

TSBVI SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
BOARD PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING
April 3, 2023

1. Call to order

Brenda Lee called to order the meeting of the TSBVI Board Committee on Programs at 8:02 a.m. on April 3, 2023, from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 1100 West 45th Street, Austin, Texas.

Board members Beth Jones and Lee Sonnenberg attended the meeting. Board member Elaine Robertson attended remotely via Zoom.

TSBVI staff members participating in the meeting were: Miles Fain, Comprehensive Programs Principal; Sara Merritt, Short-Term Programs Principal; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; and Emily Coleman, Superintendent.

2. Consideration of approval of minutes of the February 3, 2022 meeting

Brenda Lee asked for consideration of the minutes from the February meeting. Beth Jones motioned to approve the minutes and Lee Sonnenberg seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion.

3. Consideration of Approval of TSBVI's 2023-2024 School Calendar

Miles Fain presented the proposed calendar for the 2023-2024 school year for the Committee's approval. Beth Jones motioned to approve the calendar and Lee Sonnenberg seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion.

4. Report from Emily Coleman on Engagement of Educators Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deafblind.

Emily Coleman reported that staff disability disclosure is not required but modifications requested by staff include:

- 26 employees requested Braille or electronic format
- 13 employees requested large print
- 2 receive ASL interpretation
- the above bullets reflect 10-15% of our current employees

The requirement to be a driver was taken off TSBVI job postings for residential jobs not explicitly considered "drivers." The school has more summer employees who are blind or visually impaired resulting in a more immersive O&M experience for students. The TSBVI Accessibility Committee addresses the needs of employees and determines solutions.

A prior committee, now called the Campus Culture committee, gives staff the opportunity to share their concerns. A podcast was produced with Craig Edgley about how he received his teaching certification. TSBVI is proud of being an inclusive employer and shares this information at local

conferences to recruit staff. Miles Fain shared how we accept teachers into an internship program; our internships are through TVI/TSVI programs at Texas Tech University or Stephen F. Austin State University.

5. Report from Comprehensive Programs Principal Miles Fain

a. Consideration of approval of recommendations of the Instructional Materials Committee

Miles Fain explained that TSBVI has no new adoptions recommended in the core academic subjects this year. Annual certification is required to ensure that all TSBVI instructional materials allow students to access the TEKS. Lee Sonnenberg moved to approve the submittal of the allotment of instructional materials form for school year 2023-2024 to the Texas Education Agency. Beth Jones seconded the motion and all board members were in favor of the motion.

b. Update on TSBVI/Austin ISD Dual Enrollment Program

Hayley Moberg introduced the TSBVI/Austin ISD Dual Enrollment program. Two Comprehensive Program students who are taking Spanish at McCallum High School were also present. They shared their experiences at the high school and what some of the differences are: same seating, fast-paced, different websites, block schedules, getting to know other students without visual impairment. (Both students had attended summer programs.) Students are learning to advocate and use their monoculers. Ms. Moberg shared that she will “hand select” teachers to work with. The students were very enthusiastic about their class and the time they spend at the high school. Mr. Sonnenberg asked about dual credit courses and Hayley shared that they have not done that yet. There are currently six students who are dual enrolled.

6. Report from Short-Term Programs Principal Sara Merritt

a. Update on Summer 2023 Programs

Sara Merritt reported that the School has received 329 summer program applications with 240 slots being offered. As families decide to decline sending the applicant, additional spots are offered to students on the waitlist. It is hoped that a teacher can be found to work with students during the summer to provide credit for PE. Teachers must volunteer to work during the summer because the work is not a part of their contract. Additional ideas were discussed including determining a way to offer remote credit PE.

b. Short-Term Programs update and response to Board questions on TVI referral to Short-Term Programs

Ms. Merritt reported that TVIS across the state refer students to Short-Term Program classes. If the TVI needs additional training and professional development, Ms. Merritt reaches out to the special education director and/or the educational service center. The majority of individualized instruction referrals are for technology and math topics.

A prior question from a board member was answered regarding how people across the state learn about summer programs. Constant contact email marketing and service center meetings are used to advertise the programs.

7. Report from Outreach Director, Kate Borg

a. VI Registry/Deafblind Child Count Report

Ms. Borg reported that the Deafblind Grant was submitted on March 13, 2023 and the School should hear back about its approval in May or June.

The Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education was a success with about 280 people in attendance. A lot of good feedback was received and several people shared that this was the “best conference they had ever attended.” Ms. Borg shared anecdotal information about some of the sessions.

Upcoming conferences include:

- i. MH Symposium: April 27, 2023 hosted in Outreach
- ii. Low Vision Conference: 44 participants registered so far

b. VI Registry and Deafblind Child Count: [see data here](#).

- i. Early Childhood numbers continue to be very concerning
- ii. Continuing the Childfind Committee was created as part of the Ed Action Committee
- iii. Ms. Borg will be attending the Early Childhood Visual Impairment Alliance (ECVIA) meetings this month

8. Adjournment

Beth Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting and Lee Sonnenberg seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

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