capita & LEA Payments	700,000									700,000
UB - ISD & Local District	369,206									369,206
Housing Receipts								3,960		3,960
Surplus & Salvage								500		500
Curriculum Sales				250,000						250,000
Vending Receipts								500		500
E-Rate Reimbursements								60,000		60,000
Ft. Bend ISD - 3rd Party	24,000									24,000
Weekends Closing Reimb.				132,000						132,000
Total, Appr. Receipts	1,093,206	0	0	407,000	66,535	0	0	64,960	0	1,631,701
Interagency Contracts										
TEA-SSVI Discretionary			35,587		79,790					115,377
DARS - SWEAT			40,000							40,000
DARS-Post-Secondary Progr.	33,600									33,600
TEA-IDEA-B Discretionary	566,000	121,800	132,500	75,281	402,000					1,297,581
Total, IAC Receipts	599,600	121,800	208,087	75,281	481,790	0	0	0	0	1,486,558
Bond Proceeds – Gen Obl										
General Obligation Bonds									0	0
Total, Bond Proceeds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total, M.O.F. – FY 2012	4,995,361	3,528,700	1,179,147	4,116,461	3,425,760	0	1,773,615	1,728,629	0	20,747,673



	A.1.1	A.1.2	A.1.3	A.1.4	B.1.1	C.1.1	D.1.1	D.1.2	D.1.3	TOTAL
FY 2013 Appn Alloc.	Class.	Resd.	Summer	Related &	Tech.	Educ.	Central	Other	Facility	
METHOD OF FINANCE	Instr.	Prog.	& Short	Support	Assist.	Salary	Admin.	Support	Constr.	FY 2013
Gen. Rev. Operating										
Regular Appropriation	3,176,776	3,391,900	812,193	2,673,680	809,640	0	1,773,615	1,663,699	0	14,301,473
Total, Gen. Rev. Operating	3,176,776	3,391,900	812,193	2,673,680	809,640	0	1,773,615	1,663,669	0	14,301,473
G.R. – Capital Budget										
Technology Upgrade								0		0
Instructional Materials	80,500	15,000	10,500	17,500	26,500					150,000
School Transportation										0
Total, GR – Capital Budget	80,500	15,000	10,500	17,500	26,500	0	0	0	0	150,000
TOTAL, GENERAL REV.	3,257,276	3,406,900	822,693	2,691,180	863,1408	0	1,773,615	1,663,669	0	14,451,473
Federal Funds										
USDA – Lunch & Breakfast				53,000						53,000
Medicaid (SHRS)				500,000						500,000
Medicaid Admin. Claims				140,000						140,000
IDEA-B Formula					125,503					125,503
Region XI – Statewide Serv.					341,936					341,936
IDEA-D Deafblind					575,000					575,000
Title I-A Improv. Basic Prg.	38,292									38,292
Title II-D Technology	352									352
Title II-A Teacher Training	6,634									6,634
Fund 148 – Teacher Prep					900,000					900,000
Fund 148 –Outreach Teacher					98,856					98,856
Fund 148 –Short Term Prog.			148,367							148,367
Total, Federal Funds	45,278	0	148,367	693,000	2,041,295	0	0	0	0	2,927,940
Appropriated Receipts										
Meal Ticket Sales				20,000						20,000
Conference Registrations					66,535					66,535
Per Capita & LEA Payments	700,000									700,000
UB – ISD & Local District	369,206									369,206
Housing Receipts								3,960		3,960
Student Rents – Post Secd										0
Surplus & Salvage								500		500
Curriculum Sales				250,000						250,000
Student Store Sales										0
Vending Receipts								500		500
E-Rate Reimbursements								60,000		60,000
Ft. Bend ISD – 3 rd Party	24,000									24,000
Weekends Closing Reimb.				132,000						132,000
Total, Appr. Receipts	1,093,206	0	0	407,000	66,535	0	0	64,960	0	1,631,701
Interagency Contracts										
TEA-SSVI Discretionary			35,587		79,790					115,377
TEA – Accel. Reading/Math										0
DARS – SWEAT			40,000							40,000
DARS-Post-Secondary Prg.	33,600									33,600
TEA-IDEA-B Discretionary	566,000	121,800	132,500	75,281	402,000					1,297,581
Total, IAC Receipts	599,600	121,800	208,087	75,281	481,790	0	0	0	0	1,486,558
Bond Proceeds – Gen Obl										
General Obligation Bonds									0	0
Total, Bond Proceeds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total, M.O.F. – FY 2013	4,995,360	3,528,700	1,179,147	3,866,461	3,425,760	0	1,773,615	1,728,629	0	20,497,672



◆ *Per Capita and Other States' Comparisons* ◆

As can be seen in the above section, gauging how TSBVI's carries out its statewide mission relative to what other Schools for the Blind in the U.S. do, is a lopsided comparison. No other state comes close to the range and depth of what TSBVI sets out to accomplish for Texas. Most other states try to duplicate to one degree or another the types of programs and services TSBVI has pioneered and perfected. These efforts have limited results because they lack the statewide foundation of collaboration and innovation that TSBVI and its partners in the ISD's, Education Service Centers, DARS, the university programs and other affiliated organizations, have built over the years. The continuous support of the Texas Legislature, even during difficult times, has allowed TSBVI and its partners to move steadily forward on this mission.

The Texas Legislature has long understood that the investment in TSBVI cannot be analyzed by a single measure such as the number of students enrolled in the K-12 Comprehensive Programs. To that end a method to achieve a comprehensive accounting of the various activities of the school was developed in conjunction with the Legislative Budget Board. The average cost per student at enrolled at TSBVI in Comprehensive Programs (K-12) is determined by a formula and reported quarterly to the LBB. There are similar measures for activities in both the Statewide Outreach Technical Assistance and the Special Programs (summer and short-courses). The cost can vary significantly from student to student in Comprehensive Programs depending on the severity of their disabilities. TSBVI remains committed to serving the entire spectrum of students from blind-only youths enrolled in the academic curriculum, to students with severe and profound multiple disabilities in addition to their blindness. It is the second group that requires at-or-near 1:1 instruction and supervision in both school day and residential programs.

Cost considerations for TSBVI should take into account the following factors:

- The characteristics of students served. TSBVI has accepted as part of its mission the provision of educational services to very challenging visually impaired students with additional disabilities. Consequently, the School serves a disproportionately large number of these students (c. 75% of enrollment). These students require extensive human and material resources and a low student to staff ratio. We emphasize that this commitment to complex children with serious additional disabilities has dramatically changed the funding needs of TSBVI.
- Economic factors of the community. The Texas Legislature has linked the School's teacher salary schedule to that of the Austin ISD so as to ensure that the School is competitive in recruiting and retaining teachers. Austin-area school districts have a compensation package that has somewhat lower salaries and relatively higher employee benefits than school districts of similar size in Texas.
- The mission to serve as a model program. The School is expected to demonstrate best practices for the education of visually impaired students to other schools and service providers. This mission requires an excellent staff of teachers and support services who provide cutting-edge services to students served in this manner.
- The commitment to serve students through intensive, short-term programming. Maintaining this commitment requires specialized and intensive services to students on campus followed by training staff in the student's local school district to ensure that the students maintain their newly acquired skills.

- Instructional materials and technology for blind and visually impaired students require adaptation by changing print into the appropriate medium or modifying the materials for visual, tactile, or auditory access. The cost of commercially adapted materials is high in comparison to materials for non-visually impaired students. Not all needs can be met through commercial materials; many materials must be developed by our staff, requiring additional time and resources.
- Intensive, short-term programs, with a very low pupil-teacher ratio, are needed for students with visual impairments who are enrolled in public schools during the regular school year. Nationwide, there is growing evidence that students with disabilities can best succeed in inclusive educational settings if they also have the opportunity to receive specialized instruction in areas specific to their disabilities.
- A set of summer instructional programs that serve blind and visually impaired students who attend local public schools during the regular school year. Parents, local schools, and students rate highly these summer programs that provide them opportunities to be with other visually disabled peers, to learn things related to their visual impairment, and have a good time doing them. They return to their local districts better prepared to start another school year in the fall.
- Outreach services provides indirect services to visually impaired students throughout Texas by increasing the skills of their teachers and parents.
- Staff development provides training in skills unique to the needs of visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities, and assures that services provided at the School reflect the best practices. This includes training employees at TSBVI and serving as a professional preparation program for the entire state. The unique nature of the School's student population requires very specialized staff development. This training often requires expenditures for travel, conferences, and workshops to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers.
- Curriculum development includes participation by the School's direct-care staff during times that extend beyond their regular hours. The curricula developed are widely used by professionals throughout Texas and internationally.

◆*Budgetary Limitations*◆

The School is impacted by two budgetary limitations in Article IX of the General Appropriations Act. The first limitation is on employee FTE levels. The School is complying with the annual limitations on FTEs. The School will discuss strategies with the LBB to more accurately reflect actual employees and not temporary substitutes in the FTE count.

The second cap from Article IX is on out-of-state travel expenditures. The School is complying with the biennial limitations on out-of-state travel expenditures.

◆*Degree to Which Current Budget Meets Current and Expected Needs*◆

The School has solicited input from all stakeholders over the past several months in preparation for updating our Agency Strategic Plan. Staff, parents, representatives of public schools and public agencies, consumer groups, board members, and administration actively participated in developing the content of this plan.

This section of our plan focuses on the degree to which our current budget meets or falls short of meeting current and expected needs.

Our budgetary starting point is to reallocate the School's existing funds to address current and expected needs. We believe that we can accomplish this for most areas of need.

Student Outcomes

Students at TSBVI receive an excellent educational program. The School's curriculum includes all the essential elements of the Texas general curriculum and the elements of an expanded core curriculum designed to meet the special needs of visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities. The current level of funding allows the School to meet the educational needs of its students.

The employment of graduated students continues to be a challenge. Statewide and nationally, unemployment of adults with visual impairments remains in the range of 70%. TSBVI will need additional resources to improve the employability of students, especially by providing students with marketable job skills. The Superintendent and the Board of Trustees are focused on training students to have the skills necessary to hold specific jobs in contrast to being taught general work skills training. The School has focused its career education program on specific job skills. Recent examples include teaching students to work as a pet groomer, barista, hospitality worker, phone bank worker, and other marketable jobs.

TSBVI will develop strong partnerships with Austin Community Gardens, the Triangle small business district, coffee shops and other locations to provide job training for students. The School will continue to develop partnerships with businesses in students' local communities.

Successful transition of students back to their local districts is an area that needs improvement in Comprehensive and Short-term Programs. This

requires additional resources for staff, travel, and training of the local district personnel to whom students are transitioned.

Staff Training

The current budget allows for limited staff training. TSBVI serves a highly specialized clientele of students with visual impairment, deafblindness, and multiple disabilities. On-campus, the school must continually refine training strategies to ensure that its staff is delivering state of the art instruction in the safest possible environment for students during the daily 16 hours of learning opportunity. Off-campus, the school must deliver high quality training statewide in order to make parents skilled and informed partners in meeting the unique educational needs of their children, and build local capacity in Texas school districts to better serve students with visual impairments in their home communities.

To accomplish this TSBVI will need to devote resources to upgrade the knowledge and skills of instructional and administrative support personnel. Special attention is needed in the areas of educational issues for blind students, job-specific skills, and the use of software tools to increase productivity and manage electronic data. This initiative will require new or expanded resources for the following:

- Internal and external distance education service delivery models for school staff.
- Development of effective and cost-efficient training for school staff, local educators and parents utilizing web-based and other electronic media.
- Training for all residential instructors in the core skills necessary to teach visually impaired students.
- Continued funding for an Employee Assistance Program that provides free training in such topics as cultural diversity and conflict resolution.
- Training for administrative support staff in the use of new data management

applications, productivity software, and new communications equipment.

Safety, Security, and Health

Safety and Security. The completion of new facilities with new emergency communication systems, fire protection, electronic key access to buildings, controlled access gates, and existing security staff will be adequate to ensure the safety and security of students.

TSBVI serves a population of students with special safety and security needs 24 hours a day. These needs include medical fragility, certain vulnerabilities inherent to visual impairments and many other factors related to typical childhood issues occurring within the context of care and supervision by non-family members while in residence at the school. The parents who entrust their children into the school's care must be assured that the school takes appropriate measures to cover all aspects of student well-being during and after school hours.

To address these critical needs TSBVI has initiated:

- Close collaboration with architects to ensure that campus strikes an appropriate balance between highly controlled public access and a welcoming public environment.
- An increased security officer presence on campus.
- Coordination with architects and contractors to establish safe on-campus student travel during construction to minimize the risk of accidents.
- A comprehensive assessment of campus safety regarding buildings, grounds, communication systems, materials and practices in order to reduce risk factors and target staff and student training needs.

Health. The systems and procedures for obtaining and disseminating critical student health and

behavioral information to staff on a timely basis requires continuous upgrading and improved integration with other data management applications, especially with disparate electronic systems for managing student information. Additional programming and sophisticated data entry personnel may be needed. The current budget may not be adequate to support this critical function.

Parent Involvement

TSBVI has determined that parent involvement throughout a student's school career is among the highest predictors of school success and positive post-school outcomes. Parents regularly take a position that TSBVI should have an enhanced role in moving other systems (e.g. ISD's, DARS, etc.) toward expanded and improved services across the age-span. TSBVI realizes that it is not a regulatory or monitoring agency, and has instead focused its resources on partnering with these systems in order to build local capacity.

Successful parent training requires the following ongoing or new initiatives. To address these critical needs TSBVI will:

- Develop regional parent organizations that can in turn become advocates and supporters of service improvements at the local level as well as educating each other on effective parenting practices.
- Focus on additional resources on parent involvement at all grade levels, with particular attention to students transitioning back to their local school districts after attendance in comprehensive or special programs, and to those students who are graduating. These groups of students represent the majority of parental concerns about the shortcomings of all systems in facilitating the smooth integration back into the local school, and the failure of all systems to facilitate employment and community integration post-high school.
- Continue to develop a wide range of strategies to support parents statewide that

reflect the highly individual learner characteristics of their children, the cultural diversity represented among our parent stakeholders, and the geographic challenges our large state presents.

- Implement web-based methods for parents to visually see on an ongoing basis what and how their children are being taught, demonstrating how their children use their new skills in such activities as meal preparation, off-campus activities, responding to behavioral interventions, organizational skills, etc.
- The strategy might require additional funding for parent travel.
- Expand partnerships with systems statewide in order to continuously improve services at the local level (ESCs, ISDs, DARS, and DADS).
- Expand transition efforts for students returning to their ISDs and for students graduating to employment, education/training and community life through improved parent-led planning sessions and distance communication as well as on-site facilitation in students' home communities. On-site facilitations will require additional travel funds not limited by any budgetary travel limits required of Texas state agencies.

Clarifying and Refining TSBVI's Role in the Statewide System

TSBVI has traditionally served all referred students who meet the criteria for eligibility, and will continue to do so. The challenge is to determine how best to serve them within the school's diverse options in comprehensive programs, special programs, and through statewide outreach. TSBVI has been a major support over the past two decades in the expansion and improvement of local efforts to better serve students in their home communities. The School with its multiple programs is now but one of the options students have in order to find the best match between educational setting and their

individual learner needs. There remain significant challenges across the state for students to access easily the type of program they need when they need it. Poor school performance and high unemployment after high school are two indicators that suggest the statewide educational system as a whole needs a more coordinated effort on how students are served.

TSBVI is in an optimal position to facilitate improvements in the overall Texas system, and will develop new ways to ensure that its own programs and services are optimized to effectively reach the greatest number of students.

To address this need TSBVI will use existing appropriated funds or consider requesting additional resources in future appropriation requests to do the following:

- Develop strategies to ensure that TSBVI is serving those students for whom visual impairment is their primary learning challenge.
- Implement strategies to provide an array of services that meet the specialized needs of enrolled students and that focuses on those students making a successful transition to their families and to local programming as soon as appropriate.
- Develop strategies to conduct useful follow up support activities with graduates and with students returning to their ISD's.
- Increase TSBVI's ability to deliver an academically rigorous curriculum in the areas of science and math.
- Expand short-term programs for visually impaired students enrolled in their local public schools to ensure that they acquire the skills of the expanded core curriculum in addition to the academic skills in the general curriculum.
- Revisit the provision of a middle school concept preparing students to return to their ISDs with the ability to better access the general curriculum in high school.

- Increase technical assistance to dedicated local teams challenged by the growing number of deafblind children with complex needs.
- Explore how restructuring and reorganization of our programs could focus more resources on service delivery model planning.

Curriculum

TSBVI develops specialized curricular materials used on its campus and in many Texas school districts. The products are used around the world, and TSBVI is widely known as a leading innovator in the education of students with visual impairments. The process TSBVI uses to develop these books and packaged learning systems utilizes internal and statewide stakeholders to ensure that these products effectively meet a curricular need.

The TSBVI Curriculum Department is increasingly serving in a training capacity to make sure that its customers are prepared to make the best use of the materials. Through this activity, TSBVI has assumed a broader role in helping the state improve its overall instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments as well as focusing on learner needs relative to the TEKS and TAKS. Further, TSBVI continues to develop products that address low incidence areas of disability, such as students with visual impairments who have autism spectrum disorders.

To address this need, TSBVI will:

- Purchase time and travel as needed to convene writing and review teams from across the state.
- Use a combination of on-site and distance training delivery to educate teachers statewide on the use of TSBVI-developed curriculum.

Facilities

The Legislature appropriated bond revenue to totally rebuild the 100+-year-old facilities at the School's campus in north-central Austin. Construction continues to be on time and on budget. The school has implemented a master plan to complete and maintain a campus ideally suited to the education of students with visual impairments, including those who have significant additional disabilities that require special accessibility considerations. The new campus will support growth and innovation in all three programs areas—Comprehensive Programs, Special Programs and Outreach. Repair costs in the first year will be minimal because most of the new buildings and equipment will be under a one-year warranty. Beyond that it will be necessary to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to maintain this wonderful investment in the education of Texas's blind children.

Information Resources

Instructional Technology and Equipment. The current budget provides sufficient funds to meet the special needs of the School's on-campus students for electronic and assistive instruction technology. It will be important to ensure that students served by the School's on-campus programs and by the Technology Loan Program continue to have access to the technology needed for success at school and on the job.

Computer technology in the students' living and learning quarters has expanded and now each residential learning facility has at least two computers dedicated to student use and one computer for staff. Additional adaptive and assistive equipment in the living and learning quarters includes closed circuit television, braille embossers, and speech-enabled computers. These devices provide students the opportunity to apply their technology skills from the classroom to homework assignments, research, and recreation, and to enhance their independent living skills. The

rapid proliferation of mobile devices, netbooks, smart phones, and pads has not bypassed our school. These devices provide additional adaptive learning and communication tools to our students, but also present challenges in managing and securing these devices in our computing and communications environment.

Technology Staff Development and Distance Education. The School seeks to expand the use of technology and distance education technologies to provide on-campus training for staff, and for educating parents and other professional across the State. Additional funds to purchase and deploy these technologies will in the medium term reduce the per unit cost of training by reducing the time and cost of travel.

The current budget will be adequate for the short-term, but additional resources will be needed to replace aging equipment or to deploy new technologies in the medium and long term.

Infrastructure Technology. Additional hardware and software are needed to meet the projected demand for more server capacity, such as memory upgrades, processor upgrades, server systems software, and back-up media. There is currently no capital budget in place to maintain and update the back end server and network infrastructure of the school, nor to replace legacy applications still residing in the environment.

New and updated software is required to support the various functions of the staff and administration in conducting school business. The requirements of state government for electronic documents related to school data, accounting, budgeting, and grant applications require the continual upgrade of equipment, the technical environment, and software applications. The current budget lacks the programming capacity to customize and deploy software that supports these functions and that is accessible to visually impaired staff. Commercial software has been purchased that is addressing many of the needs related to the management of student data, but

extensive customization is required to meet the unique needs related to the School's functions as a residential school, e.g imparting important medical and behavioral information to direct care staff on a timely basis.

Additional hardware and software are needed to meet the projected demand for more server capacity, i.e. memory upgrades, processor upgrades, server systems software, and back-up media. There is currently an insufficient capital budget in place to replace obsolete equipment and update the back end server and network infrastructure of the school. TSBVI continually monitors and evaluates the potential benefits offered by recent server side innovations, including virtualization and cloud computing. Should these benefits become compelling, additional capital will be required to deploy these strategies in order to reap longer-term benefits, efficiencies, and cost savings.

TSBVI needs to continue expansion and development of the TSBVI web-site. The school's Web site, www.tsbvi.edu, has been tremendously successful and is considered one of the best resources for the education of the visually impaired. The web site receives more than four million individual visits annually. Many departments, particularly Outreach and Curriculum, use the Web site as a critical element of service delivery. Continued development of the Web site is indicated with expansion of web features to provide information interchange with consumers. Currently in progress is a redesign of the web site to improve usability is needed as the site has grown and information has become difficult to locate in the present design.

Management of Student Data. TSBVI must maintain a tremendous amount of information regarding students' individual educational programming, health care, and behavioral profiles due to the nature of a special purpose 24-hour facility. The school additionally must maintain and process information required of all state agencies and public schools, as well as maintaining the

website that serves as the primary source of blindness-related information for the state.

To address this critical need TSBVI will need to develop or purchase both hardware and software systems similar to systems used in all public schools in Texas.

Improvements for Campus Support Functions

TSBVI is a 24-hour a day operation that requires considerable support from its maintenance department. Unfortunately maintenance is often viewed as “administrative overhead” and suffers funding reductions when the School is required to reduce its budget. We are committed to taking care of our new facilities and ensuring that there are adequate fiscal and human resources to do so.

Personnel Issues

Issues identified in the strategic planning cycle include:

- a. Accessibility for personnel with visual impairment to information required for job performance
- b. Compensation strategies for recruitment and retention of qualified staff

Accessibility to Information Required for Job Performance. Additional resources will be necessary to modify software, whether purchased externally or developed internally, to ensure that blind and visually impaired staff can access electronic tools necessary to do their job. Additional time may be necessary for software training designed for the unique needs of staff with disabilities.

Compensation Strategies for Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff. Strides have been made in recruitment and retention of staff, especially due to the pay increases residential staff received in the 81st legislative session. These

raises are tied to staff training, years of service and other criteria.

Additional funding is needed for merit increases to classified staff and to move staff up in their pay scales instead of relying solely on career ladders. With limited finances, turn-taking of awarding merit steps is occurring, although this should not be the case. Meritorious staff should receive merit increases. TSBVI is not at parity with other agencies in its pay to staff. TSBVI continues to use a pay scale based on steps but other agencies instead use an entire pay scale for each classification. Unique one-person positions have never had a career ladder established for them.

Anticipated Decrease in Federal Funds for Statewide Outreach Programs

Federal funds support major programs operated by the School’s Outreach Programs. Among these are statewide services for deafblind children and a program preparing teachers for visually impaired students. For several years the funding for these programs has remained level while costs have increased. In the event that federal funds decrease or end for these programs, the School would seek funding resources from the State to continue these effective and exemplary programs.

◆Capital and/or Leased Needs◆

No later than the 2014-15 biennium, the school will need funding for ongoing preventative maintenance of newly constructed buildings to be used to retain the new or renovated conditions of the buildings in the years to come. This funding will be all the more imperative assuming that ongoing maintenance has been deferred as a result of state budget reductions.

The school has a vehicle replacement schedules that calls for one large school bus and five vans to be replaced every two years. This ensures that students are not transported in any vehicles with over ten years of service.

Service Population Demographics

◆Historical Characteristics◆

It has only been within the last 20 years that many local school districts have developed the capability of providing services to students who were blind or visually impaired. Historically, TSBVI made its educational services available to blind children, ages 6 to 21, who had no additional disabilities. The population served was carefully selected, leaving the more challenging or complex children with limited, if any, educational services. That has changed radically, and now TSBVI has developed capabilities to serve some of the most severely disabled students with visual impairments in the state.

◆Current Characteristics◆

Today, the majority of the almost 9,000 blind and visually impaired students in Texas attend local schools. Often they are enrolled in regular classes with sighted classmates and are supported by a qualified teacher of the visually impaired. One responsibility of TSBVI is to provide educational services to children whose needs cannot be met in their local schools or who need short-term intensive instruction in core curriculum areas. Another equal responsibility is to share resources with all local districts in the state that are serving blind and visually impaired students. Indeed, off-campus services emanating from TSBVI are considered as important as on-campus services delivered directly to students. Educational placement takes into consideration the fact that blind and visually impaired children have two areas of need: an academic program that parallels that which they would receive if they were sighted, and a disability-specific program which addresses their unique needs.

Often the academic needs of students can be effectively met in regular classrooms at the local level. However, disability-specific needs addressed by the Expanded Core Curriculum for

Visually Impaired Students are often difficult for local schools to teach, and they may look to TSBVI for assistance in meeting these needs. TSBVI has the capability to meet all expanded core curriculum needs of blind and visually impaired students, but its best use is to “fill in” the core areas when resources and services are not available locally. This fact impacts greatly on the function of TSBVI. It can meet many core curriculum needs of children either by providing an on-campus program or by sending educators out to districts to help in developing more effective local programs. TSBVI currently carries out its responsibility to all blind and visually impaired children of Texas by offering these two options.

Visual impairment in children is a low prevalence disability when compared to other disabilities. This creates problems with service delivery because this population needs highly specialized teachers that are in short supply. Geographic factors affecting services are a major problem because, in a rural area, there may be only one blind child in a 50-mile radius. Even a moderate-sized district with a larger number of visually impaired students will typically find that it has only one or two visually impaired students who can be served together, due to differences in their ages and skill levels.

In recent years, the number of blind and visually impaired children in need of services has increased greatly in the United States because of the profession’s ability to measure marginal vision loss and its effect on learning. Also, advances in medical science have saved the lives of visually impaired children with additional severe disabilities. This need for services is exacerbated in Texas not only because of population growth but because the state is getting better at identifying and assessing the needs of students with visual impairments.

Also, it has been found that children who are visually impaired and have additional disabilities need the services of teachers trained in education for the visually impaired. Currently, it is estimated that about 90% of the visually impaired children in

Texas have low vision. It is also estimated that about 70% of the children identified as visually impaired have additional disabilities. These changes in populations have had a dramatic effect on educational services. Local school districts only request enrollment at TSBVI for their students when those students require the intense and specialized services of this school. As a result, TSBVI serves the more disabled segment of visually impaired students with additional disabilities.

TSBVI carries the serious responsibility of addressing the needs of a widely diverse population. Children in need of services from the school may be mildly or moderately visually impaired, or they may be totally blind. They may be visually impaired since birth or may have lost vision yesterday. They may have no other disabilities except visual impairment, or they may have several additional disabilities. They may be able to master a regular academic curriculum, or they may have educational goals that address their basic independence needs. They may live in urban areas where there are excellent resources at the local level for a visually impaired child, or they may live in extremely rural areas where services from a qualified teacher of the visually impaired are basically non-existent. Indeed, the demographics of this low prevalence population demand that educators and parents utilize their creativity when planning services that meet all the needs of a particular child.

◆*Demographic Factors and Future Trends*◆

Short-term: As the population of the state grows, so will the number of students with visual impairments. 2012 saw a slight flattening of this trend, the explanation for which cannot be determined at this time. Undoubtedly the pace of growth will pick up in 2013 and subsequent years. The majority of newly identified students with visual impairments will continue to be high-risk infants with additional disabilities and more complex learning needs.

The completion of the TSBVI campus master plan by 2013 will bring much attention to the school as parents and ISDs re-evaluate old perceptions of the school as drab, institutional setting. An increase in referrals, already in evidence before the project is even completed, will soon tax the school's capacity if we cannot successfully implement the Service Delivery Model mentioned in earlier sections. Under this service model, only those students clearly in need of our services in order to receive an appropriate education will be admitted. Each will be transitioned back to their ISDs as soon as they, and their ISD educational team, have developed the capacity to be successful back in the home community. This in-and-out flow will be supported by all three (Comprehensive, Outreach, Special) programs in order to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved for both students and ISDs.

The largest group of students referred for specialized instruction at TSBVI is composed of students 18 or older who have finished or peaked in the general curriculum, but who lack the independent living, self-advocacy, and vocational skills necessary for adult living. About 36% of the School's enrollment in Comprehensive Programs is in this age group. Parents and local school districts have discovered that their young blind adults are not really ready and seek "last minute" specialized services before these students "age out" of eligibility for services from public education at age 21. To meet the needs of this increase of older high school students, additional resources will be needed to prepare these students for jobs, independent living, and higher education.

TSBVI will continue to receive a substantial number of referrals for children between the ages of 10 and 13, indicating that local districts often need assistance as the visually impaired student makes the transition from elementary to middle school. Many of these students remain at TSBVI for two to three years, then return to their local district with the skills to function in their local secondary school placement.

Another demographic factor having an immediate impact on the need for services at TSBVI is the deplorable employment rate of people with disabilities. Specifically, 70% of people with visual impairments ages 21 to 64 are unemployed, and 30% of those who are working are considered underemployed in relations to their qualifications, according to the US Department of Labor based on the 1994-95 US Census Bureau data. In response to this persisting demographic trend, the School has embarked upon an expansion of vocational programs for young persons who have graduated from their local high school and a vocational training program for students with mild additional disabilities.

Statewide demographic studies indicate that the number of non-Anglo school-age children will continue to increase in Texas. The 2010-2011 ethnic composition of the School's non-white student population was 47% in Comprehensive Programs, 57% in Summer Programs and 57% in Short-term Programs.

It will be increasingly important that the School recruit and retain staff who reflect the ethnic makeup of Texas. Instructional programs must take into account the needs of children with limited English proficiency. The culture and values of minority groups must be given respect and understanding in the School's instructional and residential programs. Parent newsletters produced for the regular school year program and for the Outreach Program are also provided in Spanish, as are written Student Progress Reports and all legally required forms related to student and parent rights under federal and state laws. Additionally the "SenseAbilities Newsletter" produced by TSBVI in collaboration with Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services - Division for Blind Services is available in Spanish both on the Web and in print for Spanish speaking families. The Outreach Program pays for Spanish or sign language interpreters for workshops that the School sponsors to make them more accessible.

There is also some evidence that the students and families of students enrolled at TSBVI are below the average economic status of Texas. Fifty-seven percent of students enrolled at TSBVI meet the financial eligibility requirements to receive Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). In response to the needs of students and families with limited financial needs, the School will also need to allocate staff resources to link students and their families to educational, social service, vocational, and medical resources in their communities. This linkage is often vital to make successful transitions for students back to their local communities.

Another current trend is the increased expectation on parents to participate in the education of their children. Parents are expected to actively plan and advocate for their child's educational program, and to understand and secure services for their child in infancy and pre-school years. In response to this need, the School has launched programs to help parents become informed advocates for their children and learn more about the importance of early intervention for their children during infancy and early childhood.

Medium-term: Advances in medical technology will continue to save high-risk infants, resulting in a growing population of children with multiple disabilities. The intensity of disability-specific needs of blind and visually impaired children will require local districts to reconsider their resources in meeting these needs. Local schools will either need to provide more services to children from a teacher of the visually impaired, or consider short-term placements at TSBVI.

Successful transition from TSBVI to students' local programs and communities will continue to be a need. The Texas Performance Plan for special education has identified transition services as a primary area of emphasis in response to the U.S. Department of Education's review of Texas programs. Our own survey of graduates confirms that successful transition from school to

independent living and working requires more attention. The School will need to increase its efforts to convince and to support local school districts in implementing transition programs. Such transition programs are especially critical at the times when students move from elementary to middle school and to the later years of high school when students approach graduation or “aging out”.

In response, the School has implemented an EXIT program (Experiences in Transition) and a Post-Secondary program designed to assist students in this transition, and to provide the students with skills in independent living, career education, and orientation and mobility.

Special education across the nation will continue to emphasize the integration and inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular classrooms of local public schools. “Inclusive education” for children with disabilities became an exciting trend, beginning about 15-20 years ago. Today, the reality of “responsible inclusion” for children with visual impairments has shown great improvement. With more and better qualified teachers of the visually impaired being available in Texas, the quality of local services seems to have grown, resulting in a slight decrease in referrals to TSBVI by local districts. This trend is also due to the quality and quantity of services to local districts that TSBVI offers. However, when local school districts find that they are unable to meet the educational needs of certain individual students, they will refer the most challenging students to TSBVI for services. The natural effect of this is that TSBVI is increasingly serving students with maladaptive behaviors or a long history of educational failure. All too often, these students have fallen farther behind for several years and need intense remediation. Again, this changing population of students at TSBVI requires small class size and ongoing training for staff.

There is an increased demand that states and schools be accountable for the learning of students. More testing, more data, more analysis, more

program evaluation, and more accountability are the order of the day. Both “No Child Left Behind” and “Individuals with Disabilities Individual Education Act” have added to the strong need for accountability and documentation. New data management systems are required to gather and organize this information. In response the School has increased its accountability systems, including full participation in all components of the Texas Statewide Assessment System. The results are shared with the governing board of trustees, the Texas Education Agency, parents, and with the School’s stakeholders.

The maintenance of TSBVI’s new facilities and grounds will require more resources in order to keep these building systems in good order. Preventive maintenance, maintenance workers with higher technical skill sets and outside contracts for things such as HVAC, security, irrigation and elevators, will be needed to make the facilities last. Improved data management systems and the skilled personnel to build and maintain them will be major issue.

Building capacity in developing webinars, broadcasts and DVDs to train teachers and parents statewide about best practices in the education of their students will grow. For those who can travel, the new TSBVI Conference Center (Outreach Department) is becoming the go-to site to receive the best training available in the state.

Long-term: All of the demographic trends and impacts described above will continue to impact the education of visually impaired children in Texas for the foreseeable future. In response to these service population demographics, the School’s planning must include the following long-term strategies:

- TSBVI and local school districts will continue to develop a mutually supportive system. The future will build upon the expertise of TSBVI staff, appreciation of them by local school personnel, and trust in

asking for services from TSBVI without any fear that TSBVI has an interest in recruiting students. The TSBVI philosophy supports local school placement for most students, if the required support system is available, and local schools increasingly acknowledge and respect that philosophy. Children are arriving and departing at TSBVI with increasing regularity. TSBVI has developed creative programming that results in a minimum interruption for children in their local schools as they benefit from intensive instruction in core curriculum areas on the School's campus. Education for all blind and visually impaired students is directed toward a productive, fulfilling, enjoyable adult life in a setting that best meets the social, personal, and occupational needs of each individual.

- In the future, TSBVI will serve students in small “clusters”, depending on needs. These clusters will represent specific areas of a core curriculum, and students will receive intensive instruction in only those areas for which there is an assessed need. This core curriculum emphasizes instruction in those areas that address the unique needs and special learning methods of students who are blind, deafblind, and visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.
- Access points to TSBVI's programs and services will grow in number and in quality. Students will move in and out of TSBVI with greater frequency, easily returning to TSBVI as their educational needs change.

Technological Developments

◆Impact of Technology on Current Agency Operations◆

Instructional Technology:

Technology, and its application to educating the blind and visually impaired children of Texas, is fundamental to the mission of TSBVI and to its support of the priority goal for Public Schools as detailed in *Securing our Future*, the Strategic Planning document for the State of Texas. Technology has an ever-increasing beneficial impact on the education of students with visual disabilities and is now critical to their gaining maximum independence and success in their lives. One cannot visit a TSBVI classroom or residential facility without observing the growing role that technology has come to play in the education of our students. Computers and Web-based technologies are required to provide the most basic access to instructional materials, reference sources, and to materials previously only available in print. Prior to the advent of computer technology and the Internet, the percentage of instructional materials available in braille and other forms accessible to the visually impaired was so small as to be statistically insignificant at far less than 1 percent. Desktop computers, laptop computers, LCD monitors, and peripheral devices, including speech output and braille output devices, give blind students the opportunity to access instructional materials on a level near that of their sighted peers. While providing significant empowerment and opportunities to individuals with visual impairments, technology continues to challenge staff and students. The skills that a student must possess to use technical systems continue to increase as systems become both more useful and more sophisticated.

Technology is mandatory for TSBVI to provide students with equal educational opportunities and to achieve Texas' priority goal for public schools: “To ensure that all students in the public education

system acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsible and independent Texans.” To accomplish this instructional technology staff must remain apprised of developments in technology as they pertain to the general education population, and they must also provide training for students on issues related to assistive technology. These efforts require a broad knowledge base to meet the needs of our students, most of whom have more than one physical, sensory, cognitive, or language impairment. The technology needs of these students range from basic communication and socialization needs to vocational, telecommunications, and college preparatory training. The proliferation of handheld devices, pads, and smart phones hold great promise in enabling and enhancing access and mobility to our students and the ability of these devices to meet the needs of our student may one day reduce our dependence on more specialized and specific learning aids.

TSBVI must maintain an inventory of modern equipment to provide the level of service appropriate for the student with visual impairments.

Administrative Technology:

The expanded use of TSBVI Intranet has improved campus communication, documentation, and planning coordination through development of a common facilities calendar, routine publication of contact information, meeting minutes, forms, and similar materials. The ongoing development of our Intranet has allowed TSBVI to promote efficient and effective inter-office communication and has standardized publication of information.

TSBVI continues to make great progress in the development and use of administrative technology. New systems for the management of student data and for management of special education documentation systems have been deployed that are compliant with the state’s Public Education and Information Management System (PEIMS).

Another software application ensures that direct care staff receive timely information related to the medical, dietary, behavioral, and supervision needs of the children in their charge.

The School participates in the statewide exchange of student information through the Texas Records Exchange (TREN system).

The School continues to perform the Statewide Registry of Students with Visual Impairments as an on-line registration system. This system was written and implemented for the TSBVI Outreach department and received a complete re-write providing significant enhancements this year. In this system, over eight thousand students with visual impairments are registered for subsequent reporting to TEA. This timely and accurate reporting to TEA ensures that the blind and visually impaired children of Texas receive their fair share of federal funds for educational materials. The system is available during the annual registration period at <http://www.tsbvi.edu/app/>

Distance Education:

The TSBVI Outreach department supports the nearly 900 teachers and specialists who instruct the approximately 9,000 blind and visually impaired children living throughout Texas. As the Outreach department offers more diverse services to more individuals across the state, the reliance on technology to support distance education continues to increase. Deployment of new information and access to resources over the web has been identified as a key need to use limited staff resources effectively, and to ensure the efficient use of public funds. Enhanced use of distance education is a fundamental aspect in future program planning. Courses offered by distance education have included Foundations in Visual Impairment, Math Materials and Methods for Teachers of VI students, and Abacus Instruction. These courses are examples of how these emerging technologies provide new methods for efficient

and cost-effective service delivery. The use of distance education and the opportunities and savings it provides will continue to expand.

In fiscal year 2011 the TSBVI website received over 2.2 million visits from more than 200 countries. Parents and teachers download files that contain braille books and instructional materials, information for parents in English and Spanish, algebra in braille mathematics code known as Nemeth code, parent newsletters, announcements of training opportunities, and many other resources. The World Wide Web has provided a unique opportunity for the School to broaden and increase service delivery with minimal additional expenses compared to conventional support methodologies. Quick and efficient distribution of profession-specific information to an expanded group of parents and professionals has proven extremely helpful. The TSBVI website is fundamental in supporting the priorities of the 2012-2016 State Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management.

◆*Impact of Anticipated Technological Advances*◆

Instructional Technology:

Technological advancements are changing the face of education through the use of telecommunications and multimedia technology. These advancements are allowing students to control the learning process through creative means of expression and information gathering. One of the greatest challenges at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to provide students with visual and multiple impairments a means of access to these technologies so that learning opportunities available to sighted students can be made available to them to the greatest extent possible. There are many specialized products currently available that allow students with these impairments to participate in the educational opportunities afforded by advancements in technology.

The commitment of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to serve as a statewide research and demonstration facility requires that the School consistently do the following: (1) evaluate technological advances, (2) determine the most practical and functional technological systems for use with this population, (3) create and establish standards for teaching and integrating technology into the educational setting, and (4) provide technical training, curriculum, and support to professionals.

An example of the constant need to update equipment is illustrated by new developments in equipment specifically for persons with a visual impairment. Examples of the portable technology used by visually impaired students are the Braille Note and the Pac Mate. The Braille Note has a braille display and auditory output using a Windows operating system. The device includes such features as email, a Web browser, a scientific calculator, a calendar, and other personal digital assistant (PDA) functions. The Pac Mate is a Hewlett Packard PDA modified to provide information using JAWS voice output software. These devices cost about \$4,000 per unit. Rapid advances in portable computing devices like smart phones and pads offer the possibility of increasing flexibility of access devices and mobility for our students and the potential replacement of very expensive single use technologies with broader application of general consumer technologies to achieve the same ends.

There are a great many other examples of advances in instructional technologies that can have a strong and positive impact on the progress the blind and visually impaired children of Texas. These may range from the simple advances of LCD monitors to the complexities of streaming quality video presentations to remote students and educators. There is a pressing need to maintain adequate funding for instructional technology.

Infrastructure Technology:

The ongoing upgrade of the School's local area network has significantly improved the functionality and flexibility of the School's desktop computers and is critical to TSBVI's support and adoption of statewide priorities for information resources management. Completion of construction and the build out of wireless network will complete the IP network platform that will serve as the infrastructure foundation for technology moving forward. Access and interaction with Internet resources has provided new dimensions for classroom and residential instruction and communication/support to local independent school districts served throughout the state. As staff gains skills, new initiatives and applications are implemented to improve services to students, families, and other professionals.

Continued upgrading of desktop and laptop computers on a regular basis is needed to ensure the reliability and compatibility of TSBVI computing resources, and to meet the technical demands of adaptive software and equipment. Technical developments are closely monitored to ensure our use of computer environments that reflect those of other schools and businesses. The development of a consistent development architecture based on industry standard products is important to enable maximum accessibility for individuals with visual impairments, maintain platform independence, and ensure compatibility with future technology innovations and development. Given these design goals, new software systems are written as web-deployed applications using Java Enterprise (J2EE) technology. Future development will be within this software environment to advance the use of object-oriented programming to maximize platform independence, interoperability, and long-term supportability.

Distance Education:

As technology advances, the School's commitment to serve as a statewide research and demonstration facility becomes more critical. Our role to evaluate new technologies oriented toward the individual with visual impairments and our participation on standards bodies to create and establish textbook and electronic publishing standards are two primary leadership areas that have significant impact to the state and nation. Development and documentation of techniques for use with new technology and technical training support to professionals who work with individuals with visual and/or other impairments are a continuing program initiative. Innovation with new network-based deployment will continue to grow in volume and importance. The advent of digital video and the ability to create instructional videos with high production values on the desktop is another important advance in instructional technology and distance education for TSBVI. This technology, when fully implemented, will allow for enhanced efficacy of TSBVI outreach programs, better documentation of student's progress, and the ability to effectively share this progress with parents and educators. The needs and uses of digital imaging hold the promise of greatly increasing the efficiency of service delivery to Texans. TSBVI will continue to review and evaluate emerging social media technologies to assess their promise in enhancing service delivery and workplace productivity. TSBVI executive management and the Information Resources Steering Committee are actively discussing the issues involved in developing a solid social media strategy and continue to look for guidance from the DIR Statewide Social Media Toolkit.

◆*Degree of Agency Automation and Telecommunications*◆

TSBVI has highly automated telecommunications and computing functions. Campus telecommunications are based on IP telephony on the Cisco IP platform. Approximately 400 individuals access TSBVI computer systems by

networked desktop computers or laptop computers. Workstations are connected via TCP/IP transport over Ethernet. All workstations are configured for standardized networking configuration and network transport is standardized on Cisco equipment. The network is configured to provide telecom as well as file sharing, networked printing, and other services for both Macintosh and PC clients. Both PC and Mac clients share all networked printers by use of the Adobe Postscript driver standard. Fiber optic cable segments are in place between most buildings on campus and will connect all buildings on campus when construction is complete. The School is a member of the CapNet network and granted an Internet domain address of TSBVI.EDU (192.188.148.x) in 1992. Currently, TSBVI servers support the various functions such as web-hosting (www.tsbvi.edu) Web-based distance education, video-conferencing, resource sharing, application serving, and Intranet applications. TSBVI must maintain up to date equipment for the effective, efficient, and reliable delivery of services.

The current technical standard for network deployment is 1Gb to the desktop so that any client endpoint on campus can be the source of video conferencing or to meet other high-bandwidth requirements. Long-term plans to meet anticipated capacity requirements have been addressed by deployment of 10 Gigabit backbone segments between the main classroom building, the Outreach building and the network core to provide a reliable and supportable campus environment.

A secure, reliable, and robust wireless IP networking infrastructure is required to prepare our school and our students for the accelerating transition of computing and communications moving from tethered desktops and server rooms to smaller portable devices and the internet. Much as children in school today will likely never have a land line for phone service, children entering school today will likely never have a box at their desk plugged into the wall as a computer. With a 40 acre campus, freeing faculty and staff from their

offices for communications and computing services allows them greater flexibility for efficient and effective service delivery.

Communication routing for TSBVI is provided via the Department of Information Resources. All access and report/mail delivery to the USAS, USPS, and other state and federal computer facilities is provided through this link. Through our participation in the Esconnett, the school uses a second circuit to Educational Service Center XIII to provide client Internet access as well as to route all video protocols. Gigaman fiber circuits connect TSBVI with DIR and the Region XIII Education Service Center to provide network, internet, and video conferencing and distance education services.

◆Anticipated Need for Automation (either purchased or leased) ◆

The TSBVI management team, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, has determined that a four-year replacement cycle for computers and assistive technology is required for reliable delivery of services to the blind and visually impaired children of Texas. This schedule meets service delivery requirements while increasing reliability and decreasing maintenance costs and disruptions brought about by obsolete equipment. Committing to a four-year replacement cycle reduces the risk that service delivery may be adversely impacted when budget constraints occur and replacement needs to be postponed. Current capital budgets are not sufficient to fully meet the four-year replacement cycle so some prioritization and re-deployment is required.

After careful consideration utilizing the Texas Department of Information Resources Guidelines for Lease vs. Purchase of Information Technologies, TSBVI has determined that the purchase option is in the best interests of the school and those it serves. The relatively long life of the assets along with the need for flexibility and integration with adaptive technologies were important considerations in this decision.

It is a priority of the TSBVI management and Board of Trustees that the School's adaptive, instructional, and information technologies are sufficient to accomplish its educational mission to teach children and be a statewide resource.

Economic Variables

◆Identification of Key Economic Variables◆

There are two key economic variables for TSBVI to consider. The first is the impact of the economy on the lives of blind and visually impaired adults, and how our educational program reflects this impact. The second variable is how the general economy impacts the capacity of TSBVI to carry out its mission.

◆Extent to Which Service Populations are Affected by Economic Conditions◆

Blind and visually impaired adults are traditionally unemployed or underemployed. While there is little specific data available, the general consensus of experts in rehabilitation is that actual unemployment among blind adults has hovered around 70% for the past 40 years. Any downturn in the economy or increase in the general rate of unemployment exacerbates this problem. TSBVI believes that this is unacceptable, and that education owns at least part of the responsibility for this tragic level of unemployment. We have been restructuring our vocational program to address this economic fact. Preparing students for the world of work will remain a major focus of TSBVI's programs.

◆Expected Future Economic Conditions and Impact on Agency and Service Populations◆

The workforce environment increasingly requires that prospective workers have the technical skills necessary to be employable. Literacy and the skills to live and travel independently are also prerequisites for blind people to be able to obtain

and hold jobs. The programs of the School will need to continue to emphasize these skills. TSBVI is developing its vocational program to directly address projections for future employment in Texas. TSBVI has reorganized its career education program so that all students will receive extensive learning experiences designed to prepare them for the labor market of today and tomorrow.

◆Agency Response to Changing Economic Conditions◆

Future economic conditions of the State will certainly impact TSBVI. The school has carefully and prudently examined its budget, redefined its various roles, reallocated resources, and uses its resources in creative and conservative ways to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired students throughout Texas. We cannot reduce or eliminate services now being offered and still meet the needs of Texas children, and of their parents and school districts.

The School is being affected by the major economic events at play in the state and nation. The most pressing concern is the impact of the state's economy. As with all government services, it will be a great challenge for the School to balance increased demand for services with available funding.

Impact of Federal Statutes/Regulations

◆Historical Role of Federal Involvement◆

The most significant impact of federal involvement has been the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The requirements of this law, and the processes required to implement it, have affected TSBVI greatly. Direct participation by parents and local school staff in the educational process, and the requirement of an Individualized Educational Plan

(IEP) for each child have positively affected programming for students while requiring increased time and attention from staff and administrators.

In addition to its impact on programs, instructional planning, student assessment, educational placement, and due process rights for parents, this law has also provided the School with some funding, most notably those allocated to operate the statewide Deafblind Project. The School has been the primary source for the statewide delivery of these services since 1973. This source of federal funding has provided a high quality outreach program to local districts and families. In the event that the U.S. Congress eliminates these funds, the program would be eliminated or severely curtailed.

Also, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has made available to the School some federal IDEA funds awarded to Texas for statewide priorities. These funds have been used for several programs, including a technology loan program for students throughout the state, conducting the statewide registry of visually impaired students, operating Summer Programs, and meeting the needs of students with multiple disabilities, including deafblindness.

◆*Description of Current Federal Activities*◆

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was re-authorized and amended by the U.S. Congress in 1995 and 2004. Any future changes in the law, accompanying regulations, and the current revision of state education rules will significantly affect TSBVI. Congress has upheld the right of all children with disabilities to a continuum of placement options, including schools such as TSBVI. Federal and Texas statutes, rules, policy statements, and case law continue to make it clear that special schools like TSBVI continue to be the “appropriate” and “least restrictive environment” for some visually impaired students. TSBVI is an essential placement option within the Texas public education system.

The enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has also affected the School significantly, beginning with the 2003 school year. There are increased requirements for documenting student learning, and increased testing and accountability systems. We are proud to have been pioneers in partnership with the Texas Education Agency in developing a meaningful accountability program for TSBVI students.

The School continues to participate in the Medicaid reimbursement programs for specific reimbursable expenditures. These include portions of school health and related services (SHARS) provided directly to students, and certain administrative overhead costs (Medicaid Administrative Claims, abbreviated as the MAC).

The federally funded Free and Reduced Lunch Program also provides funds that offset the state’s cost in providing meals to students enrolled at the School. All of our residential students under the age of 21 are eligible for this program because they are in a state-operated, residential, educational program.

◆*Anticipated Impact on Service Populations and Agency Operations of Future Federal Actions*◆

The amended IDEA and its accompanying federal regulations of, and the expanding requirements of the NCLB Act combine to alter significantly the services provided to students with disabilities. The individualization of curriculum is being supplanted by individualization of services aimed at having all children master the same curriculum. If this trend continues, it will pose interesting challenges in the education of blind and visually impaired students, including those with deafblindness and other additional disabilities.

Other Legal Issues

◆ *Impact of Anticipated State Statutory Changes* ◆

Anticipated Texas and federal statutes will emphasize increased accountability for public education especially for student learning and effective teaching. This increased accountability necessitates expanding instructional curriculum, improving effective teaching methods, and increasing time and money for teacher training.

◆ *Impact of Current and Outstanding Court Cases* ◆

None at this time.

◆ *Impact of Local Government Requirements* ◆

None at this time.

Self-evaluation and Opportunities for Improvement

◆ *Meeting Legal Requirements, Serving Critical Populations, Achieving Accreditation and Recognition* ◆

➤ *Legally Required Services*

TSBVI is established to provide appropriate educational services to school-age children with significant visual impairments who may have additional disabilities when the local or regional programs cannot meet the educational needs of those students. There are nearly 9,000 children with blindness or visual impairment geographically dispersed throughout Texas. TSBVI may be called upon at any point in the educational careers of these students to directly serve them in the School's regular school year program, in a summer program, or in one of the new short-term programs. In addition to direct instruction of students, the school is also

established to be a statewide resource for the education of blind and visually impaired children who attend their local public schools. TSBVI continually evaluates the effectiveness of its programs and the satisfaction of those it serves. Evaluation is conducted by performance measures, internal audits, customer surveys, and informal comparisons to other states' schools for the blind.

➤ *Accreditation*

TSBVI is accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as a special school within the Texas public education system. The School and the TEA have jointly developed and approved a set of Academic and Program Excellence Indicators to measure student learning and program effectiveness at TSBVI. These Indicators have been incorporated as measures in the School's Strategic Plan and serve as a component in determining the accreditation status of the School.

➤ *Attainment of Performance Objectives*

During fiscal year 2011, the School met or exceeded eight out of eleven of its performance objectives as set forth in its Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriations Request. Three other objectives fell less than 5% below the projection.

The following information details the School's performance for FY 2011 in areas critical to the School's mission:

- **Student Learning.** The School exceeded its projections in the areas of student learning as reflected by progress in performance indicator assessments, TAKS scores, Short-term Program student progress, and productivity of TSBVI graduates.
- **Customer Satisfaction.** The School met or exceeded its projections in the following areas:

- At least 90% of parents, local school districts, and students rated satisfaction in all 10 major instructional areas in Comprehensive Programs as satisfactory, very satisfactory or outstanding.
- 94% of parents, local school districts, and students stated students' experiences in Short-term Programs were very satisfactory or outstanding.
- 96% of local school districts and parents stated students' learning in summer programs was very satisfactory or outstanding.
- 87% of Outreach customers rated the effectiveness of school consultations and workshops as very satisfactory or outstanding.

➤ *Program Evaluations*

TSBVI evaluates the effectiveness of its programs through both formative and summative evaluations. Detailed annual action plans are developed to accomplish the objectives stated in the Agency Strategic Plan. Formative evaluation is conducted by documenting progress on the action plans at scheduled intervals. Summative evaluation is conducted annually by the School's Board of Trustees and administration based on attainment of objectives in the School's Strategic Plan and in the TSBVI Annual Improvement Plan. One of the objectives found in both the Agency Strategic Plan and the Annual Improvement Plan is attainment of the accreditation standard set by the Texas Education Agency. Performance on this standard is evaluated annually by TSBVI and TEA and the standard for the next school year is developed at that time.

➤ *Audit Reports*

The School conducts an ongoing internal audit process based on an annual audit plan approved by the TSBVI Board of Trustees. Recent audits have focused on timekeeping, reporting and

investigating allegations of student abuse, neglect and exploitation, and on the school database management system.

The Internal Auditor develops an annual risk based audit plan in close collaboration with school administrators and the board of trustees. Audits assessing compliance with state laws and rules as well as agency policies and procedures have been completed. Recommendations are implemented as necessary to improve compliance and increase efficiency of operations as needed. The administration has implemented appropriate responses to the findings of these audits.

An audit of the School's Risk Management Program was conducted in March 2012 by the State Office of Risk Management. One recommendation was made related to continuing the development of the Agency Business Continuity Plan.

The Texas Education Agency monitored the educational program of TSBVI in the spring of 2012. The monitors found that the School is in compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.

➤ *Comparisons with Other States and Industry Leaders*

As part of its benchmarking process, TSBVI has collected data and compared its performance to that of schools for the visually impaired in other states. In every category regarding parent satisfaction, TSBVI is rated equal or superior to the composite data on all other schools for the blind. TSBVI significantly exceeded national results in the area of competitive employment for its graduates.

TSBVI has pioneered the role of schools for the blind as a statewide resource. Other states have long envied and now are beginning to emulate the comprehensive outreach programs provided by TSBVI. The School's curriculum has been

published and adopted by other schools for the blind, local school districts, and university teacher preparation programs. The School's summer programs have long been a model for the country, reaching out to blind students who attend local public schools during their regular school year sessions.

The School's evaluation and planning process has also led to a significant programmatic change as a result of comparison with other states' schools for the visually impaired. The School has initiated short-term special programs during the regular school year for students who attend public schools. TSBVI has looked at models for this service in other states, adapted a Kentucky model, and is now in its tenth year of conducting short-term special programs. Local school districts, parents, and students have welcomed this expanding area of programming at TSBVI.

Needs assessments gathered for the Outreach program reflect a generally high level of satisfaction with the range of services provided by this program and a continuing desire for more assistance. Consumers need information provided in a variety of formats, languages and media. The sheer size of the State of Texas limits opportunities for face-to-face interaction and makes isolation a major concern. Parents and blind or deafblind students are eager for opportunities to meet others with similar needs and issues. For professionals and families there is a desire for general training on the impact of visual impairments and deafblindness, and for individualized answers to more specific questions. In-person conferences and consultations are rated consistently as very helpful, and there is also a growing demand for products accessible at the moment a need arises, as through Web sites, videotapes, booklets and pamphlets, and computer disks. The Outreach Programs are continuing to expand their distance education capacity and diversify the materials used for imparting information and training in order to most effectively meet statewide requests.

◆*Performance Benchmarking*◆

➤ *Benchmarking Process*

The School engages in internal benchmarking and industry benchmarking. Internal benchmarking relies primarily on the School's evaluation of its outcome, output, and efficiency measures. Examination of output and efficiency measures has allowed the School to re-allocate some resources to initiate or expand services.

Industry benchmarking is a new effort of the School in collaboration with other schools for the blind throughout the United States. TSBVI is an active member of the Council of Schools for the Blind (COSB), a national organization of residential schools for blind and visually impaired students. COSB has begun the task of developing baseline data on all schools for the blind in the U.S., in order to provide both composite data and information on how schools compare to one another. Thus far, data from demographic studies, customer satisfaction (parents) surveys, and student learning (employment) have been collected, analyzed, and compiled. TSBVI has met or exceeded the composite scores of those schools for the blind participating in the national study and benchmarking process.

◆*Agency Characteristics Requiring Improvement*◆

The School is committed to making the following improvements:

- Improved quality, effectiveness, and efficiency in the operation of instructional programs, and in the administrative divisions that support the instructional programs. The Comprehensive Programs division is implementing the findings from a benchmark quality improvement program known as Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired (QPVI) completed in 2007.

- Implementation of a master facilities plan and construction of physical facilities that are congruent with the needs of our students.
 - Increased use of data in needs assessment and decision-making.
 - Contribute to a shared vision among Education Service Centers, local school districts, parents, and TSBVI regarding high quality service delivery systems for the education of blind and visually impaired students in Texas.
 - A higher, more positive profile of TSBVI in the State, with a focus on making the School's processes as highly regarded as its programs.
 - Completion of the School's project to develop a balanced curriculum that meets the individual needs of each student and that includes the expanded core curriculum to address the unique needs of learners with a visual impairment.
 - Increasing revenues from other public and private sources to help meet the expanding demand for services from TSBVI.
 - Active involvement of local districts and parents in maintaining a sense of responsibility for residential students at TSBVI. Increased parental participation is a specific goal, utilizing telephone conferences, on-site visits, videoconferences, a Parent Weekend, and participation in the school wide site-based decision making committee.
 - Expansion of technology available to students and training of staff in instructional and administrative technology applications.
- ◆Key Obstacles◆**
- Fiscal Resources: Maintaining sufficient funds to meet the demand for expanded services on campus and throughout Texas.
 - Human Resources: Inadequate resources for continued staff development, especially in the use of new and emerging technologies.
 - Societal Perception: There is a pervasive lack of knowledge and appreciation of the capabilities of persons with blindness and visual impairments, especially in regard to employability. The unemployment rate, and the underemployment rate, of visually impaired individuals are much too high.
 - Geographic Obstacles: The geography of Texas profoundly affects the travel budget and delivery systems for outreach services, parent participation, and Weekends Home for students.
 - ◆ Student Transportation. Many blind children live in some of the more remote, rural areas of Texas. This geographical dispersion complicates the logistics of transporting students to and from the School, which is especially challenging because the School strongly believes that students attending a residential school should maintain the closest possible ties with their families, and should travel home as often as possible. The School has undertaken extensive travel obligations to ensure that students in east, west, north and south Texas have the same opportunities to be with their families as the students in central Texas.
 - ◆ Outreach Services. The geography of Texas also presents special challenges for the School's Department of

Outreach Services, the component of the school that provides services statewide to parents and professionals who work with students who have visual impairments, other additional impairments, and deafblind students. The expenditures for and the legislative cap on travel expenses has motivated the increased use of services through electronic media.

◆ *Opportunities* ◆

TSBVI has defined and nurtured its role in the education of all blind and visually impaired students in Texas. Our opportunities are great, including:

- An outstanding professional staff, constituting the greatest concentration of expertise in education of children who are blind and visually impaired in Texas.
- A committed support staff. Every TSBVI employee knows that she is employed in order to serve children, whether the job is preparing meals, providing physical therapy, or mowing the lawn.
- Facilities that are conducive to carrying out our mission. Actions by previous legislatures have provided TSBVI with much-needed funds to renovate its aged campus. The staff, students, and parents are very appreciative of the Legislature's funding a complete reconstruction of its facilities.
- There is a positive climate at TSBVI that encourages personnel to explore, create, and accept new challenges. All staff are urged to participate in decision-making and to assume shared responsibility for our efforts. Visitors from other state agencies, public schools, and other stakeholders often compliment the School on the quality of its staff and services.
- TSBVI is a recognized leader in technological development, both for its staff and for students. Recent advances in technology have the potential to open unlimited professional and personal doors for blind and visually impaired persons. The School has established an Accessibility Work Group to advise the Superintendent and Board on how to make TSBVI a model for accessibility of information for blind and visually impaired staff.
- TSBVI and the Texas Division of Blind Services (DBS) of the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) share a common interest, good working relationship, and geographic proximity. This interagency partnership has created the opportunity to provide excellent transition services to young people preparing to leave school and enter the world of work and independent living. We are developing an even closer working relationship with the DBS so that our students will receive the best preparation for adulthood from us, and then, as necessary, take full advantage of appropriate services at the DBS.
- The citizens of Texas, through their elected legislators, have demonstrated a commitment to quality education for blind and visually impaired children at TSBVI. This is evidenced by the continuing strong fiscal support for our school by the Legislature.
- TSBVI recognizes its responsibility to provide our students with opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers, and we have developed a community program that brings sighted children onto our campus for social and recreational activities, as well as provide opportunities for our students to access community activities off-campus.

- Our curriculum department has published curriculum guides and other documents that greatly enhance the education of children on our campus and throughout the state. TSBVI is known nationally and internationally as the source for the best curriculum materials for blind learners in the world.

◆Working with Local, State, and Federal Entities◆

TSBVI works with local school districts and local Education Service Centers (ESC's) throughout the state to develop an appropriate, individualized educational program for each student. TSBVI is mandated by the Legislature to provide services to all blind and visually impaired children in the state. This requires that the School maintain and nurture effective working relationships with local school districts and Education Service Centers. An increasing number of staff development activities are the result of collaboration between TSBVI, ESCs, and school districts.

TSBVI will work with state agencies such as the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Division of Blind Services, other branches of the Health and Humans Services Commission, and local interagency groups such as Community Resource Coordinating Groups (CRCG's) to assist in locating and delivering services to the students served by TSBVI.

Federal funds contribute to support the School's statewide programs and services for deafblind students. The School also receives federal and state funds through the Region XI (Fort Worth) Education Service Center, to provide many of the School's Outreach services that enrich the educational programs for all blind and visually impaired students in the State.

◆Key Technological, Capital, Human and Community Resources Available◆

The School has initiated a program to obtain more community resources to assist the School in its mission. An existing staff position and director-level administrator have been assigned part-time to enhance revenue from both public and private sources. All Blind Children of Texas, a 501c(3) non-profit educational charity, continues to support programs for blind children throughout Texas.

The School will continue to avail itself of the excellent resources of the Austin community. These include the Austin ISD that has long been a partner in providing opportunities for students at TSBVI to attend academic classes in regular public school settings. Students from the University of Texas-Austin and Texas State University, especially the Delta Gamma sorority, continue to volunteer and provide opportunities for TSBVI students to participate in social activities in the community. TSBVI has been accepted as a partner with the Austin Junior League, whose volunteers are providing recreational opportunities for our students, as well as recording recreational reading and transcribing braille.

Service organizations such as the Austin Downtown Lions Club, the Texas National Federation of the Blind, the Austin Council of the Blind, church groups, corporations, and individuals continue to provide their time and some funds for special activities. Finally, there are the ample and unique community resources of the city of Austin and its environs that are much used by the School's students for recreation, cultural awareness, employment, and gaining consumer skills.

The School will continue to be a partner with universities to recruit and train teachers for the visually impaired in high-need areas of Texas. Currently, TSBVI is collaborating with Stephen F.

Austin University and with Texas Tech University in teacher preparation.

◆*Employee Attitudes Regarding TSBVI*◆

The results of TSBVI staff's participation in the 2011 Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) administered through the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work indicated that areas of strength for the School are in the constructs of Supervision, which indicates employees view supervisors as fair, helpful, and critical to the flow of work; Strategic, which indicates employees view the organization is able to quickly relate its mission and goals to environmental changes and demands; Employee Development, which indicates employees feel the organization provides opportunities for growth in organizational responsibilities and personal needs.

Areas of concern are in the constructs of Pay, which suggest salary is a central concern or reason for employee discontent; Information Systems, which suggests employees are frustrated with securing needed information; Internal Communication, which suggests employees feel information does not arrive in a timely fashion and it is often difficult to find needed facts.

These results are consistent with an informal employee satisfaction survey posted on the TSBVI Intranet in April 2010 that indicated employees are dissatisfied with pay. It is our impression that staff often leave for reasons directly or indirectly related to pay. Very seldom do staff express dissatisfaction with the work itself. In fact, many departing staff members comment in their resignation letters on the satisfaction of working with students and their own growth while working here. Staff take pride in the work that they do with students. Even staff who do not work directly with students often get involved in student activities or attend student events. The focus at TSBVI is, first and foremost, on students, and that is reflected in the attitude of all staff.

The fact that TSBVI has very few grievances and a low incidence of complaints filed indicates that the School fosters positive employee attitudes. One illustration of this is the number of former TSBVI staff members who return to employment after having left. Many employees openly state that they like their jobs, their students, and the dedication of their colleagues.

AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL 1: Students who are visually impaired or deafblind will demonstrate the skills and knowledge to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying lives as demonstrated by academic success and successful transition to the community.

OBJECTIVE: Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will annually demonstrate progress in their academic programs, career and work programs, and life skills programs.

Outcome Measures:

- Percent of Comprehensive Program Students Achieving Moderate to Substantial Progress on Every Area of the Core and Expanded Core Curriculum in Which They are Receiving Programming
- Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-assessment
- Percent of Students Graduated from TSBVI During the Past 5 Years Who Are Currently Employed, Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities
- Percent of Major Instructional Areas of Comprehensive Programs in which Students' Progress Rated as Satisfactory or Above by at Least 90% of LEAs, Parents and Students
- Percent of Statewide Assessment Tests Passed
- Percent of English Language Learners Meeting the Passing Standard on the Reading and English End-of-Course State Assessments

STRATEGY: Provide a well-balanced curriculum which includes disability-specific skills and which meets either State Board of Education requirements for regular education or individualized education plan (IEP) goals. Provide instruction in academic/functional, vocational, and orientation and mobility skills and promote the successful transition of students to local schools, community placements, work or further education.

Output Measures:

- Number of Students Enrolled in Day Programming During the Regular School Year

- Number of Students Returned to Local School Districts through the ARD process
- Percent of Students Enrolled Who Have Multiple Disabilities

Efficiency Measure:

- Average Cost of Instructional Program per Student per Day

STRATEGY: Conduct residential programming that provides instruction in independent living skills and social skills.

Output Measure:

- Number of Students Enrolled in Residential Programming During the Regular School Year

Efficiency Measure:

- Average Cost of Residential Program per Student per Night

STRATEGY: Provide a variety of instructional and residential Special Programs including summer enrichment and short-term programs designed to meet the educational needs of students with visual impairments. Curriculum will be provided in the following content areas: (a) compensatory academic skills, including communication modes; (b) social interaction skills; (c) recreation and leisure skills; (d) use of assistive technology; (e) orientation and mobility; (f) independent living skills; (g) career education; and (h) visual efficiency skills.

Output Measures:

- Number of Students Enrolled in Short-term Programs
- Number of Students Enrolled in Summer Programs

Efficiency Measure:

- Average Cost of Special Programs per Student

STRATEGY: Provide related and support services during the regular school year and short-term Special Programs that support the instruction of students attending TSBVI.

Output Measures:

- Number of Students Receiving Orientation and Mobility Services

Efficiency Measures:

- Average Cost of Related and Support Services per Student

GOAL 2: Families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve educational programming and other services for all Texas students who are visually impaired or deafblind.

OBJECTIVE: Texas students, professionals, families, individuals, local school districts, and agencies will receive quality services or products from Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Outcome Measures:

- Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Improvement of their Knowledge and Skills as a Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI
- Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the School Consultation/Workshop
- Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Agreeing that there was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a Result of a School Consultation

STRATEGY: Provide technical assistance and information and referral services for families of and programs serving children with visual impairments and children with deaf-blindness through pre-service, inservice and family services programs.

Output Measures:

- Number of Education Regions Receiving School Consultations and/or Local and Regional Workshops in Their Regions or Attending Training Sponsored by TSBVI
- Number of Districts/Special Education Cooperatives Receiving School Consultations
- Number of Conferences and Workshops
- Number of School Consultations
- Number of Participants at Conferences and Workshops

Efficiency Measures:

- Average Cost of Each School Consultation
- Average Cost of Workshop per Person

STRATEGY: Support preparation of educational professionals in visual impairment. Provide a unique statewide mentorship program for VI professionals and support university programs to recruit and train new teachers of students with visual impairment (TVI) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) to address a growing teacher shortage.

Output Measures:

- Total Number of New Individual Students Enrolled in University Coursework
- Number of Newly Hired Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) Serving Students with Visual Impairments in Local School District

GOAL 3: We will establish and carry out policies governing purchasing and public works contracting that foster meaningful and substantive inclusion of historically underutilized businesses.

OBJECTIVE: TSBVI will include historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) in at least 18% of the total value of contracts and subcontracts awarded annually by the agency in purchasing and public works contracting by fiscal year 2016.

Outcome Measure:

- Percent of Total Dollar Value of Purchasing and Public Works Contracts and Subcontracts Awarded to HUBs

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a plan for increasing the use of historically underutilized businesses through purchasing and public works contracts and subcontracts.

Output Measures:

- Number of HUB Contractors and Subcontractors Contacted for Bid Proposals
- Number of HUB Contracts and Subcontracts Awarded
- Dollar Value of HUB Contracts and Subcontracts Awarded

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT AND ALIGNMENT

1. Initiative Name: Name of the technology initiative.	
Wireless Infrastructure	
2. Initiative Description: Brief description of the technology initiative.	
The wireless infrastructure initiative is designed to plan and deploy state of the art campus wide wireless services in a secure, robust, integrated, and manageable manner.	
3. Associated Project(s): Name and status of current or planned project(s), if any, that support the technology initiative and that will be included in agency’s Information Technology Detail.	
Name	Status
Daily Operations	Ongoing
4. Agency Objective(s): Identify the agency objective(s) that the technology initiative supports.	
<p>This objective primarily supports the objective under Goal 1 of the TSBVI Strategic Plan:</p> <p>Texas School for the blind and visually Impaired will annually demonstrate progress in their academic programs, career and work programs, and life skills programs.</p>	
5. Statewide Technology Priority(ies): Identify the statewide technology priority or priorities the technology initiative aligns with, if any.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – Cloud • P2 – Data Management • P3 – Data Sharing • P4 – Infrastructure • P5 – Legacy Applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P6 – Mobility • P7 – Network • P8 – Open Data • P9 – Security and Privacy • P10 – Social Media
<p>This initiative aligns with Priority 6 – Mobility in enabling an employee and student facing secure and ubiquitous mobile network; Priority 7 through enhancing and extending network services and security while providing for the convergence of voice data and video over IP networks; and Priority 9 by providing centralized management and increased privacy through the use of state of the art security protocols and the ability to manage different levels of access to data and resources.</p>	

6. Guiding Principles: As applicable, describe how the technology initiative will address the following statewide technology guiding principles:

- Connect – expanding citizen access to services
- Innovate – leveraging technology services and solutions across agencies
- Trust – providing a clear and transparent accounting of government services and data
- Deliver – promoting a connected and agile workforce

This initiative addresses the guiding principle of innovation by implementing leading edge technology solutions that work for government by building a state of the art wireless network that can provide ubiquitous access across our campus while improving performance, reducing security vulnerabilities, and lower management overhead and costs through centralized management.

The guiding principle of Trust is addressed by reducing infrastructure and cyber security vulnerabilities through enhanced security, increased visibility, and the ability to better manage access to data and resources. The ability to implement advanced security protocols will further help to protect the privacy of personal information.

The guiding principle to Deliver is addressed by adopting appropriate alternate computing models that position TSBVI for the future as technology continues to migrate from the desktop to the hand held device. This initiative promotes a connected and agile workforce no longer tethered to their desks in order to communicate or to access and interact with data and resources anywhere within the TSBVI network or accessible through the internet.

7. Anticipated Benefit(s): Identify the benefits that are expected to be gained through the technology initiative. Types of benefits include:

- Operational efficiencies (time, cost, productivity)
- Citizen/customer satisfaction (service delivery quality, cycle time)
- Security improvements
- Foundation for future operational improvements
- Compliance (required by State/Federal laws or regulations)

The anticipated benefits of this initiative include operational efficiencies realized through enabling communications and data access anywhere on our 40 acre campus via wireless enabled devices freeing student and staff from the tether to the desktop. The ability to respond to internal and external customers in real time should also serve to enhance customer satisfaction. Management overhead of the infrastructure should be reduced by centralized management and maintenance of a uniform campus wide infrastructure. The ability to deploy state of the art security protocols and manage access to data and resources on a more granular level will provide significant security improvements. Finally, a secure and robust wireless infrastructure will provide a foundation for future operational improvements as more types of data migrate to IP networks, and as more computing and communications moves toward handheld wireless enabled devices.

8. Capabilities or Barriers: Describe current agency capabilities or barriers that may advance or impede the agency’s ability to successfully implement the technology initiative.

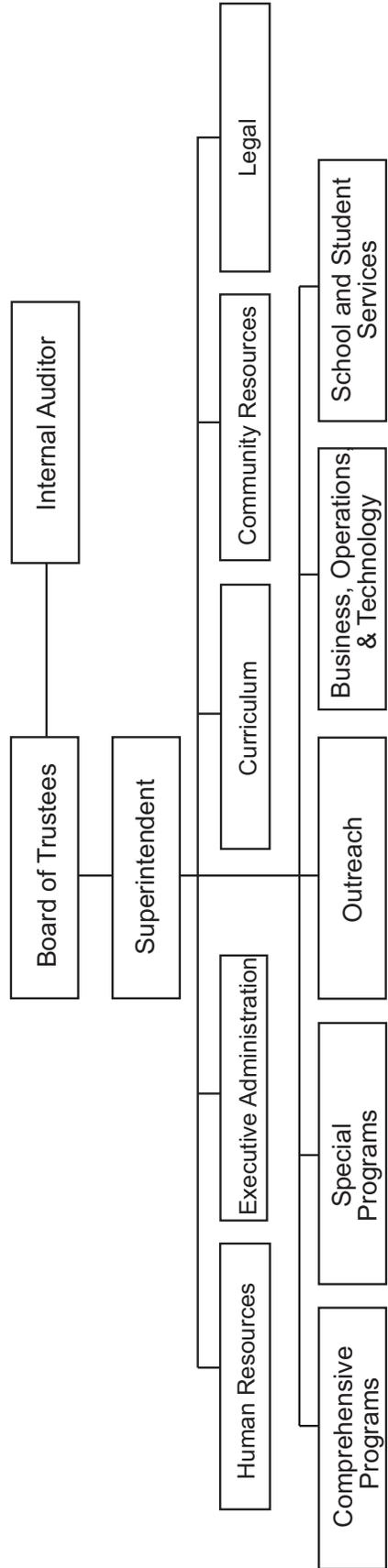
TSBVI has a competent and capable Information Resources team in place that will advance the implementation of this initiative, but additional training will be required to update the skills necessary to manage and secure this new wireless infrastructure. Planning and budgeting for this training has been include in this initiative.

Appendix A: Strategic Planning Process

This Agency Strategic Plan was developed with input from the School's Instructional Planning Council (IPC), TSBVI's Management Team, and the Board of Trustees. Members of these groups include TSBVI staff, students, parents, ex-students, individuals with visual impairments, professionals serving students with visual impairments throughout Texas, and members of the business community.

Appendix B: Current Organizational Chart

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired



Appendix C: Five-Year Projections for Outcomes
TSBVI PROJECTED OUTCOMES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2011-2015

Outcome	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percent of Comprehensive Program Students Achieving Moderate to Substantial Progress on Every Area of the Core and Expanded Core Curriculum in which They are Receiving Programming	80	80	80	80	80
Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-assessment	85	85	85	85	85
Percent of Students Graduated From TSBVI During the Past 5 Years Who are Employed, Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities	70	70	70	70	70
Percent of Major Instructional Areas of Comprehensive Programs in which Students' Progress was Rated as Satisfactory or Above by at Least 90% of LEAs, Parents and Students	100	100	100	100	100
Percent of Statewide Assessment Tests Passed	70	70	70	70	70
Percent of English Language Learners Meeting the Passing Standard on the Reading and English End-of-Course State Assessments	100	100	100	100	100
Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Improvement in their Knowledge and Skills as a Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI	85	85	85	85	85
Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the School Consultation/Workshop	85	85	85	85	85
Percent of Families, Professionals and Paraprofessionals Agreeing that there was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a Result of the School Consultation	90	90	90	90	90



Appendix D: Performance Measure Definitions

OUTCOME MEASURES

Objective 1:1 – Student Success

Percent of Comprehensive Program Students Achieving Moderate to Substantial Progress on Every Area of the Core and Expanded Core Curriculum in Which They are Receiving Programming

Short Definition: This measure indicates the percent of students achieving a score of 2.0 or higher in the Core and Expanded Core Curriculum areas in which they are assessed.

Purpose/Importance: This measure reflects the School’s primary measure of student learning and also serves as a basis for determining the accreditation status of the School. The standard for student performance that underlies this measure was jointly developed by TEA and TSBVI in response to a legislative requirement that such a measure be adopted by a joint memorandum of understanding.

Source/Collection of Data: Each student receives a pre-test in the curricular areas in which the student is scheduled. The number of skills in which the student has competency and generalized use are recorded on a computer database. At the end of the school year, the student is tested again to determine the number of skills in which the student has attained competency and generalized use. The teachers enter this data into a computer database and submit it to the Curriculum Department for compilation and analysis. The final results are forwarded to the Texas Education Agency.

Method of Calculation: The improvement in skills for each student is calculated at the end of each school year. Improvement is based on attainment of the following three criteria: a predetermined increase in the number of skills at the competency level, a predetermined increase in the number of generalized skills, and a predetermined prompt-level decrease, all of which were established in the student’s previous Individual Education Plan (IEP). The number of students who achieved a score of 2.0 or higher in all areas in which they are assessed is calculated and measured against the total number of students who were assessed.

Data Limitations: The evaluation data is curriculum-based and criterion-referenced. However, the results will have some limitations based on the degree to which the evaluators demonstrate objectivity and inter-rater reliability in conducting the assessments.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

Percent of Students Attending Short-term Programs Demonstrating Progress as Measured by Pre- and Post-Assessment:

Short Definition: All students are evaluated to determine the knowledge and skills that they have acquired in the special program that they attended.

Purpose/Importance: This is the School's primary measure of student learning in the special programs. The results are shared with the students' local school districts and parents.

Source/Collection of Data: Each student receives a pre-test in the skill areas for which the student has registered. At the end of the program, the student is tested again to determine progress. The teachers collect this data and submit it to the principal's office for compilation and analysis.

Method of Calculation: For each skill taught within an objective, the student is assessed on his/her ability to demonstrate the skill with 1 point given for demonstration of the skill and ½ point given for improvement in the skill. A percentage achievement of skills for each student is then obtained by tallying the number of points earned and dividing the total by the total number of skills taught. "Progress" is defined as achieving 70% of skills taught. On an annual basis, the total number of students (duplicated count) who have acquired at least 70% of skills taught is divided by the total number of students (duplicated count) who attended the program classes to determine whether or not the program's performance objective has been met. Progress reports are not issued for students attending weekend or one-day only classes.

Data Limitations: The evaluation data are criterion-referenced. The results have some limitations based upon the degree to which the evaluators exercise objectivity and inter-rater reliability in conducting the assessments.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Students Graduated from TSBVI during the Past Five Years Who are Currently Employed, Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities

Short Definition: Percentage of students who graduated from TSBVI five years before, and up through, May of the previous year who, during the past six months, had paid employment, were enrolled in post-secondary education or training, were homemakers with at least one dependent, were engaged in unpaid work or who currently participate on an ongoing basis in volunteer activities. Graduates who are no longer in the labor force because of long-term physical or mental illness are not included in the calculation.

Purpose/Importance: This measure provides information about the employability of TSBVI graduates, the rate at which they are enrolled in post-secondary education or training and the effectiveness of TSBVI's career education programs.

Source/Collection of Data: Telephone calls are made by the Superintendent's office staff or designee each summer to the last known location of TSBVI graduates, including to their own homes, to their parents' homes and to adult living centers. Respondents are asked to state the history of the graduate since leaving the School. Data are reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

Method of Calculation: The total number of graduates that graduated from TSBVI five years before, and up through May of the previous year who, during the last six months had paid employment, were enrolled in post-secondary education or training, were homemakers with at least one dependent, were engaged in unpaid work or currently participate on an ongoing basis in volunteer activities is measured against the total number of respondents to the surveys. Graduates who are not in the labor force because of long-term physical or mental illness are not included.

Data Limitations: Employment of graduates and enrollment into post-secondary education or training are contingent upon many factors, many of which are beyond the control of TSBVI. A graduate's motivation to work or to receive further education or training, as well as an employer's willingness to hire an individual who has a visual impairment have a strong impact on the results of this measure.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Major Instructional Areas of Comprehensive Programs in which Students' Progress was Rated as Satisfactory or Above by at Least 90% of LEAs, Parents, and Students

Short Definition: Student progress is measured based on the perceptions of all the stakeholders interested in the learning acquired by students at TSBVI during the regular school year.

Purpose/Importance: Student learning is the primary mission of the School. This measure helps the School to determine whether its regular school year program is considered to be effective.

Source/Collection of Data: Those surveyed include local districts, students who were enrolled since the start of the school year and parents of those students. Student participants are those middle school and high school students who have the cognitive ability to understand the questions in the survey. Surveys are mailed out by, and returned to, the Superintendent's office in the spring of the school year and consist of a rating instrument on which the local district, parent, and student indicate their degree of satisfaction with the student's progress in 10 identified skill areas. The rating scale consists of 5 scores: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Results for each current year are reported in the annual report following the fourth quarter.

Method of Calculation: An average percentage of satisfaction is obtained by tallying the number of respondents who rated progress in each instructional area as a 3 or lower versus the total number of respondents to obtain one average score for each of the 10 instructional areas. The final reported result is calculated by dividing the number of instructional areas in which at least 90% of customers rated progress as a 3 or lower versus the total number of instructional areas.

Data Limitations: The entire survey is somewhat subjective. Student progress can be impacted by a number of factors beyond the School's control including each student's motivation to learn.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Statewide Assessment Tests Passed

Short Definition: This measure indicates the percent of STAAR, STAAR-Modified, and STAAR-Alternate tests taken in which students meet the State passing standard set by the Texas Education Agency in the core curriculum areas in which they are assessed.

Purpose/Importance: This measure reflects educational standards required by NCLB and reflects the School's commitment to providing all students with education based on the TEKS objectives.

Source/Collection of Data: Each student meeting the state criteria for testing in STAAR, STAAR-Modified, and STAAR-Alternate will be assessed yearly in all required subject areas according to the calendar provided by the Texas Education Agency. Results are received in the format of individual Confidential Student Reports and District Reports.

Method of Calculation: The passing rate will be determined by scores available at the end of each school year. In the event that a student must retake a test that has not previously been passed, only the most recent test result will be calculated. Aggregate passing rate will be determined by calculating the total number of tests administered by individual and subject areas. The number of tests administered that met passing standards will then be divided into the total number of test administered, yielding the aggregate passing rate.

Data Limitations: As the majority of students at TSBVI take these standardized tests in a non-standard format (Braille or large print), the data is limited by the quality of the materials provided and the knowledge that non-standard formats may make the test more difficult than it would be for a student using regular print. Because field tests are not provided in Braille, students using Braille were not included in the process of setting standards for passing rates. Also, unlike other public schools, TSBVI students are referred to the School because they are failing in their local programs. They are returned to their local programs after increasing skills in areas for which they were referred. The average stay for these students is slightly over 3 school years and there is a high turnover of students. Because of these unique factors, scores on statewide assessment tests at TSBVI may not be comparable to scores in public schools

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

Percent of English Language Learners Meeting the Passing Standard on the Reading & English End-of-Course State Assessments

Short Definition: This measure indicates the percent of STAAR, STAAR-Modified, and STAAR-Alternate tests taken in which students met the State passing standard set by the Texas Education Agency in Reading and English End-of-Course exams.

Purpose/Importance: This measure reflects educational standards required by NCLB and reflects the School's commitment to providing all students with education based on the TEKS objectives.

Source/Collection of Data: Each student meeting the state criteria for testing in STAAR, STAAR-Modified, and STAAR-Alternate will be assessed yearly in all required subject areas according to the calendar provided by the Texas Education Agency. Results are received in the format of individual Confidential Student Reports and District Reports. Only results from Reading and English End-of-Course exams will be used for this measure.

Method of Calculation: The passing rate will be determined by scores available at the end of each school year. In the event that a student must retake a test that has not previously been passed, only the most recent test result will be calculated. Aggregate passing rate will be determined by calculating the total number of tests administered by individual and subject areas. The number of tests administered that met passing standards will then be divided into the total number of tests administered, yielding the aggregate passing rate.

Data Limitations: As the majority of students at TSBVI take these standardized tests in a non-standard format (Braille or large print), the data is limited by the quality of the materials provided and the knowledge that non-standard formats may make the test more difficult than it would be for a student using regular print. Because field tests are not provided in Braille, students using Braille were not included in the process of setting standards for passing rates. Also, unlike other public schools, TSBVI students are referred to the School because they are failing in their local programs. They are returned to their local programs after increasing skills in areas for which they were referred. The average stay for these students is slightly over 3 school years and there is a high turnover of students. Because of these unique factors, success on TAKS tests at TSBVI may not be comparable to scores in public schools.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

Objective 2.1 – Statewide Resource Center

Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Improvement of their Knowledge and Skills as a Result of the Services or Products Received from TSBVI:

Short Definition: Parents and professionals throughout Texas who have received services and products from the School’s Outreach Technical Assistance Program are surveyed to measure their satisfaction with these services and products.

Purpose/Importance: This is a key question to indicate whether the TSBVI training and materials provided new or valuable information in a format useful to participants.

Source/Collection of Data: Surveys are distributed following each workshop and along with written reports mailed out following each school consultation. Surveys are mailed annually for the “TX SenseAbilities Newsletter”, and for customers of the Technology Loan Program and Instructional Materials Center. The surveys include a rating instrument on which Outreach technical assistance customers indicate their degree of satisfaction according to the following rating scale: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Data are compiled manually and reported in the Annual Performance Report following the fourth quarter.

Method of Calculation: The total number of Outreach technical assistance customers rating how well Outreach technical assistance products or services improved their knowledge and skills as a 2 or lower is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

Data Limitations: Success is based on the perceptions of those who have received the products and services. A degree of subjectivity is inherent but the measure offers reliable information on program results and customer satisfaction.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Rating as Very Satisfactory or Above the Effectiveness of the School Consultation/Workshop:

Short Definition: Parents, professionals, or paraprofessionals attending Outreach technical assistance workshops or receiving school consultations rate the effectiveness of the services.

Purpose/Importance: This measure of customer satisfaction provides information about whether Outreach technical assistance staff effectively address the specific needs of parents, professionals and paraprofessionals receiving consultation or training.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance customers are provided with written surveys following each workshop and school consultation on which to rate their satisfaction according to a five-point rating scale: 1 = outstanding, 2 = very satisfactory, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = unsatisfactory, 5 = very unsatisfactory. Data are manually compiled and reported in the Annual Performance Report following the fourth quarter.

Method of Calculation: The total number of Outreach technical assistance customers rating the effectiveness of the school consultation or workshop as a 2 or lower is measured against the total number of respondents to the survey question.

Data Limitations: Success is based on the perceptions of those who have received the services. A degree of subjectivity is inherent but the measure offers reliable information on program results and customer satisfaction.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Families, Professionals, and Paraprofessionals Agreeing that There was a Positive Change for the Student, Staff or Family as a Result of the School Consultation:

Short Definition: Percentage of Outreach technical assistance customers agreeing that the student, staff or family experienced a positive change as a result of a school consultation.

Purpose/Importance: The measure addresses the question as to whether the services of Outreach actually make a positive difference. This is an important measure of program effectiveness.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance customers are provided with written surveys following each school consultation on which to rate their satisfaction according to a two-point scale: Yes or No. Data are manually compiled and reported in the Annual Performance Report following the fourth quarter.

Method of Calculation: The total number of Outreach technical assistance customers agreeing that the school consultation resulted in a positive change as compared to the total number of responses.

Data Limitations: Success is based on the perceptions of those who have received the services. A degree of subjectivity is inherent but the measure offers reliable information on program results and customer satisfaction.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

OUTPUT, EFFICIENCY and EXPLANATORY MEASURES

Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.1

Number of Students Enrolled in Day Programming During the Regular School Year:

Short Definition: The total number of individual students enrolled at TSBVI who received classroom instruction during the regular school year (September-May) including students on evaluation status.

Purpose/Importance: Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs. The data is also used to determine the School's allocation of federal IDEA funds and the local schools' contribution of funds to TSBVI.

Source/Collection of Data: The School's Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes. A database report is compared with student enrollment lists provided by each program to determine the number of students enrolled each quarter.

Method of Calculation: Each individual student who has attended classes during any time each quarter is counted.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Number of Students Returned to Local School Districts Through the ARD Process:

Short Definition: The total number of students transitioned from TSBVI to local school districts through the ARD process.

Purpose/Importance: This measure reflects the number of students transitioned to local school districts in the state of Texas through the ARD process, as having met goals designed to enable the students to successfully participate and integrate in their local schools' and communities' programs. Data are obtained through the agency's automated student database system.

Source/Collection of Data: The School's Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes. A database report is compared with student enrollment lists provided by each program to determine the number of students that transitioned each quarter through the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) process.

Method of Calculation: The total number of individual students that transitioned each quarter through the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) process is reported.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Students Enrolled Who Have Multiple Disabilities:

Short Definition: The total percent of students with multiple disabilities who received classroom instruction during the regular school year.

Purpose/Importance: The percent of enrolled students with multiple disabilities is a critical factor in planning programs, allocating staff and fiscal resources, and modifying facilities.

Source/Collection of Data: Disability status is determined at each student's annual ARD (admission, review, and dismissal) meeting and maintained in a student database in the Registrar's Office. The measure also includes students labeled as "deafblind". A report from the database is generated each quarter.

Method of Calculation: Counted are the total percent of individual students who are identified as having a disability in addition to a visual impairment.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Efficiency Measure – Strategy 1.1.1

Average Cost of Instructional Program per Student per Day:

Short Definition: Daily cost per student attending the instructional component of the regular school year program, not including short-term program students.

Purpose/Importance: Useful for long-range planning.

Source/Collection of Data: Applicable portions of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

Method of Calculation: Divide applicable expenses by total enrollment by the number of teacher contract days.

Data Limitations: The total population of the School varies from year to year in terms of number and degree of disability. Therefore, the average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual

number of students referred by local districts, and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Lower than target

Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.2

Number of Students Enrolled in Residential Programming During the Regular School Year:

Short Definition: The total number of individual students enrolled at TSBVI who received residential programming during the regular school year (September-May) including students on evaluation status.

Purpose/Importance: Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs.

Source/Collection of Data: The School's Admissions Office enters enrollment information into a database as students enter the School and as their enrollment status changes.

Method of Calculation: Each individual student who was enrolled in residential programming during any time of each quarter is counted.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Efficiency Measure – Strategy 1.1.2

Average Cost of Residential Program per Student per Night:

Short Definition: Daily cost per student enrolled in the residential program during the regular school year, not including short-term programs.

Purpose/Importance: Useful for long-range planning.

Source/Collection of Data: Applicable portions of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

Method of Calculation: Divide applicable expenses by total enrollment by the number of days each month.

Data Limitations: The total population of the School varies from year to year in terms of number and degree of disability. Therefore, the average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students referred by local districts, and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Lower than target

Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.3

Number of Students Enrolled in Short-term Programs:

Short Definition: The total number of individual students enrolled in instructional short-term programs offered during the regular school year.

Purpose/Importance: Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs.

Source/Collection of Data: The School's Registrar enters enrollment information into a database. A report is generated each quarter to determine the number of students enrolled each quarter.

Method of Calculation: This is a cumulative, duplicated count of individual students who are enrolled in instructional programming in any short-term program during each quarter.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Number of Students Enrolled in Summer Programs:

Short Definition: The total number of individual students receiving instruction during the summer programs.

Purpose/Importance: Enrollment is the basis for planning and decisions related to staffing levels and funding needs.

Source/Collection of Data: The School's Registrar enters enrollment information into a database. A report is generated in the fourth quarter to determine the number of students enrolled.

Method of Calculation: The number of students (duplicated count) attending each summer program is added to attain this information.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Efficiency Measure – Strategy 1.1.3

Average Cost of Special Programs per Student:

Short Definition: Average total cost per student of all short-term programs offered during the regular school year and summer.

Purpose/Importance: Useful for planning, and for the allocation of budget, personnel and facilities.

Source/Collection of Data: Applicable sections of the School's expenditure report and student enrollment database.

Method of Calculation: Divide applicable expenses by total enrollment of students in short-term and summer programs.

Data Limitations: The average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students participating in all short-term programs (regular school year and summer), and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Lower than target

Output Measures – Strategy 1.1.4

Number of Students Receiving Orientation and Mobility Services

Short Definition: This measure reflects the total number of students receiving orientation and mobility services as documented in each student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Purpose/Importance: Useful for planning, for determining staffing needs, for ensuring that visually impaired students acquire independent travel skills, and for documenting compliance with the statutory requirements related to special education.

Source/Collection of Data: Students’ schedules, providers’ schedules, and students’ IEPs are the sources for this information.

Method of Calculation: The caseloads of each orientation and mobility specialist are added.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Efficiency Measures – Strategy 1.1.4

Average Cost of Related and Support Services per Student:

Short Definition: This measure calculates the per student cost of related and support services for all programs conducted on the School’s campus. Related and support services include orientation and mobility, social work services, occupational and physical therapy services, psychological services, counseling, educational diagnostician services, speech and audiological services, library services, curriculum services, staff development, health services, food services, recreation services, and transportation service.

Purpose/Importance: The measure provides the School with cost data for services required by federal and state laws and rules related to special education, and for services required because of the residential component of the School’s programs.

Source/Collection of Data: Applicable sections of the School’s expenditure report and student enrollment database.

Method of Calculation: This measure is calculated by dividing the total cost of the related and support services strategy (Strategy 1.1.4) by the total number of students enrolled in the regular school year and in all short-term programs.

Data Limitations: The total population of the School varies from year to year in terms of number and degree of disability. Therefore, the average cost per student will fluctuate depending on the actual number of students referred by local districts, student participation in all short-term programs, and the special needs of students related to their combinations of disabilities.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Lower than target

Output Measures – Strategy 2.1.1

Number of Education Regions Receiving School Consultations and/or Local and Regional Workshops in their Regions or Attending Training Sponsored by TSBVI:

Short Definition: The measure reflects how many of the twenty Education Service Center regions throughout the State received school consultations or local and regional workshops from Outreach technical assistance staff, or participants from their regions who attended training sponsored by Outreach technical assistance staff concerning services for children with visual impairments and deafblindness. Consultation consists of suggestions for instructional methodologies, materials and equipment, staffing needs, educational placement, transition planning, related services, or information on relevant resources.

Purpose/Importance: Measures the degree to which TSBVI Outreach Technical Assistance Services are provided to all regions of the State.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet that records Outreach technical assistance services provided throughout the State and specifically listing the regional education service centers in to whom were provided and the regions represented at training sessions.

Method of Calculation: The total number of regions receiving services each quarter.

Data Limitations: Outreach technical assistance services are provided to regional education service centers or their constituents only upon request.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Meet target

Number of Districts/Special Education Cooperatives Receiving School Consultations:

Short Definition: The number of independent school districts, special education cooperatives, families, and local service providers receiving school consultations coordinated by TSBVI Outreach Technical Assistance Programs. Consultation consists of suggestions for instructional methodologies, materials and equipment, staffing needs, educational placement, transition planning, related services, or information on relevant resources.

Purpose/Importance: The measure indicates the impact of Outreach technical assistance school consultations in terms of quantity and geographical dispersion.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing the content and location of the services provided.

Method of Calculation: Tally the total number of individual local school districts or special education cooperatives receiving school consultations.

Data Limitations: Outreach technical assistance services are provided to districts and special education cooperatives only upon request.**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Number of Conferences and Workshops:

Short Definition: The number of conferences and workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by TSBVI, or at which TSBVI personnel are speakers.

Purpose/Importance: The measure indicates the degree to which the School's services meet its statewide mission and demonstrate professional leadership in the field.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing services provided throughout the State and nation.

Method of Calculation: Tally the total number of conferences provided.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Number of School Consultations:

Short Definition: The number of individual school consultations to local school programs, families and local service providers regarding services for students with visual impairments and deafblindness.

Consultation consists of suggestions for instructional methodologies, materials and equipment, staffing needs, educational placement, transition planning, related services, or information on relevant resources.

Purpose/Importance: The measure is important for two reasons: (1) it provides information regarding demand for the School's services, and (2) it provides historical data for planning and budgeting costs related to travel and staffing needs.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing services provided throughout the State including specific districts and programs served.

Method of Calculation: Tally the number of individual school consultations.

Data Limitations: Outreach technical assistance services are provided to local programs only upon request.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Number of Participants in Conferences and Workshops:

Short Definition: The overall number of participants attending conferences and workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by TSBVI, or those at which TSBVI staff are speakers.

Purpose/Importance: The measure indicates the degree to which the School's services meet its statewide mission and demonstrates professional leadership in the field.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance staff submit monthly reports that are entered into a spreadsheet listing the number of participants attending conferences and workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by TSBVI, or at which TSBVI personnel are speakers.

Method of Calculation: Tally the total number of participants attending conferences and workshops sponsored or co-sponsored by TSBVI, or at which TSBVI personnel are speakers.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Average Cost of Each School Consultation:

Short Definition: This measure calculates the average cost to conduct consultation regarding specific students attending local programs.

Purpose/Importance: This measure tracks expenditures for school consultations. It is important for the School to collect data on costs that are subject to the limit on travel expenditures required by the legislature for state agencies.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach technical assistance staff provide reports of travel expenses that are maintained in a computer-based spreadsheet.

Method of Calculation: The sum of costs for all travel for school consultation is divided by the number of consultations provided. The calculation includes only school consultations that result in a travel expense.

Data Limitations: There are several independent variables in calculating this efficiency measure: duration of each trip, distance traveled, and commercial airfares.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Lower than target

Average Cost of Workshop per Person:

Short Definition: Average per participant cost for workshops sponsored by TSBVI Outreach.

Purpose/Importance: This measure tracks expenditures for workshops sponsored by TSBVI. The data is important for budget planning.

Source/Collection of Data: Outreach staff manually track workshop expenses that are submitted for payment from funds appropriated to TSBVI.

Method of Calculation: The cost of each workshop production is divided by the number of participants at each conference to obtain an average cost for each conference. Each average cost is added and then divided by the number of workshops. The total cost of each workshop's expenses, including speaker fees, travel expenses for speakers and/or Outreach staff, audio/visual media, facility rental, copying costs, interpreter fees, and travel assistance for participants, when applicable.

Data Limitations: There are several independent variables in calculating this efficiency measure: number of participants, duration of each workshop, distance traveled, commercial airfares, cost for presenters, and the costs paid by other co-sponsors.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Lower than target

Output Measures – Strategy 2.1.2

Total Number of New Individual Students Enrolled in University Coursework:

Short Definition: Number of new participants enrolling each year in university coursework to become teachers of students with visual impairments (TVI) or certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS).

Purpose/Importance: This measure addresses the critical need for qualified staff to provide specialized educational services to students with visual impairments.

Source/Collection of Data: Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin Universities provide enrollment data annually to the TSBVI Outreach Program in a spreadsheet.

Method of Calculation: Tally the number of new enrollees in the programs.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

Number of Newly Hired Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists Serving Students with Visual Impairments in Local School Districts:

Short Definition: Measures the success of university preparation programs in increasing the supply of trained VI professionals for local districts.

Purpose/Importance: This strategy is designed to increase the number of qualified professionals available to provide specialized services to students with visual impairments and deafblindness. There is a growing shortage of personnel with these skills making it difficult for local districts to meet individualized educational programming requirements (IEPs).

Source/Collection of Data: Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin Universities provide information on numbers of teachers of visual impairments (TVI) receiving probationary certificates and newly hired certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS). Data is provided to the TSBVI Outreach Program in a spreadsheet. Given the difference between the school year calendar and the fiscal year, employment data will be supplied for the previous school year.

Method of Calculation: Tally the number of probationary teachers of students with visual impairment (TVI) certificates and newly hired certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS).

Data Limitations: Information comes from the universities who may not have complete information about where their graduates are hired.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

Appendix E:

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE ANALYSIS AND WORKFORCE PLAN

I. OVERVIEW

Originally created by the Texas Legislature in 1856, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been established as part of the public education system that serves as a special school in the continuum of statewide alternative placements for students who have a visual impairment. It is also a statewide resource to parents of these children and professionals who serve them.

Mission of TSBVI

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.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1: Students who are visually impaired or deafblind will demonstrate the skills and knowledge to lead vocationally, personally, and socially satisfying lives as demonstrated by academic success and successful transition to the community.

OBJECTIVE: Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will annually demonstrate progress in their academic programs, career and work programs, and life skills program.

GOAL 2: Families, professionals, and paraprofessionals will have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve educational programming and other services for all Texas students who are visually impaired or deafblind.

OBJECTIVE: Texas students, professionals, families, individuals, local school districts, and agencies will receive quality services or products from Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Main Functions: Direct and Outreach Services

- 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 school district and parents agree that such services are not available in a local program.
- To conduct supplemental programs, such as summer school and short-term school-year programs, to students who are enrolled in their local school district during the regular school year.
- To provide statewide services to parents of students with visual impairments, school districts, regional education service centers, and other agencies. These services include training, consultation, technical assistance, and developing and disseminating materials such as curriculum, instructional methodology, and educational technology.
- To provide information about instructional resources and materials, including educational technology, related to teaching, assessment, and transition of students with visual impairments.
- To lend educational and technological materials for student use to school districts and regional education service centers.
- To partner with Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin University in preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired.
- To cooperate with public and private agencies and organizations serving students and other persons with visual impairments in the planning, development, and implementation of effective educational and rehabilitative service delivery systems.
- To serve as leaders in the use of distance learning for teachers, parents, and students.

Anticipated Changes

It is expected that the primary functions of TSBVI will remain the same over the next five years; therefore, the mission, goals, and objectives of the School will remain relatively stable. However, the following types of changes will cause us to adjust some of our strategies, or at least the manner in which those strategies are executed:

- We are serving a significant number of students who are either wards of the State, from unstable families, or otherwise in situations that have caused them to have severe emotional and social support needs.
- In fiscal year 2012, 37% of our students were 18 years of age or older. Because we are serving an increasing number of adult-age students, many of our programs are directed at transitioning to adult life, such as career education.
- The number of referrals for existing classes in short-term programs rises each year. Additionally, requests to add specific new types of classes from parents, professionals, and school board

members increase each year. However, there has been no additional staff added to assist with instruction or admissions.

- There are increasing requests for weekend and higher frequency local trainings that require staffing in Outreach for increased travel and flexible hours.
- Pursuing distance learning technology for providing anytime training on the website requires increasing staff with technical skills.

II. Current Workforce Profile

The staff of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is comprised of 576 budgeted full- and part-time employees, including substitute employees, who work on an on-call, as-needed basis. Because the majority of our employees do not work continuously through the summer and other school breaks, our FTE count varies depending on the quarter. Our average FTE count for FY 2011 was 376.17. Of these, 326 are classified and one, the Superintendent, is line item exempt. The remaining are teachers, principals, counselors, and other educational positions that, by statute (Texas Education Code 30.024(b)(1)), are paid in accordance with Austin Independent School District pay scales for comparable positions.

Among the classified positions, the single largest staff group (136 positions) consists of residential instructors. Classified as Resident Specialists, these are the staff that provides care, instruction, and supervision of students in their non-school hours. Other classified positions range from nurses to maintenance mechanics, from accountants to technology specialists. The campus-based workforce is a small community with nearly every occupational field represented.

TSBVI's contract workforce provides services primarily in the following areas: Pediatric medicine, low vision services, psychiatry, dietitian, and linen service. The first four of these are specialized professional services that can be provided more efficiently by contractors. Linen service is contracted out for some, but not all, linen use due to the safety and equipment issues involved in laundering linens heavily soiled with biohazardous substances. Contract workers are used to a lesser degree in the following ways: Spanish translation for documents required to be provided to parents in their primary language; temporary employee vacancies; specialized, non-routine repairs.

Source document for the above charts, including Staff by Gender, Staff by Length of Service, Staff by Age, and Staff by Ethnicity provided by a report from the Texas Comptroller's Office with data current as of March 31, 2012. Source document for Staff by EEO Category Compared to Civilian Workforce Composition provided by the Texas Workforce Commission's "Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Hiring Practices Report" for fiscal year 2010, which notes:

"Items may not add to totals or compute to displayed percentages due to rounding. Detail for Race and Hispanic-origin groups will not add to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the Caucasian and African American categories."

As is typical of an education setting, the majority of TSBVI employees are female (67%). Over sixty percent of the workforce (63%) are over the age of 40, and more than one-third have more than 10 years

of experience at this school (41%). Since 2005, our percentages of African American and Hispanic TSBVI employees increased in several job categories. However, minorities are still underrepresented in the Professional, Officials/Administration, and Administrative Support categories at TSBVI in comparison to the civilian workforce composition. Although we are addressing this in our recruiting plan, we are limited by the fact that the majority of our professional staff consists of certified VI teachers, and it is known that minorities are vastly underrepresented in this specialized teaching field.

Retirement Projections

The task of projecting the number of retirements is more difficult for TSBVI than it might be for other agencies because our School changed retirement systems. In September 1994, the School moved from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) to the Employees Retirement System (ERS); therefore, the data available from ERS about retirement eligibility is incomplete because it is based on ERS service only. We cannot reliably project retirements based on length of TSBVI service because our employees were able to withdraw their TRS service without terminating employment when we moved to ERS. We know that some, perhaps many, employees did so, but this information is not formally available to us.

According to a report from the Texas Comptroller’s Office, approximately 23% of TSBVI’s workforce, excluding Substitute employees, will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Whether those employees choose to retire or not is unknown.

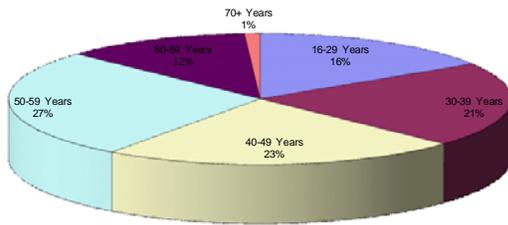
Administrators and Department Heads: Among the 17 managers who are the school’s top administrators or major department heads, it is expected that approximately one-third, will retire (or, as return-to-work retirees, terminate) within the next five years.

Educational and Related Services Professionals: Teachers, educational diagnosticians, school psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers, physical/occupational therapists and similar professionals make up this group. Approximately 22% of them may be eligible to retire within five years. Due to the fact that the majority of these individuals are professional educators, these are the least likely staff to have withdrawn their TRS retirement.

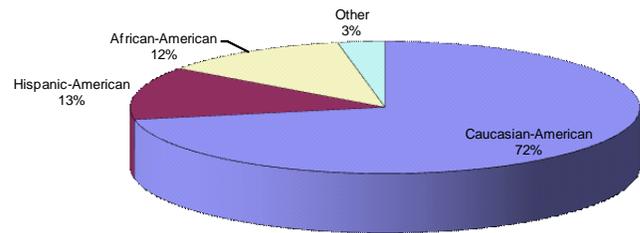
Staff Ethnicity by EEO Category Compared to Civilian Workforce Composition

Job Category	African American		Hispanic American	
	TSBVI %	Workforce %	TSBVI %	Workforce %
Officials, Administration	0	8%	0	21%
Professional	3%	10%	6%	19%
Technical	8%	14%	8%	27%
Admin. Support	1%	13%	18%	32%
Skilled Craft	0%	7%	50%	46%
Service & Maintenance	16%	14%	17%	50%

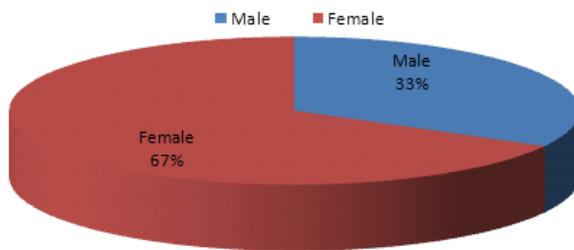




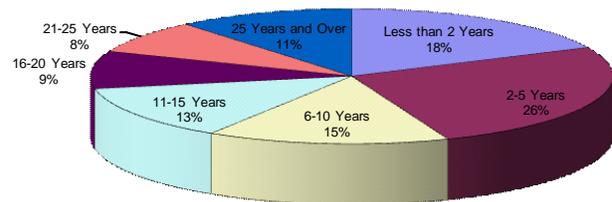
Staff by Age



Staff by Ethnicity



Staff by Gender



Staff by Length of Service

Mid-managers and Non-educational Professionals: This is a varied group that includes smaller department heads, residential managers, front-line supervisors, programmers, and nurses, and, among others. Approximately 32% are eligible within the next five years assuming they have not withdrawn their TRS service.

Instructional and Residential Paraprofessionals: Although this is our largest group of staff and consists primarily of Residential Instructors and Teaching Assistants, the anticipated retirement rate within it is negligible. These jobs are primarily held by younger individuals who will leave TSBVI employment well before retirement eligibility. Approximately 13% of our non-management, paraprofessional direct care staff has the age and length of service to retire within five years.

Technical/Clerical Support Staff: Less than one-quarter of this group will be eligible to retire within the next five years.

Other Support Services: This group includes maintenance technicians, cooks, custodial workers, drivers, and security personnel. Of these, it is estimated that one-third could be eligible to retire within the next five years.

In summary, within the coming five years, TSBVI is likely to experience the most significant losses through retirement among the top administrators, educational and related services professionals, mid-managers, and non-educational professionals in the School. The fact that retirement eligibility is primarily concentrated among TSBVI’s most experienced and highly skilled employees is of more concern than the actual number of prospective retirees. We know that this will be a “second and final” retirement for some individuals, but others will be interested in returning to work post-retirement and may be able to do so, which will mitigate some of the loss.

Turnover and Projected Attrition

During the 2011 fiscal year, our turnover rate as reported by the State Auditor's Office was 17.5%, including interagency transfers, compared to 16.8% turnover statewide, excluding interagency transfers. TSBVI's prior year's rate was 18.7% for FY 2010.

Critical Workforce Skills

TSBVI relies primarily on teachers and other educational professionals to carry out its core mission. Additionally, direct care paraprofessionals extend the capabilities of teachers during the school day and provide care, supervision, and instruction to students during non-school hours. Finally, employees with a wide variety of administrative, technical, manual and other skills provide the support activities that allow our campus to function programmatically and physically. As such, we consider the following skills and credentials to be critical to the performance of our mission:

- Certification as a teacher of visually impaired students.
- Proficiency in working with students with multiple disabilities, including autism, deafblindness, and orthopedic impairments.
- Proficiency using and instructing students in the use of specialized technologies for the visually impaired, one of the most critical options available today for providing access to the world of information for blind learners.
- Certification or licensure in the professional areas that comprise special education related services required for our students: O&M Specialist, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, Educational Diagnostician, Speech-Language Pathologist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Librarian, Social Worker, Nurse.
- Knowledge of statewide services, regional programs and local school districts and how to work with them.
- Proficiency in training and consulting skills.
- Proficiency in instructing students in career education and other subjects related to transition to adult life.
- Proficiency in leadership and management skills, and educational administration certification if required for position.
- For direct care paraprofessionals, individuals who have:
 - ◆ A human service orientation with a sincere desire to work with children with disabilities.
 - ◆ Paraprofessional certification and qualified under No Child Left Behind Act
- Proficiency in database management, technology, and skilled trade areas that support all School functions.
- Proficiency in business and administrative support areas that support all School functions.
- Skill in working collaboratively as a team member

III. Future Workforce Profile

Factors Driving Expected Workforce Changes

- Comprehensive Programs (regular school year) anticipates a slight increase in enrollment.
- The Special Programs department provides both Short-Term Programs during the academic school year and Summer Programs during June and July. Short-Term Programs has added only one teacher between school years 2006-2012, despite an enrollment increase from 132 to 205 students during those years. Only one administrative assistant has been available to handle all departmental functions, including admissions and travel for the 200+ students, since the program began in school year 2000. Although demand for these programs grows annually, the program cannot grow without additional instructional and administrative staff. Summer Programs are the largest of all schools for the blind in the country, serving approximately 300-325 students each summer. Although we are not able to accept all applicants, it is difficult to identify sufficient staff to teach in the summer and we therefore anticipate holding this program at its current size rather than trying to increase it.
- Students will continue to present severe and complex disabling conditions, particularly emotional and behavioral disorders, along with visual impairment. They will have intense needs while enrolled at TSBVI, and will require more indirect services to help ensure their success in local school districts.
- The proportion of students who need vocational instruction and independent living skills will increase.
- Federal and state education and special education regulations will require more services and impose more standards that our School will be expected to meet.
- The new building program will require a higher level of technical expertise for building systems such as security, building controls, plumbing mechanical and life safety. There are additional state required inspections and service by licensed professional for elevators, plumbing, fire protection and suppression, natural gas line (both exterior and interior), boilers, pest control and food services as well as best practices inspections for electrical, air conditioning and plumbing systems. These increased required inspections are accomplished through contracts with licensed professionals, the training of current staff where possible for certification and hiring licensed and certified technicians.
- There is a critical need for database management and process automation at TSBVI. Coupled with increased reliance on technology, both to execute the school's core mission and to assist in all support activities, the School anticipates a need for more highly skilled technical staff.

Future Workforce Skills Needed for Critical Functions

The mission of TSBVI and its key goals are unlikely to change in the coming years. The critical functions will continue to be the direct and indirect provision of services to the visually impaired, school-aged children of Texas. While the mission will remain the same, it will be implemented with a changing student population and within a changing regulatory environment, by an evolving staff. As such, we anticipate the following future workforce skill needs:

- TSBVI will continue to have a steady demand for certified VI and O&M teachers, but will also need teachers who are certified in VI along with auditory impairment, math, science, ESL, and geography.

- We will continue to need certified or licensed professionals in the related services areas, but with particular emphasis on counseling and assessment personnel because of (a) anticipated attrition through retirement in this area, and (b) the need for more intensive services related to student behavioral disorders and severe emotional needs.
- We will need educational administrators with a strong background in education of the visually impaired as well as administrative and leadership skills.
- We will need managers in non-educational areas with strong leadership skills in addition to expertise with their own functional areas (facilities, business, technology, etc.).
- All staff who provide direct services to students, whether professional or paraprofessional, must develop skills to manage students' behavior and emotional problems.
- All staff must have an adequate working knowledge of technology appropriate to their assignment.
- TSBVI will need staff who have bilingual skills and cultural awareness.

Anticipated Changes in the Number of Employees Needed

TSBVI anticipates a need for targeted skill areas, including staff with bilingual skills and cultural competence, staff with systems analysis and database management expertise, and training staff with expertise in creating computer-based teaching classes specifically geared toward visual impairment as well as more general development.

It is difficult to forecast future enrollment, because we cannot ordinarily predict how many or which students will be referred to TSBVI, and we cannot know the extent of their needs until they have been assessed. A referral from a local district to TSBVI can take place at anytime, and it is a complex, highly regulated process which does not give us much flexibility to decline to accept students we do not feel adequately staffed to serve. Nevertheless, we do not expect a decline in enrollment or demand for other services.

IV. Gap Analysis

Anticipated Shortage of Employees and Skills

The following gaps are either likely or possible based on a comparison between the current staff profile and anticipated future staffing and skills needs:

- Staff will need to continue to increase the knowledge and skills required to work with students who are presenting increasingly challenging disabilities.
- We will have an insufficient supply of VI teachers, educational administrators and related service professionals due to retirement and other attrition.
- We will have an insufficient supply of professionals in the fields of visual impairment and deafblindness who are available to travel as statewide consultants.
- Flexibility will be required of the school's grounds, building, and custodial staff as the campus continues to transform with new buildings going up and old buildings coming down. To maintain the new buildings and grounds to a high standard, it may be necessary to reclassify existing staff in addition to hiring additional maintenance, custodial, and grounds staff.
- The need for data management and process automation will require us to either hire additional technical professionals or contract for this service.

- As technology becomes more integral to most jobs, staff will need to increase their technical competence accordingly. In addition, in some jobs, the required competence level will be quite high due to the complex technology related to visual impairment.
- To ensure that training needs related to behavior, technology, VI core curricular areas, and other content are met, we need to utilize computer-based training rather than traditional instructor-led training to reach more staff at times convenient to their schedules. We also need for staff to have time to be trained.

V. *Strategies for Workforce Transition*

Succession Plan

The core of TSBVI's institutional knowledge is held by (1) its professional staff members who provide direct services to students on campus and indirect services to students throughout the state through families and other educators; and (2) its administrators and managers. Emphasis in this succession plan is given to those two groups.

At TSBVI, we take a three-pronged approach to succession planning:

- (1) We believe that a diversity of professional educational approaches enriches our programs; therefore, we strive to recruit broadly to bring highly qualified professional staff from outside our school.
- (2) The large number of paraprofessional positions at TSBVI provides a supply of staff who have demonstrated good basic skills and a genuine interest in working with children with disabilities. Some of these individuals decide that they want to make a professional career of teaching visually impaired children, which we encourage and support. Our VI teachers can pursue further career development, with our support, by obtaining additional subject matter certification, becoming administrators, or becoming related services specialists.
- (3) We seek to disseminate key institutional knowledge throughout the organization both laterally and vertically by means such as cross-training and documenting work processes. There are key positions at our School that, because of the nature of the job and the size of the department, do not have potential internal successors.

Direct Instruction and Service

1. VI Teachers

Action steps to ensure adequate supply of VI teachers:

- a. Continue to administer the VI teacher preparation project established by legislative rider. This includes continuing to financially support the Texas universities (Texas Tech and Stephen F. Austin) that offer VI teacher preparation in return for their assurance of a mini-

imum number of graduates per year, providing mentors for teachers in training, and providing workshops for new teachers to minimize attrition.

- b. Work to assure the continued funding of the VI teacher preparation project by documenting the outcomes of the program and communicating them to the funding sources.
- c. “Create” VI teachers from TSBVI staff:
 - (1) Identify and encourage degreed paraprofessionals (e.g., teaching assistants) who could complete alternative teacher certification in Special Education through the Region XIII Education Service Center program. After completion of this program, employ them (if vacancies occur) as first year classroom teachers to fulfill their internship.
 - (2) Hire promising teacher candidates who already have Generic Special Education or other related certification.
 - (3) Require all teachers hired under both circumstances to obtain VI certification over a designated period of time. Provide tuition reimbursement for those who complete coursework toward VI certification.

2. Related Service Professionals and Teachers with Additional Certification

Action step to ensure adequate supply of related services professionals (e.g., Educational Diagnosticians, Speech/Language Pathologists) and specially certified teachers (e.g. English as a Second Language, Science)

- a. Continue to identify “high need” credentials based on actual and expected attrition.
- b. As funding permits, utilize the existing procedure that provides for teachers to receive tuition reimbursement for completing coursework toward credentials designated by the School’s management as “high need.”
- c. Actively solicit interest among current VI teaching staff in these opportunities.
- d. Actively recruit and train interns.

3. Outreach Specialists

The majority of outreach specialists are highly experienced VI teachers or professionals in the field of deafblindness. A person would typically progress to this position from an earlier successful career as a provider of direct instruction; in other words, they are nearer retirement age than the average employee. It is estimated that a significant number of staff in this group will be eligible to retire within the next five years, whether they choose to do so or not. The classroom teacher staff at TSBVI provides a natural “training ground” for future outreach specialists; however, many teachers would not be interested in this role due to the extensive travel and longer work year. Generally, vacancies in this area require a national or at least statewide search. Fortunately, the very nature of the outreach specialist job involves extensive networking in the fields of visual impairment and deafblindness, both on a state and national basis. Our Outreach program is well known, and potentially suitable candidates for vacancies in this area are usually well known to us.

In summary, effective succession in this area will be accomplished by a combination of drawing upon a pool of highly qualified internal applicants and cultivating a ready-made network.

Management

1. Educational and residential program administration:

- a. Superintendent: The Superintendent was hired within the last five years and is expected to remain in this position for the foreseeable future.
- b. Principals/Assistant Principals/Outreach Director/School & Student Services Director: Several employees in this area have already retired and returned to work. It is possible that one-third of these positions will retire for a final time within the next five years. It is expected that succession will be accomplished through (1) re-organization or consolidation of some functions or (2) filling vacancies with current employees who will meet MQ's or (3) conducting a national search for outside candidates. Our practice of developing lead teachers helps ensure our future supply of educational leaders.
- c. Residential Directors/Dorm Managers: Attrition at the residential director level is not expected within the next five years. Turnover among dorm managers is routine and succession is expected to be accomplished through the competitive selection of outstanding Residential Instructors.

2. Management of Support Functions:

It is likely that two to three of the top five non-programmatic management positions will be vacated within the next five years. Although these are critical and highly skilled positions, they – unlike the educational administrator positions – do not require educational certification, and they have counterparts in other state agencies. It is expected that both internal and external applicants will compete for most of these positions. Meanwhile, the emphasis in these areas is on documenting institutional knowledge to ensure the smoothest possible transition to successors.

Other Goals for Workforce Transition

The first three goals, below, concern staff training. The first one addresses: 1) The need for training concerning students with increasingly challenging disabilities. Workers, even professionals, do not arrive at our doorstep with these skills. It is imperative that we are able to rely on our own training to meet the complex needs of the students we serve. 2) The need for annual supervisory training for all dorm managers, supervisors, and department heads. It is imperative that decision-makers receive the latest information concerning employment laws that affect every day personnel decisions. Even the most seasoned managers need a refresher to minimize legal risk.

The second goal will facilitate having an involved and well-informed staff by ensuring that 1) all staff receives information in an accessible format, and 2) all staff acquires the technical skills to use computers in their jobs.

The third goal considers the possibilities for expanding internal training efforts.

The fourth goal focuses on retention through continuing development of career and salary progression.

The fifth and final goal recognizes that we cannot meet all of our needs by training, promoting, and retaining our existing staff. The expanding and changing needs of our school will demand that we add staff in certain areas. This goal does not necessarily imply that the overall staff or contract workforce size must increase, since some positions may be able to replace other, less critical ones.

Goal 1: 1) Ensure that all staff who work with students have adequate knowledge and skills in working with students with increasingly challenging disabilities.

2) Ensure that all employees in a supervisory role receive employment law training on an annual basis to minimize potential legal pitfalls.

Goal 2: 1) Ensure that all employees in all departments receive information in an accessible format. 2) Ensure that all employees have the technical skills and the access to consistently use the intranet and e-mail for necessary information.

Goal 3: Explore the possibility of establishing a comprehensive staff development program that would serve the needs of TSBVI staff at all levels as well as non-TSBVI professionals.

Goal 4: Improve our ability to attract and retain staff.

- A. Continue efforts to develop career progression programs tied to training completion and/or education advancement.
- B. Continue to develop criteria to utilize our authority to make salary adjustments for purposes of internal and external equity, particularly for under-compensated job groups such as nurses.
- C. Work to identify more funds for merit salary increases so that deserving staff can be moved upward through the salary ranges for their jobs.
- D. Continue to follow our Highly Qualified Recruitment and Retention Plan, which provides incentive for teachers to obtain visual impairment certifications.
- E. Increase marketing efforts on the benefits of employment at TSBVI.
- F. Encourage paraprofessional staff who are interested in a career path as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired or Orientation and Mobility Specialist to pursue the required credentials and experience.

Goal 5: Assure we are sufficiently staffed for new or expanded initiatives.

- A. Continue to refine our determination of areas in which we will need to add staff as funding permits, and then prioritize those areas (e.g., physical plant support, training, direct care, technology).
- B. For each identified need and in order of priority, work toward a decision of whether and how to fund staffing for the need or how to meet the need in an alternative way.

Appendix F:

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED

SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

In November of 2012, TSBVI participated in the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) administered through the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. We are pleased our response rate of 59% was higher than the response rate of 42% the last time TSBVI participated in the survey (2008).

At 59%, our response rate is considered average. According to the SEE, average rates mean that many employees have a reasonable investment in TSBVI, want to see TSBVI improve, and generally have a sense of responsibility to TSBVI.

The SEE consists of five Workplace Dimensions that capture the total work environment. Each Workplace Dimension is composed of several Constructs designed to broadly profile areas of strength and concern.

The Workplace Dimensions are:

- Work Group
- Accommodations
- Organization
- Information
- Personal

The Constructs are:

- Supervision
- Team
- Quality
- Pay
- Benefits
- Physical Environment
- Strategic
- Diversity
- Information Systems
- Internal Communication
- External Communication
- Employee Engagement
- Employee Development
- Job Satisfaction

According to the SEE's guidelines for interpreting scores, on all but four of the 14 constructs included in the five dimensions, TSBVI's scores indicated areas of substantial strength for the organization or areas about which employees felt more positively than negatively. The areas of strength for TSBVI include Supervision (defined as aspects of leadership, the communication of expectations, and the sense of

fairness), Strategic (defined as the mission, vision, and services provided), and Employee Development (defined as the priority given to employees' personal and job growth needs). The areas of concern for TSBVI include Pay (defined as the overall compensation package offered), Information Systems (defined as computer and communication systems), and Internal Communications (defined as the flow of communication from the top-down, bottom-up, and across divisions/departments).

In the "Employee Attitudes Regarding TSBVI" section of this and previous versions of the Strategic Plan, we have contended that the low number of internal grievances and external complaints filed by employees supports the notion that TSBVI is considered a good place to work by most staff. Some of the SEE constructs on which we received higher scores lend further support to this belief.

In addition to the areas of strength listed above, the constructs that were areas of substantial strength for us were:

- Team
- Quality
- Benefits
- Physical Environment
- Diversity
- External Communication
- Employee Engagement
- Job Satisfaction

In summary, we were mostly pleased with the survey results but recognize that we have room for improvement. Our plans to address these concerns are as follows:

- A. Work harder to publicize the SEE and improve response rate when it is next administered to gain a more accurate picture of staff attitudes.
- B. Continue to make efforts to improve compensation and communicate these efforts to staff. Clearly document and consistently inform staff of all compensation programs that are in place. Clearly distinguish the factors that are and are not within local agency control.
- C. Continue to use the School's intranet as a means of communicating important information to staff. Ensure that all staff, including staff who do not routinely use computers in their jobs, have the access and the knowledge to use a computer so we can instill regular checking of the Intranet into staff routines.