

# **Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

## **BOARD PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 3, 2023**

### **Call to order**

Elaine Robertson called to order the meeting of the TSBVI Board Committee on Programs at 8:02 a.m. on February 3, 2023, from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 1100 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, Texas.

Board members Beth Jones, Maghan Gautney, and Brenda Lee participated remotely via Zoom. Elaine Robertson was present and chaired the meeting.

TSBVI staff members participating in the meeting were: Miles Fain, Comprehensive Programs Principal; Sara Merritt, Short-Term Programs Principal; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Tad Doezema, Assistant Principal; Edgenie Bellah and Yolanda Shaw, Family Engagement Coordinators (Outreach)

### **Consideration of approval of minutes of the November 18, 2022 meeting**

Elaine Robertson asked for consideration of the minutes from the November meeting. Maghan Gautney motioned to approve the minutes and Brenda Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Consideration of Approval of Board Policies**

Jenny Wells, legal counsel, attended the meeting to recommend approval of changes to policies. Ms. Wells shared the differences between legal policy and local policy and the difference between state agency and school district policies.

Ms. Wells explained that Policy FD-Admissions highlighted changes in language regarding agreements between TSBVI and the family and TSBVI and the local district as found in Education Code 25.022 (a)-(c). Wording changed to: "TSBVI will present two enrollment agreements: one between TSBVI and parent, and another between TSBVI and the LEA, for signatures by all three parties before enrollment can be finalized."

Beth Jones made the motion to approve the changes to Policy FD as discussed in committee and Maghan Gautney seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Report from Comprehensive Programs Principal Miles Fain**

#### **a. Career Education Program update:**

Tad Doezema, Assistant Principal of the EXIT Program, reviewed progress in vocational programming on campus and in the community. He recently hired a new Career Ed teacher from Tennessee. He reported that the school is offering 11 Career and Technology Education (CTE) courses, which is the most ever offered. Two community partners reviewed include the Lighthouse for the Blind and HEB. These two partners have many locations across the state. Eleven students have worked at the Lighthouse this year up to twenty hours per week. The Lighthouse provides technology training and

real-world feedback on job performance, thus building employability skills. The program also partnered with Texas School for the Deaf.

Mr. Doezema reported that the Business Advisory Council meets twice a year and is comprised of students, business partners and employers, and school personnel. They are hoping to expand partnerships. The residential Work Training Program is overseen by Carlotta Binns. Students can work in the evening hours on campus and earn stipends.

**b. Consideration of approval of the *My Rights, My Life* curriculum:**

Miles Fain introduced the topic of consideration of approval of the My Rights, My Life Curriculum. Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director, updated the committee on the actions of the School Health Advisory Committees (SHAC) that held two public meetings regarding the curriculum. The SHAC recommended that the Board approve use of Unit 1 and Unit 2 of *My Rights, My Life* to support instruction in the TEA-required instruction areas for prevention of child abuse, dating violence, and sex trafficking. Parental permission is required for each student participating. Beth Jones moved to approve Units 1 and 2 of the *My Rights, My Life* curriculum. Brenda Lee seconded and the motion passed.

**Report from Short-Term Programs Principal Sara Merritt**

**a. Short-Term Program update:**

Sara Merritt reported that a nurse for Short-Term Programs was identified from amongst current TSBVI nurses and is in training. TSBVI nurses excelled this week during the ice weather and school closures that Austin faced. Seven nurses stayed overnight one night and four stayed the remaining nights to ensure the safety of students on campus.

School-year short-term programs successfully served students in person and remotely in Individualized Instruction. Classrooms and dorms are fully staffed with six TSVIs, two TAs, and five dorm staff.

**b. Update on Summer 2023 Programs:**

Ms. Merritt stated that summer 2023 applications are open and displayed a chart showing enrollment projections and total applicants as of February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The due date for applications is February 14<sup>th</sup>. As is typical, many applications are expected to arrive during the last week.

Summer Projection 2023	Applicants as of February 3, 2023
Secondary: 108	76
Elementary: 102	48
SWEAT: 15	7
WALIC: 15	10
TOTAL: 240	141

## Report from Outreach Director, Kate Borg

### a. Outreach Program update:

Kate Borg reported on the VI Registry and Deafblind Child Count: Deafblind numbers are up and more details will be shared at the next committee meeting. She stated that registration for the Deafblind Symposium scheduled for February 23 is currently at 248 and it is anticipated that the number will grow. The five-year Deafblind grant application is up for renewal with the application deadline being pushed to March 13th.

### b. Family Engagement:

Edgenie Bellah and Yolanda Shaw presented information and initiatives regarding the Family Engagement Program. They explained that they are working under a new document that was created in partnership with the National Center for Deafblindness (NCDB) Deafblind Network on Family Engagement: <https://www.nationaldb.org/products/families-engagement-priorities/>. A statewide needs assessment is currently ongoing through focus groups, surveys, and other stakeholder feedback. This is the driving force in determining what their post-COVID steps are.

Partnerships are being expanded and strengthened with family organizations like Partner Resource Network, National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB), and National Family Association for Deafblind (NFADB), the Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association of Texas (DBMAT), Texas Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (TAPVI), and others. Meetings are held three times per school year with the leadership of the family organizations. A pilot playdate with Region 13 is scheduled in April for families with children ages birth-5 years. Outreach staff are also partnering with Region 4 for Babies' Day Out. Also offered are virtual family gatherings with the Family Recharge Zone scheduled once a month with two sessions offered each time. Families select a training topic and then have a debrief/networking time. Other events include the national Family-to-Family Collaboration.

Ms. Bellah and Ms. Shaw shared about some of the family training opportunities provided including TSBVI's Game of Life program for students and families that occurred this month; Discovering the Future, a transition planning for students with complex needs; and a planned new program - ECC focused family training. Family Leadership Training—Family Engagement Series provides training for family members, usually over four to five weekends and covers topics like advocacy and communication. The Family Leadership Series empowers families to be engaged at systems level (Schools, LEAs, Legislative, etc.). Many other projects including Texas Chargers, DBMD waiver, and more came directly from the Family Leadership series.

## Adjournment

Maghan Gautney motioned to adjourn the meeting. Brenda Lee seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.