

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Texas School for the
Blind and Visually
Impaired

TSBVI

TSBVI Board of Trustees

The School is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Board is comprised of three members who are blind or visually impaired, three who have experience working in the field of visual impairment, and three who are parents of a child who is blind or visually impaired. Public meetings of the Board are generally held 6 times per year.



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Many will remember the 20-21 school year through the lens of a pandemic or perhaps within the context of a historical winter storm. We may think about the multiple pivots from in-person to remote programming for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. I suspect we will also remember the feelings and emotions we experienced as we navigated such challenging times. When I think back on the last school year, the first word that comes to mind is pride. I knew TSBVI was a remarkable place, but I could not have been prouder of the way our community handled the last school year.

Our comprehensive program team continued to prioritize students and ensured that within whatever setting or situation they would show personal and academic growth. Our short-term program staff provided exceptional online instruction all year and added in-person options for students in the summer. This planning occurred without even knowing if in-person would be possible, yet, it was. Our outreach team and curriculum department exponentially increased their audience through online training, consultations, and products. Everyone on our campus supported the incredible work for and with students. At the start of the year, I said our student focus would not waiver amidst a pandemic and our community proved me right. They deserve endless credit; families, students, and employees alike.

As you read our Annual Report, I implore you to think about each individual behind the information you receive. Put faces to the data and imagine one of the 11,000 or so students identified in our state who rely on TSBVI to support their success. When you stop to really think about how any individual student can be empowered by our programs, I have no doubt that you will feel pride, too. We all share a responsibility to ensure transformative student outcomes and when that is truly shared, we all deserve to be proud...including you.

Emily Coleman

TSBVI HISTORY



The Texas Legislature originally established TSBVI as the Blind Asylum in 1856. Classes were first taught at the residence of Mr. W. L. Hill in Austin TX. The School's first move was to the "Little Campus", Arno Nowotny Building/Custer House at the University of Texas, and what is now known as the Heman Sweatt Campus. In 1887, a second campus called the Institute for Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Colored Youths was established on Bull Creek Road in Austin.

In 1917, the School's name was changed to the Texas School for the Blind and was moved to the 45-acre campus on West 45th Street. In 1965, the School was racially integrated and children from the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School for African-American Students were able to attend the 45th street campus.

In response to the Rubella epidemic of the 60's and the subsequent increase in children who were DeafBlind, a special program was initiated in 1972 and was housed in the former Confederate Widows' Mansion on 38th Street. The DeafBlind program moved to the 45th Street campus in 1981. In 1989, the School was given its current name, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), to reflect more accurately the population it serves.

The campus began major renovations from 2008-2019 and virtually every building on campus was replaced with modern, purpose built, state of the art facilities. The campus is continuing to evolve to meet the needs of its students. Recent upgrades include perimeter fencing and gates, a covered walkway, an outdoor pavilion, clear campus signage, a campus wide public address system, and installation of a video conferencing system.

Throughout the twists and turns of our history, what has remained constant is the dedicated commitment from staff, teachers, principals, and superintendents to create a special place empowering students who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind to lead independent lives.

Vision, Mission, and Structure

Our Vision

All Texas students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind will be empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

Our Mission

We serve as a leading center of expertise and resources, working in partnership with schools, families, communities, and organizations to transform educational outcomes for students, ages birth to 22, who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind.

Our Structure

TSBVI's services are organized into three program areas, Comprehensive, Short-Term, and Outreach. Each program is designed to meet the diverse educational needs of our students. We collaborate with families, school districts, state agencies and Education Service Centers to provide the support they need to help students succeed in their local school and community.

To provide a robust level of state-wide instructional support and wraparound services, TSBVI employs 371 full-time equivalent professionals. These positions include:

- ▶ classroom teachers
- ▶ teacher aides
- ▶ job coaches
- ▶ service staff
- ▶ orientation and mobility instructors
- ▶ speech-language pathologists
- ▶ occupational therapists
- ▶ physical therapists
- ▶ psychologists
- ▶ behavior specialists
- ▶ counselors
- ▶ social workers
- ▶ nurses
- ▶ residential staff
- ▶ clerical staff
- ▶ business office staff
- ▶ admissions and records
- ▶ information resources
- ▶ food service workers
- ▶ transportation
- ▶ security staff

TSBVI Funding

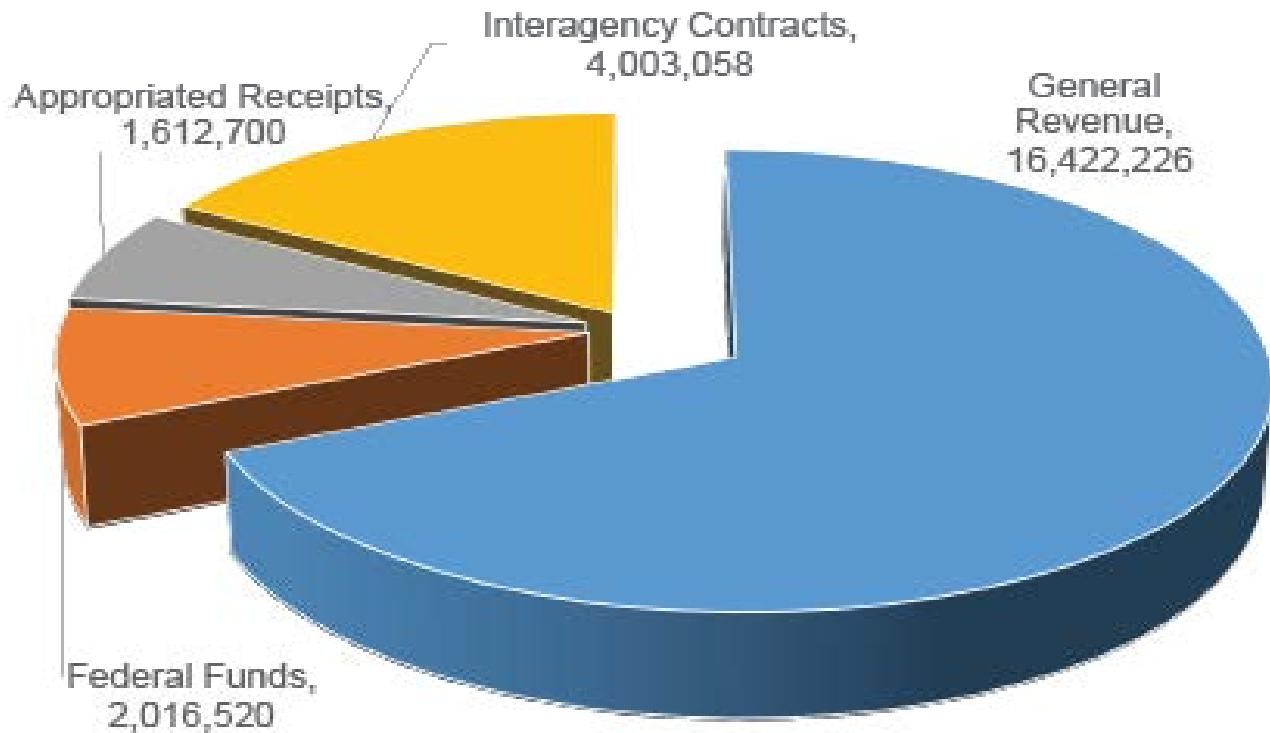
Pamela Darden,
Chief Financial Officer

The School is primarily funded through appropriations granted by the State Legislature.

Appropriations categories include:

- ▶ General revenue, \$16,422,226
- ▶ Federal funds, \$2,016,520
- ▶ Appropriated receipts, \$1,612,700
- ▶ Interagency contracts, \$4,003,058
- ▶ 2021 Fiscal Year total funding \$24,054,504

Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriated Funds



**FY2021 Total Funding
\$24,054,504**

Comprehensive Programs

Kindergarten-12

TSBVI provides full-time comprehensive programs during the regular school year to students who are unable to receive an appropriate public education from the local school district. Districts refer students for placement to acquire a student-specific set of skills that, once learned, will allow the student to return to education in the home community. At TSBVI, students receive intensive instruction in all areas of the curriculum including braille reading and writing, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, career education, social skills, occupational and physical therapy, speech therapy, daily living skills training and many other disability-specific skill areas. TSBVI is the only placement in the State where all educational staff are specially trained and certified to teach students with visual impairments and all residential staff receive ongoing training in teaching independent living skills, including personal hygiene, dressing, grooming, and home care.

Post-Secondary

This program, offered in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission, provides training for students who are legally blind and have a regular State Board of Education high school diploma or GED. Students seeking this post-secondary experience are in need of remedial academic, independent living and work related skills training. They will cultivate the skills, attitudes and opportunities necessary to meet the demands of competitive employment and adult living.

Accreditation and Legislative Board Standards

TSBVI has two performance measures by which the Texas Education Agency (TEA) determines its accreditation status. One measure is that at least 70% of students will achieve moderate to substantial progress on every area of the Core and Expanded Core Curriculum in which the student receives instruction. TSBVI achieved a rate of 79.83% in the 2020-2021 school year.

The second performance measure determines the percent of statewide assessment tests passed by TSBVI students as compared to all special education students in the state of Texas. The standard set by TEA and TSBVI is that the percent of tests passed by TSBVI students will meet or exceed the percent passed by all special education students in the state of Texas. In 2020-2021, the passing rate for TSBVI students was 28% as compared to the state special education passing rate of 30%.

Achievements

As a state agency, TSBVI sets performance standards each biennium with the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) that are tied to its Legislative Appropriations Request. For students served in Comprehensive Programs, five performance standards were set for the 2020-2021 school year. They include the two TEA Accreditation measures above plus three additional standards.

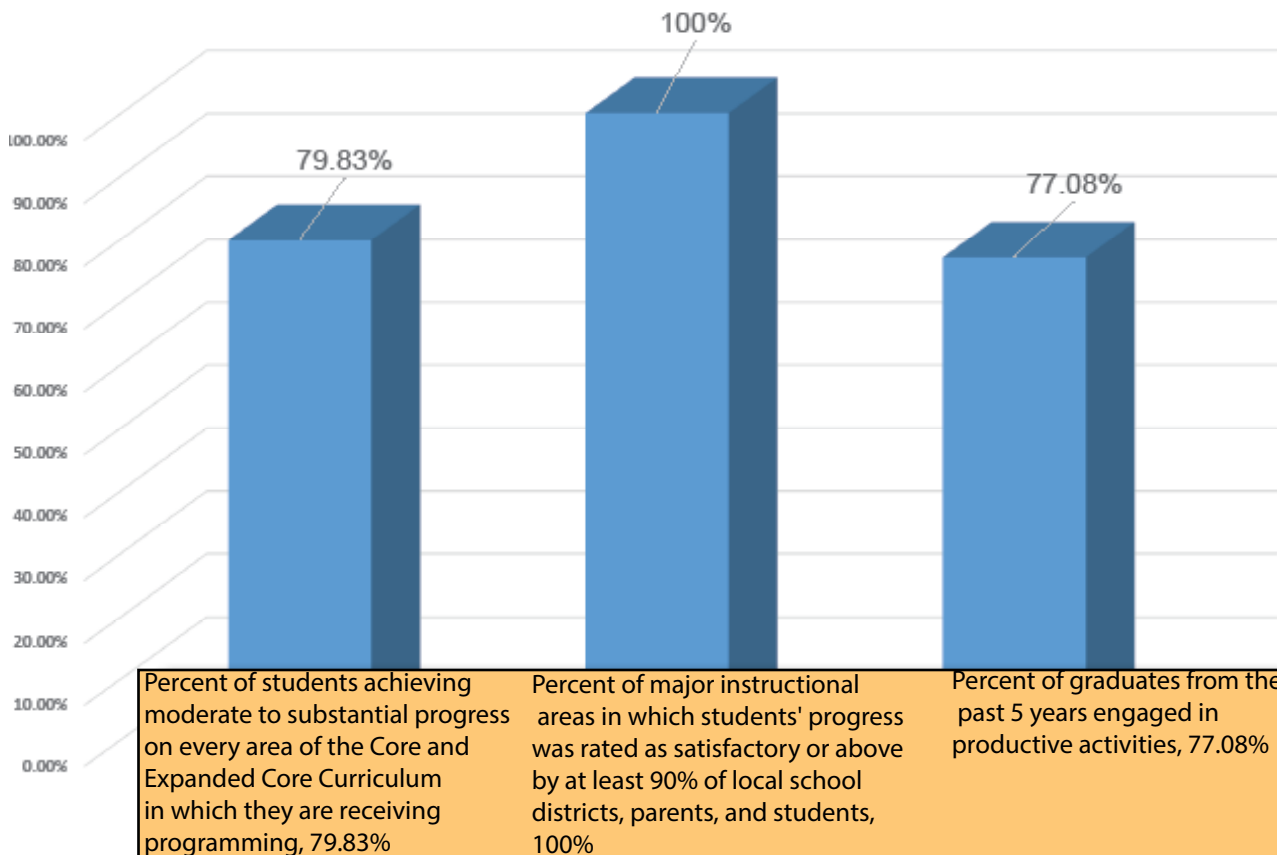
The first additional standard is that at least 60% of statewide assessment tests will be passed by TSBVI students. Because the Texas Education Agency made testing optional for students statewide, far fewer TSBVI students took tests with 40.91% of tests taken being passed.

The second measure is associated with satisfaction with student progress in Comprehensive Programs. The standard set with the LBB is for student progress in 100% of the ten major instructional areas to be rated as satisfactory, very satisfactory, or outstanding by at least 90% of parents, local school districts and students. TSBVI achieved this standard!

The third measure is related to students who graduated from TSBVI: 70% of students who graduated from TSBVI during the past 5 years would be engaged in productive life activities (work, post-secondary education or training, child care, or volunteer activities). TSBVI exceeded this standard in that 77.08% of graduates were considered productive.

Teacher Julie Lemman received the national 2021 Principal of Schools for the Blind (POSB) Outstanding Teacher of Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments award. Residential Instructor Daniel Butler was named the 2021 POSB Outstanding Residential Instructor.

Comprehensive Programs Measures



Activities and Resources

► Learning Resource Center (LRC)

The LRC continues to be a hub of activities with this year being even busier than any previous year. Students stop by throughout the day to check out books, download books onto their devices, create in the Maker Space and check out equipment. Many of our teachers bring their classes to the LRC weekly for a storytime with Renee. Instructional and Residential staff come to the LRC to collaborate, to find instructional materials, work on computers or sometimes just to find a good audiobook for their commute. In addition to all the regular school day activities the LRC is also home to the afternoon tutoring sessions.

► The Computer Lab

Our lab is slowly undergoing a make-over from a single-purpose space to a more useful space where students can create their own podcasts. A donor has generously donated the funding to repurpose this space into a recording studio and still retain the features of a computer lab.

► Two New Classes in the Computer Lab

This year we are conducting two new STEM classes in the LRC, ATECH and Fundamentals of Computer Science. ATECH, an assistive technology class, is an innovative class created by the TSBVI Curriculum and Region 4. The purpose of this class is to provide students an opportunity to use assistive technology to master the skills they will need to be successful in school and in the workplace. We spent the first month of the class learning and improving our foundational skills such as keyboarding and file management. Through the process of writing a business letter students learned the structure of formal correspondence, how to proofread and edit their work. We have a variety of interesting projects to work on throughout the rest of the year.

The Coding Class of the past has evolved to Fundamentals of Computer Science. This class started the year working on foundational skills and has moved onto 3D drawing using the OpenSCAD programming language. Our goal is to teach and reinforce skills that are standard to the tech industry. Project management, time management, and presentation skills are a few we address as we work through the school year.

► TechCats Zone

The TechCats Zone continues to meet in the Computer Lab. TechCats are a group of staff volunteers who assist other staff on campus with technical problems. The Zone is staffed in-person 2 days a week for drop-ins and appointments. In addition, Jim Allan has been conducting regularly scheduled JAWS training for staff members. These classes have focused on navigating the Google Apps environment using the screen reader as well as CAPPs and other school management software.

► MakerSpace

The MakerSpace is continuing to be a popular activity center as more teachers incorporate “making” into their lesson plans. The purpose of the MakerSpace is to work on skills such as following directions, development of fine motor skills, cooperative group work, basic science skills of observing and measuring, and project-based learning. We are hoping to increase the size and scope of our Maker Activities by having it housed in its own classroom.

Activities and Resources Continued

► Braille Books on Demand

Research has shown that giving students the ability to choose what they read leads to a greater interest in reading and improved literacy. Amanda Storaasli, a certified transcriber, continues to create braille books for students on-demand. This is one of the most important services provided to our students. These books are entered into the library collection and are available to others. One of the library's goals has been to increase the number of grade 1 braille books for beginning and early readers. We continue to grow and expand our braille book collection.

► Audio Books

We have enjoyed an ongoing relationship with the dedicated volunteers of the Junior League of Austin who continue to record a large number of books that wouldn't be available to our students otherwise. They will scan books for us to put into braille when we can't get editable text from other sources. The variety of audio picture books has been invaluable to our elementary students. Many weeks during book check out time, students leave the library with a pile of audiobooks to enjoy during their leisure time!

► Book Clubs

We currently have a High School book club that takes place during lunch each week. Our wonderful cafeteria staff packs sack lunches that students eat in the library while we all read, discuss and enjoy books!

► Additional Activities in the LRC

We continue to have a variety of classes in the library each week where we read books, participate in literacy activities and have book celebrations. We just celebrated Banned Book Week, had a Voter's Registration Drive and Mentor Center TVI visitors. Future activities include a Talking Book Program and Austin Public Library Registration Fair. The LRC staff is happy to be a resource for everyone at TSBVI!

Career Education

We continued to implement our five-step continuum of Career Education courses for students in Middle School, High School, and EXIT. These courses provide content and experiential learning opportunities that are designed to help students and their families narrow down goals for future employment.

Courses in the continuum are:

1. General Employability
2. Methodology for Academic and Personal Success (MAPS) I
3. Work Exploration
4. MAPS II
5. Work Training



Career Education Continued

Additionally, we continued to offer the following CTE courses:

- ▶ Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness
- ▶ Principles of Human Service
- ▶ Interpersonal Studies
- ▶ Child Development
- ▶ Principles of Hospitality
- ▶ Hospitality Services
- ▶ General Employability



The Career Education program had to suspend all off-campus work training options due to safety concerns related to the COVID 19 pandemic. However, we made efforts to maintain all the business partnerships that we had during the previous school year in order to return to having students working off-campus again when it is safe to do so.

Additional Career Education Initiatives

▶ Perkins V Grant

We continued to participate in the Perkins Career and Technical Education Institutional Grant. This is a federal grant that requires, among other things, that we establish and maintain a Business Advisory Council. Our council, which we established in the fall of 2020, consists of industry representatives, Blind/Visually Impaired professionals, students, parents, and professionals from both education and vocational rehabilitation. Our council convened twice during the 2020-2021 school year, in December and May. The committee will continue to meet twice a year to identify areas of improvement for the Career Education Program.

▶ Nepris Virtual Platform

The Nepris platform connects students with industry professionals from around the world. Students were able to conduct several informational interviews and gained more insight into the workplace through onsite virtual tours. This provided ample opportunities for students to participate in work-related informational activities while still adhering to COVID protocols.

▶ Career Cafe

The Career Education Coordinator collaborated with our Transition Coordinator and School Counselor to offer a "Career Cafe." This was a monthly opportunity for students of all ages to listen to professionals (some of whom are blind and visually impaired) speak about a variety of careers and gain firsthand experience with the tools of various trades and professions. Speakers presented virtually from around the nation. Students heard from entrepreneurs from New York, mentors from the Austin Lighthouse for the Blind, and a mentor from the Perkins school for the Blind.

▶ Assembly and Manufacturing Curriculum

During the summer of 2020, two Career Education teachers created a scope and sequence that is used to guide instruction for students in the Assembly and Manufacturing rotation of the General Employability course.

Additional Career Education Initiatives

► Vocational Adjustment Training through Easter Seals

Five students from the EXIT program were able to participate in a Vocational Adjustment Training course through a partnership with TWC and Easter Seals Austin during the spring semester. Students participated in a progression of modules that were designed to increase work readiness and self-awareness. This virtual course was adapted to meet the needs of students with visual impairments and neuro-diversities.

► Career Education Newsletter

The Career Education Department created a quarterly newsletter that featured in-demand careers for individuals with visual impairments. The newsletter, entitled "Career Updates" highlighted specific career clusters, career paths and postsecondary training options, and lesson plans for teachers to introduce careers to elementary through transition aged students. The newsletter also focused on community and business partnerships that have enhanced student work training opportunities.

► Job Coaching Study Group

The Career Education Coordinator continued to lead monthly Job Coaching study groups in the fall and spring semesters. Staff members enrolled in this group include teachers, teaching assistants, and the Post Secondary Program Coordinator.

► TSBVI Farmer's Market

The Farmer's Market project was suspended due to COVID 19 restrictions, however, multiple teachers coordinated projects in which students created products which they sold in a manner that was deemed safe.

► Links Program

This program was suspended due to COVID 19.

► TAMU grant:

The Career Education department applied for and was awarded a \$5000 grant from Texas A&M University. Funds will be allocated to ancillary and carved out experiences for elementary students that will serve as a precursor to our existing Career Ed/EXIT enclaves on campus: Animal Care, Bistro, Hospitality and Coffee, Horticulture, Assembly/Manufacturing. Additionally, it will be used to fund project-based activities for our MI/VI population.



"I was truly impressed with the communication, dedication, and patience TSBVI had with our local school district."

Pivoting Career Education During COVID 19

► Virtual scope and sequence for Work Exploration

In August of 2020, it became apparent that the typical model of instruction for the Work Exploration course would need to be adapted to a remote learning environment. The Career Education Department tasked the CTE teachers and Job Coaches to create a curriculum that would provide meaningful instruction to students in a remote or hybrid environment. Within weeks, the staff created three comprehensive scope and sequences that addressed learning goals. This curricula provided hands-on activities that were mailed to students' homes as well as a robust combination of synchronous and asynchronous instructional materials. This allowed the Career Ed team to switch between remote and hybrid learning environments without compromising the quality of the instruction.

► Work Training (project based learning)

Since all work training options were suspended due to safety concerns, it was necessary to create authentic learning experiences for students who would have been participating in the Work Training Course. The Career Education Department developed a service learning project for students to participate in virtually. Students worked together to identify a need in the community, collaborate with outside non-profit organizations, and develop and implement a fundraiser to meet the needs of the non-profit organization. Students worked as a team to create a product, advertise, and drive online sales and were able to connect with several different industry professionals during the process.

Student selling jars of honey



Flyer promoting the farmers market

“During the time of virtual learning, the staff has been informative and helpful.”

Fine Arts

► Art

Ethan W. and Marianela O. displayed and sold ALL of their artwork at the El Dorado Mexican Cafe exhibit in May 2021. Each had 10 artworks on display.

Jonathan G. made a video over Zoom with Art Teacher Gretchen Bettes called, "Battle at the Galvan Compound," and it opened for the online play, "Paths of Destiny."

Marianela O. also entered her painting, "Two Birds," in the national Start with Hello Contest and won first place!

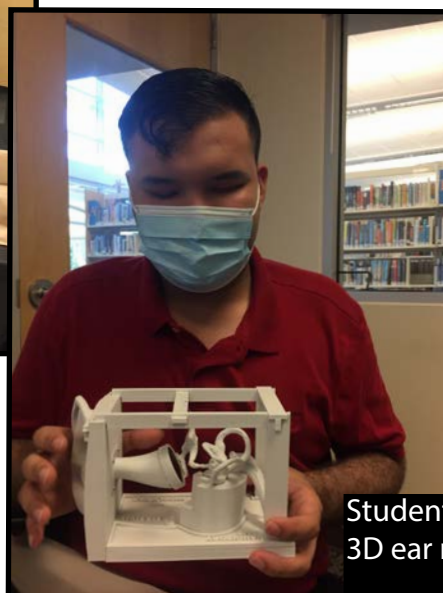
Jonathan G., Jakayla T. and Marianela O. all entered artwork in the APH Insights Art Show and received much praise from the organizers.

Congratulations to Jakayla T. and Marianela O. for having artwork in the Figuralo Art Show Youth Exhibit held online in the Smithsonian Learning Lab.

► Music

The TSBVI Classical Guitar Ensemble participated in remote learning and concert performances throughout the year. Music instruction consisted of synchronous music learning using Zoom, Google Classroom tools, and the online guitar curriculum for students with visual impairments, Lets Play Guitar.org.

Students became very familiar with the studio recording process and shared their music during two online concerts and graduation. Graduating seniors completed a unique audio/video recording project for their graduation ceremony singing "Cover Me in Sunshine" by Pink.



"We are very pleased with the progress our child continues to make. He loves his school and his learning environment. The staff are always a pleasure to work with. We look forward to another wonderful year!"

Clubs and After School Activities

► Student Council

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the TSBVI Student Council was able to accomplish many great things including:

1. Sponsoring a Winter Parade
2. Gathering hygiene supplies to donate to the Austin Women and Children's Shelter
3. Sponsoring a Valentine's Day Love Poem Contest
4. Hosting an all Virtual Talent Show

Yoga (virtual)

dance (virtual)

Art on the dorm (virtual)

Choir (virtual)

coding

Music Mania outside and (virtual)

music recording

scrapbooking

cooking & baking

Drama (virtual)

walking & running on campus

jewelry making

gardening

book club

quiz night (virtual)

YMCA Jan-March

bowling

music lessons (virtual)

rock wall climbing

Venture Crew (virtual)

beading

weaving

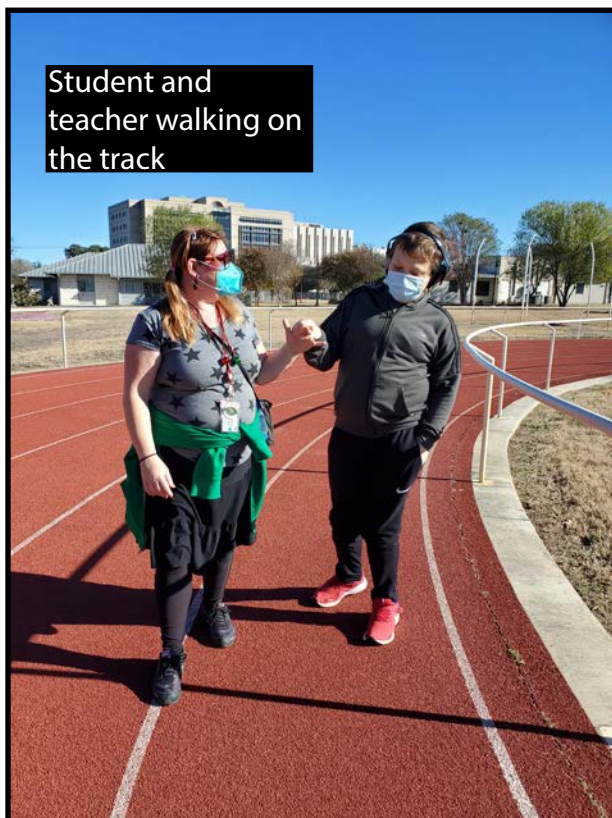
macramé

puzzles

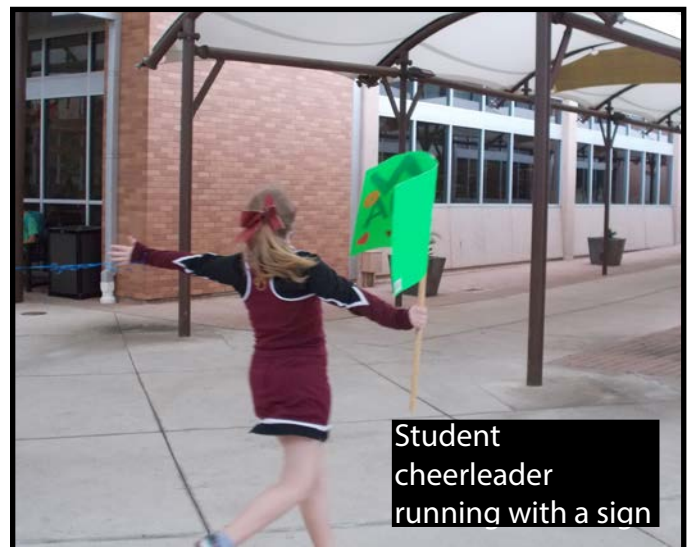
clay modeling

Athletics

May - SCASB Track & Field and Performing Arts (Virtual)



"I am very pleased and thankful for the opportunity TSBVI gave my son (us)."

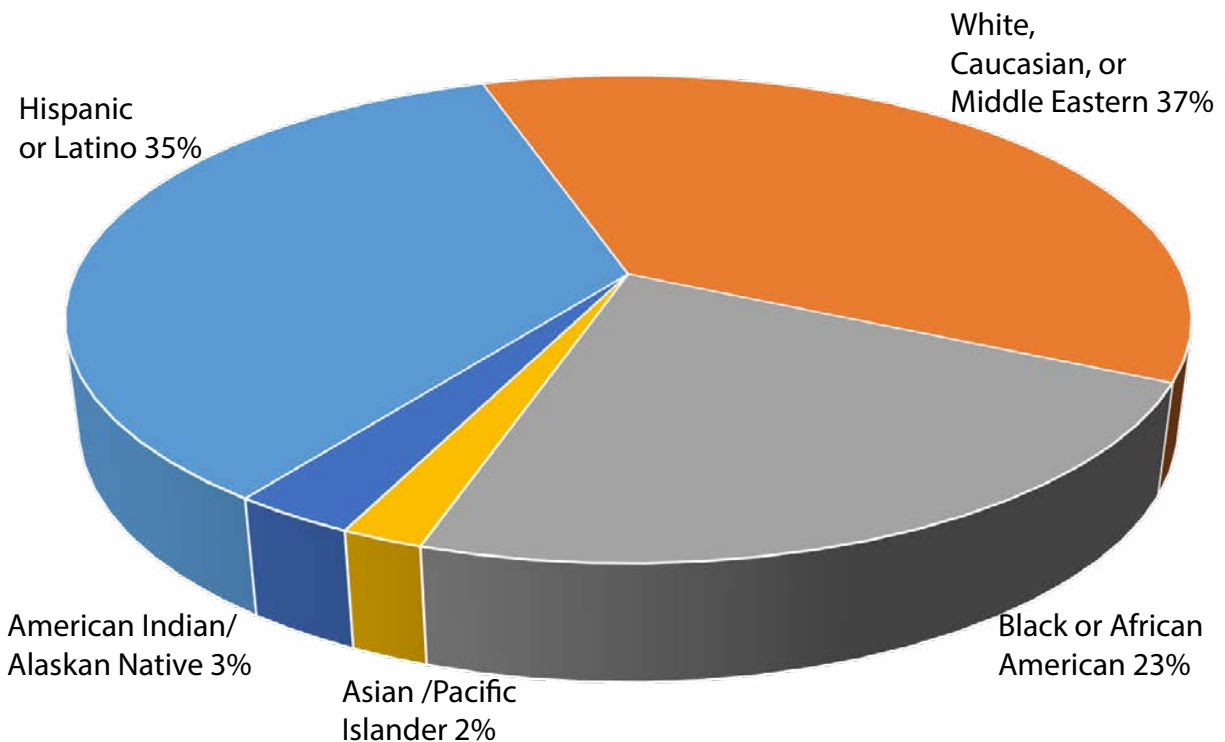


Enrollment Statistics 2020-2021

132 students representing 16 education service centers and 96 local school districts throughout Texas were enrolled in Comprehensive Programs.

Comprehensive Programs	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Elementary Program	18	16	17	17	13
Secondary Program	136	129	132	122	19
Post-Secondary Program	11	8	7	6	0
Total	165	153	156	145	132

Ethnicity of Students in Comprehensive Programs



“From our perspective, TSBVI has always worked great with our district and especially with our student.”



Student playing the piano



Student and teacher sitting on a blanket playing with instruments

“I’ve had the best teachers and staff. It’s the best school environment.”

“Thank you for your assistance in providing for my child’s transitional components to ensure the development of her independence.”



Young student holding her teachers hand walking on sidewalk



Teen student with her cane posing for a photo

“I am very pleased with TSBVI. There has been so much progress for my child. I am very happy she is on this journey on this campus.”

Short-Term Programs

Sara Meritt, Principal

Short-Term Programs (STP) offers group and individualized classes for blind and visually impaired students in Texas. Students participate in classes and activities with peers from across the state, either in-person or remotely. We offer both school-year and summer programs. Each program has a distinct purpose and targets instruction to a variety of student needs.

Short-Term Programs (School Year)

During the traditional school year, STP provides classes for students on, or near, grade-level. These students need instruction in special adaptive skills to access the core curriculum and participate fully in their school's learning and social environment. Between late August and May, STP typically offers intensive in-person classes, from three to five days long, as well as distance learning and individualized instruction. This year, due to COVID-19 related restrictions, STP provided online remote instruction and one in-person class at the end of the year.

In addition to working on the academic objectives for which their districts refer, students receive instruction in other aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for Students with Visual Impairments. This instruction includes independent living, travel, recreation and leisure, social interaction, and self-determination. Students learn alongside blind and low vision peers who are also developing ECC skills. Instruction begins when students wake up and learn breakfast preparation skills before class and ends at bedtime, after an evening of activities addressing domestic and personal care needs, food preparation, community access, homework, self-knowledge, and self-advocacy. Students often develop friendships and maintain contact with peers they meet in STP classes.

Short-Term Programs Achievements (School Year)

- ▶ Served 366 students from across the state
- ▶ 97% percent of students demonstrated progress on goals/objectives
- ▶ Served students from 17(of 20) educational regions
- ▶ Published two new online classes: Self Determination, and Abacus Part Three: Multiplication
- ▶ Presented at Mentor Center, TSBVI technology training day, and Texas Tech University Assistive Tech Weekend (BrailleNote, iOS devices & ZoomText)

Course List (September - May)

During the school year, the STP team works diligently to provide a diverse selection of courses to meet the many needs of students at various grade levels and skill levels.

1. Accessibility: What and Why?
2. Abacus Parts 1,2 and 3
3. Orion TI-84+ Talking Graphing Calculator Part 1, 2, 3
4. Google Classroom and VoiceOver
5. Google Classroom and JAWS
6. iOS Accessibility Features for the Visually Impaired
7. JAWS Part 1 Basic Concepts

Asynchronous Distance Learning Courses

School Year Courses (Virtual and In-Person)

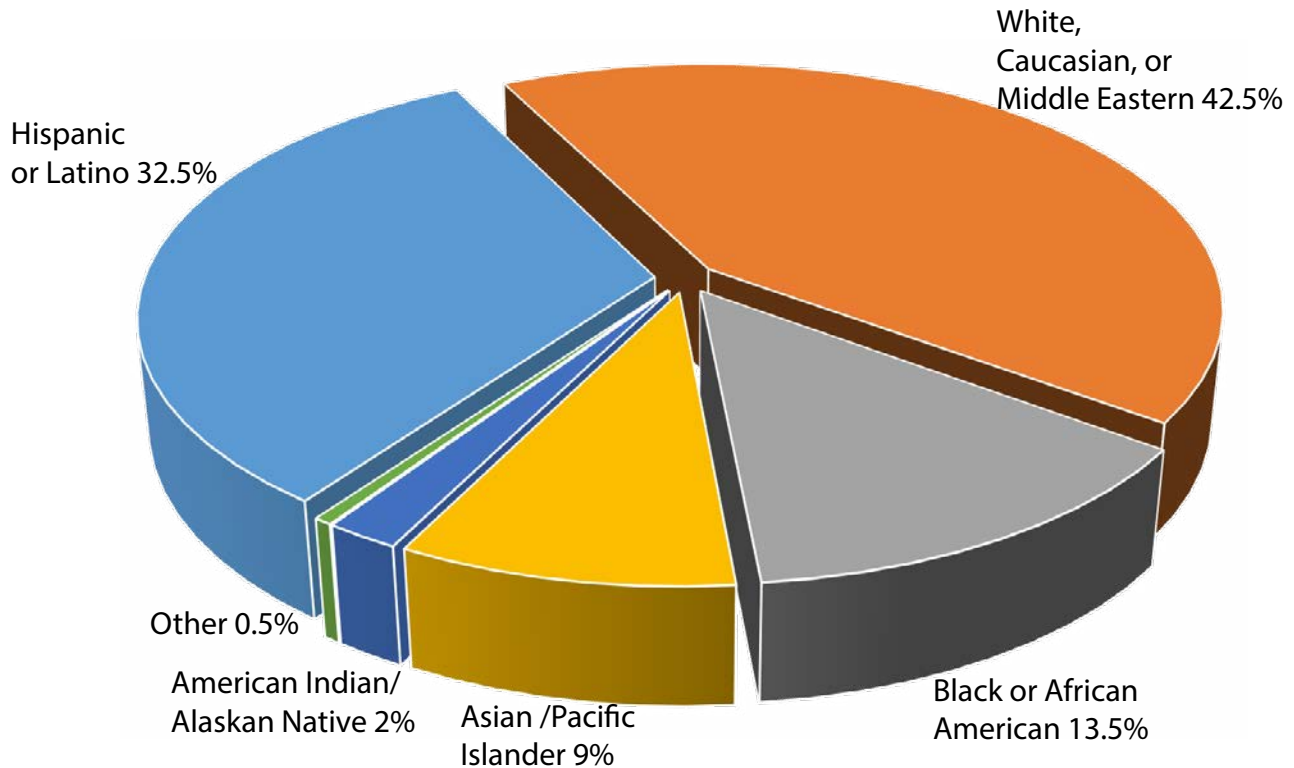
1. Individualized Instruction (Content determined by local district)
2. Book Club
3. Elementary Independence Weekend (Grades (2-3)
4. Junior Access to Academic Skills #1 (grades 6-8)
5. Elementary Technology & Math Series Part A
6. Kitchen Chemistry (grades 6-8)
7. Elementary Technology, Math Series Part B
8. High School Access to Academic Skills #1 (9-12)
9. Math or Technology, or Low Vision Tools
10. Special Focus: Preparing for College
11. Super Science! (grades 3-5)
12. Elementary Technology & Math Series Part C
13. Junior Independence #1 Iron Chef (grades 9-12)
14. Winter Social (all grades)
15. Elementary Access to Academic Skills (grades 3-5)
16. Game of Life (grades 7-9)
17. High School Access to Academic Skills #2 (gr. 9-12)
18. Wellness Weekend (grades 9-12)
19. Junior Access to Academic Skills #2 (grades 6-8)
20. In the Driver's Seat: Intro to Safe Driving Low Vision (9-12)
21. High School Independence Weekend #2: Outdoor Challenge (10-12)
22. Sexuality Education (grades 5-7)
23. Capitol Experience (grades 9-12)
24. City Travel
25. High School Independence Weekend #3: Prom (10-12) Class held via Zoom.
26. Junior Independence Weekend #2 (6-8) In-Person

Short-Term Programs Enrollment Statistics (School Year)

STP served 366 students, representing 17 Education Service Centers and 80 school districts from across the state.

Year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Students	268	311	275	205	366

Ethnicity of Students in Short-Term Programs (School Year)



Short-Term Programs Survey Responses

From Parents, Local School Districts, and Students (School Year)



Students playing outside on the lawn

"I cannot say enough good about the staff at TSBVI. They go above and beyond to assist me as I teach my student. They are student and teacher centered."

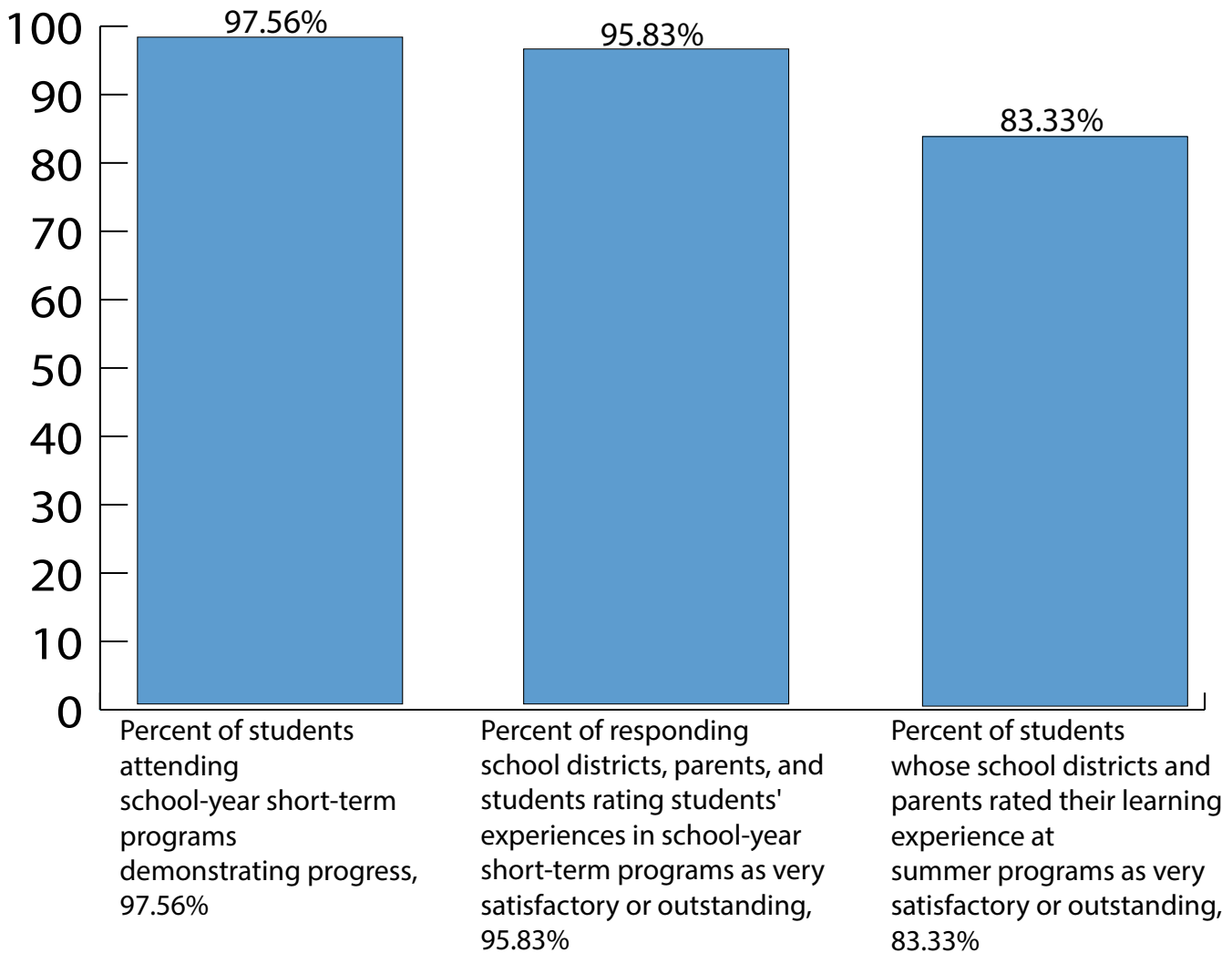
Student in a zoom class



“Her teacher presented and taught the new material in such a way that engaged my student in the step-by-step process. She enjoyed each lesson thoroughly and was quick to master the skills being taught.”

Short-Term Programs Performance Measures 2020-2021

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



“My student has grown tremendously in areas of technology and self-advocacy through TSBVI programming.”

Short-Term Programs (Summer)

Summer programs serve students from across the state in enrichment classes, emphasizing skills from the ECC that may be challenging for districts to teach during the school year. Texas students who do not attend TSBVI comprehensive programs during the regular school year are eligible for summer programs. Priority is given to students who have never attended to increase access to this specialized opportunity. Students attend one of five different summer programs described below. This year, STP offered both in-person and online summer programs.

- ▶ Secondary Enrichment (SE) provides middle and high-school-aged students opportunities to practice academic and vision-related skills in enrichment activities in unique themed classes. Students in this program generally take the STAAR assessment.
- ▶ Elementary Summer Enrichment (ESE) provides students opportunities to practice academic and vision-related skills in enrichment activities in theme-based classes. Students in this program generally take the STAAR assessment.
- ▶ Practical Experiences in Expanded Core (PEEC) provides opportunities for elementary and secondary-aged students to practice ECC and vision-specific skills in a structured classroom engaged in community-based instruction. Students are usually enrolled in self-contained classrooms in their local districts and generally take the STAAR Alternate assessment.
- ▶ Summer Work Experience in Austin, Texas (SWEAT) provides high-school-aged students paid jobs in the Austin community. Students receive intensive training in all aspects of work. Students also learn independent living skills to determine their strengths and needs as they prepare to leave traditional high school settings.
- ▶ Working and Living in the Community (WALIC) provides high-school-aged students with vocational opportunities. Students are usually enrolled in self-contained classrooms in their local districts and generally take the STAAR Alternate assessment.

Short-Term Programs Achievements (Summer)

Served 169 students; 142 in person; 27 online

83% of responding school districts, parents, and students rated their experience in summer programs as very satisfactory or above. These results were from summer 2020, when all instruction was provided online due to the pandemic. In Summer 2021, Short-Term programs were able to serve students on the campus safely.

“TSBVI is a great asset to the school district. We look to them for guidance, counselling, direction, and assistance.”

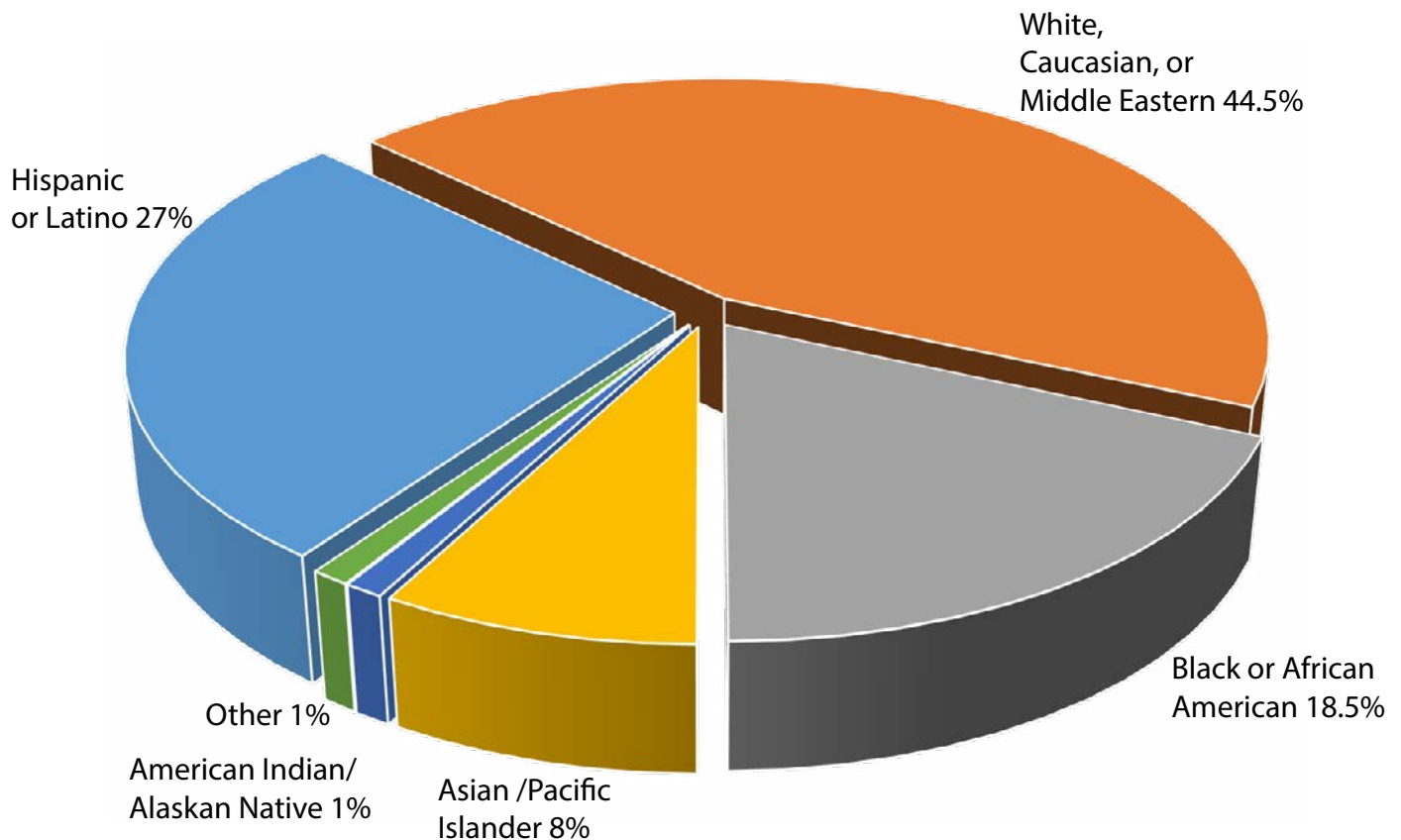


Enrollment Statistics (Summer)

169 students attended, representing 19 of the 20 Education Service Center regions and 94 local school districts throughout Texas.

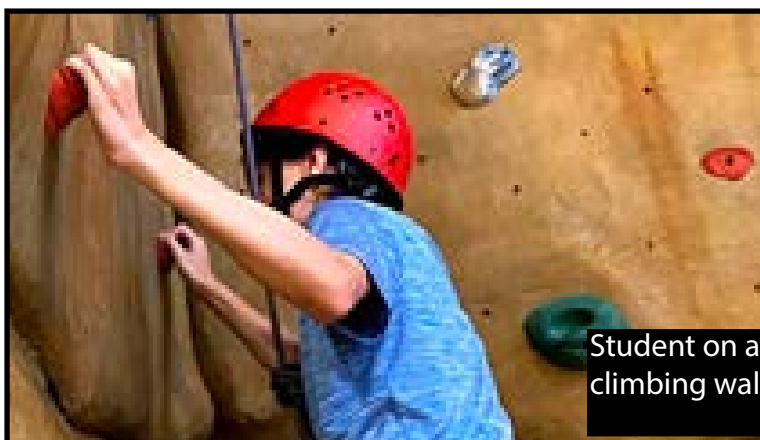
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Students	345	315	177	108	169

Ethnicity of Students in Short-Term Programs (Summer)



Short-Term Programs Survey Responses

From Parents, Local School Districts, and Students (Summer)



Student on a climbing wall

“Since the kids were unable to meet in person, I thought the teachers did a wonderful job of creating a remote learning experience.”

“We were so glad to be a part of this summer program. The teachers were so great. It's funny how close everyone got through the virtual sessions.”



Students sitting around a table eating



Students learning how to ride a bus

“TSBVI offers great learning opportunity with innovative ideas to have the students become independent and keep activities interesting.”

“The TSBVI summer camps and short term programs are an absolutely essential resource for visually impaired students in Texas.”



Student sitting at table working on a craft

Outreach Programs

Kate Borg, Director

Outreach Programs provide statewide training and information for children and students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. By working with families, the educational teams, and other related organizations, Outreach is able to offer support to students of all ages from birth through transition from school. Our focus is to support students in their homes and neighborhood communities all across Texas by bringing our services directly to school communities and programs through consultations and trainings, both in-person and virtually.

At the request of families or education personnel, Outreach provides various programs, trainings, and consultations to support family members and professionals involved with students with visual impairment or who are deafblind. We collaborate with Educational Service Center and district personnel, and partner with local, state, and national agencies and organizations to build and support quality local programs for students and families. Most assistance from the Outreach Program is available at little or no charge. Services include:

- ▶ Individualized coaching consultations to families, schools, and other related agencies or community organizations
- ▶ Training for families, professionals, and paraprofessionals through face-to-face and virtual workshops and conferences around the state
- ▶ Distance learning options via web-based live and archived webinars
- ▶ An online newsletter (Texas SenseAbilities) produced with Health and Human Services Commission Blind Children's Program and TX Workforce Commission offered both in Spanish and English
- ▶ Resources on visual impairments and deafblind strategies
- ▶ Ordering and distribution of materials from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) as part of the federal quota fund program
- ▶ Assistive technology available on loan
- ▶ The Annual Registration of Students with Visual Impairments and the Texas Deafblind Child Count conducted for the Texas Education Agency
- ▶ Coordinating and providing statewide mentoring services for teachers in their first years of service

"Outreach staff have given us the guidance and leadership this past year that we desperately needed to create a good team and give our student what he needed to be successful."

TSBVI Outreach Programs effectively support and collaborate with personnel available at regional Education Service Centers. Students with visual impairment or who are deafblind represent low incidence populations with diverse and unique needs. Districts often first turn to their regional ESC Consultant in Visual Impairment, Deafblind Specialist, or Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Those professionals refer to the TSBVI Outreach Programs as needed and we work together for optimal follow-up and implementation. This provides for a strong statewide system to support quality educational programs for students across Texas.

Achievements

► Consultation and Training

87.87% of Outreach customers rated the improvement of their knowledge and skills as very satisfactory or outstanding as a result of services received from the Outreach program.

Outreach staff completed 99 student/school consultations across 62 school districts in each of the ESC regions of Texas. This number is lower than is typical, but given the move from in-person to online school, it is not a surprise. However, these visits have documented success: 100% of respondents reported a positive change for the student, staff or family as a result of school consultations with Outreach staff. Doing virtual consultations allowed us to move to a coaching model, which has proved highly effective, and which will continue as we return to in-person and hybrid trainings and consultations.

TSBVI Outreach presented or facilitated 285 conferences and/or workshop sessions at local districts, regional service centers, and at statewide and national venues, including via distance technologies, for 12,508 participants. This increase is due in large part to the continuation of Coffee Hour (see information under “Web-based Accomplishments”). Requests for workshops and training come from throughout the state and around the nation.

There were several statewide conferences sponsored by TSBVI Outreach, including: the Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education, Intervener Training, Intervener Train the Trainers, Braille “Boot Camp”, the Southwest Orientation and Mobility Association Conference, Active Learning, Mentor Center, and a statewide Mentor Training. In addition, TSBVI Outreach staff presented at many related virtual conferences throughout the state and nation

In the 2020-2021 school year, Outreach provided a variety of presentations relevant to current trends in our field and the needs of students with sensory impairments. Topics included braille and tactile graphics, high tech orientation and mobility, cortical visual impairment, low vision devices and techniques, intervener training, calendars and routines, math teaching strategies for students with visual impairments, Active Learning, self-determination skills, early childhood specific strategies, and much more.

Outreach recognizes the value of providing instructional opportunities for professionals to acquire ACVREP or SBEC continuing education units and continues to offer training that provides professional development and qualifying credits. In the 2020-2021 year, 6,501 people received credit hours. A total of 285,412.5 hours were awarded.

“I am so very grateful to have access to your webinars, presentations and website materials over the years. You all are a rare and treasured resource for our special community. Thank you!”

Achievements Continued

► Personnel Preparation and Mentoring

TSBVI is an active partner in professional development of new teachers of students with visual impairment and certified orientation and mobility specialists. With the support of the TSBVI's state and federal funds and the TSBVI VI mentor program, 54 new VI professionals were employed in Texas. Texas universities enrolled 85 new students into professional development coursework. During the 2020-2021 school year, 83 new teachers received mentoring. There are a total of 376 trained mentors throughout Texas (Teachers for Students with Vision Impairment and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists).

► Texas Deafblind Project

The federal Texas Deafblind Project grant, which runs from 2018-2023 funds several projects and activities to continue to ensure quality education for students who are deafblind throughout the state of Texas. Members of the Deafblind team also served on a committee to draft state certification standards for teachers of students who are deafblind, which were approved by SBEC and subsequently were adopted by SBOE. Team members are currently working on writing testing items for the state certification and licensing exam.

In March, the Project hosted the virtual Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education. The symposium ran throughout the month, with 17 synchronous sessions and 14 asynchronous sessions that were presented in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and ASL. Presentations covered a wide array of topics promoting best practices for instructing and communicating with students who are deafblind. There were 1,005 people who participated across the United States and 19 other countries. This symposium was a huge success!

The Project also supported the first annual Mental Health Symposium regarding students who are deaf and deafblind. The conference was virtual, and hosted speakers from all over the country who discussed strategies and practices to support positive mental health for students.

► Family Engagement

Families have a long-term impact on the outcome of their children's educational programs. Outreach continuously offers family support and consultations, participates in conferences and trainings for families, and acts as a resource to various family networks.

Family organizations thrive in TX in part due to the support of the Outreach Programs. This past year, organization leaders met together on a quarterly basis in a web-based format. This has increased their knowledge of each other, and shared learning about effective strategies to grow a statewide family organization.

An initiative that grew out of the need for distance/online opportunities was designed specifically for families. Our Family Engagement and Transition Coordinators worked together to create a space for family members of students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind throughout Texas. TFT continued throughout the 2020-2021 school year with weekly sessions. An important aspect of TFT is the protective space for families only, which has created an environment of collaboration and sharing. One participant shared, "The group meetings have meant a great deal to me. They have allowed me to voice my concerns about distance learning in a safe, caring and respectable environment. It's always nice to know that there are others in the same boat. It has been helpful to talk with professionals about what we are going through. It finally gave me the approval to stop being so hard on myself and to take some time to just breathe and to see the good in every day."

► **Statewide Collaboration and Networks:**

TSBVI Outreach members promote, expect, and appreciate collaboration with regional and statewide entities including:

1. The West Texas Cluster
2. Personnel Preparation Advisory Group
3. State Leadership Services for Students who are Blind and Visually Impaired
4. The Texas Assistive Technology Network
5. Family organizations in the wider disability field such as Parent to Parent and Texas Hands and Voices as well as blindness related family groups such as the Deafblind Multihandicapped Association of Texas (DBMAT), Texas Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (TAPVI), and Texas Chargers
6. The Alliance of and for Visually Impaired Texans
7. The Texas Action Committee for the Education of Students with Visual Impairments
8. The Texas Interagency Task Force on DeafBlindness
9. Online and Distance Initiatives

The use of distance training tools supports access to quality training for people who might otherwise not be able to attend, resulting in wider dissemination of training materials. This past year, our ability to provide support virtually proved invaluable and many of these presentations were archived and posted on the website for later viewing.

Outreach continued to provide web-based study groups on topics including cortical visual impairment, active learning strategies, and coaching. Virtual sessions allow professionals in their local communities to connect for scheduled topical discussions and provide access to expert assistance and a peer group for discussion without the costs of time and travel. During the 2020-2021 school year, there were 44,208 total registrations via ESCWorks for our virtual offerings. The TSBVI Online Learning website, <https://www.tsbvi.edu/online-learning>, provides an organized venue for accessing anytime, anywhere training on VI and DB issues. 5,955 courses were completed through our E-Learning platform for 2713 CEUs awarded to 669 awardees.



“The presenters are all terrific: such a wealth of knowledge and insight mixed with compassion and expertise. Thank you all!”

Three students and their teacher wearing decorative hats for the holiday season

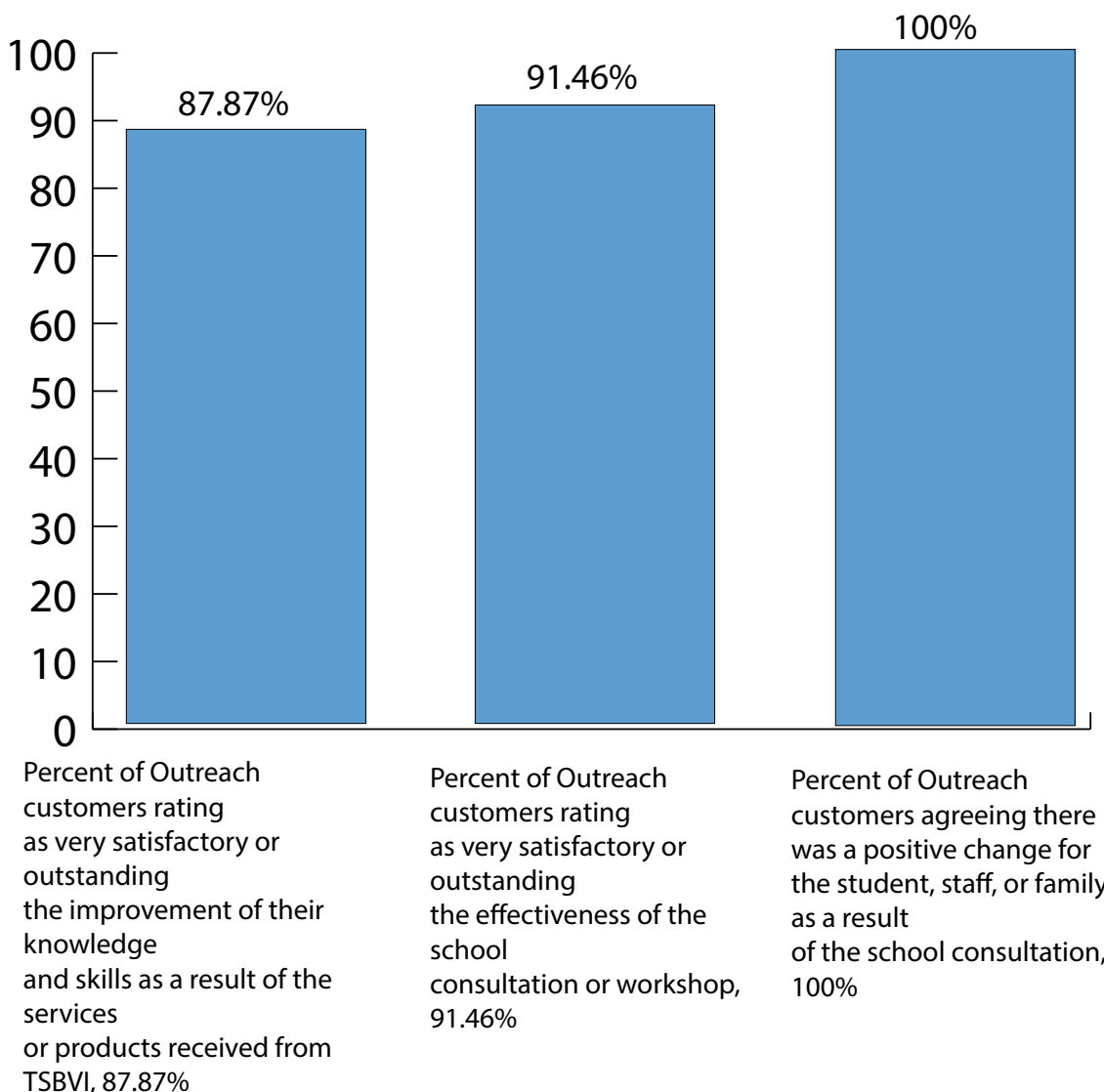
Last year, we continued offering Coffee Hour twice weekly. The purpose of these one hour sessions is to provide training, collaboration, and professional development opportunities for service providers throughout the field. TSBVI Outreach providers presented information on various topics such as Active Learning, CVI, Assistive Technology, Distance Learning, Orientation & Mobility, and much more! We also collaborated with many others in the field across the globe to lead Coffee Hour sessions. Coffee Hour will continue during the 2021-2022 school year.

Outreach published two issues of Texas SenseAbilities, a publication about visual impairment and deafblindness for families and professionals. The newsletter has 3 sections: Family Wisdom, Effective Practices, and News & Views. Content is curated by Outreach, TWC, and HHSC staff and written by families and professionals throughout the field. For this next year, we are moving the newsletter to an online format. This way, we will be able to have more up-to-date information, reach a broader audience, and provide links to resources for professionals and families.

The podcast, A Sense of Texas, continues to be published twice each month. During this year, there were 9,300 total downloads for a total of 25,500 downloads. The podcast has been downloaded in all 50 U.S. States (and D.C.) and in 42 additional countries.

Outreach Program Measures

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



Outreach Programs Survey Responses From Parents, and Local School Districts



Two students dressed in black tuxedos for the prom

“Thank you to all the teachers that give us the opportunity to observe their classrooms. This is a great experience for me as a future teacher of the visually impaired.”

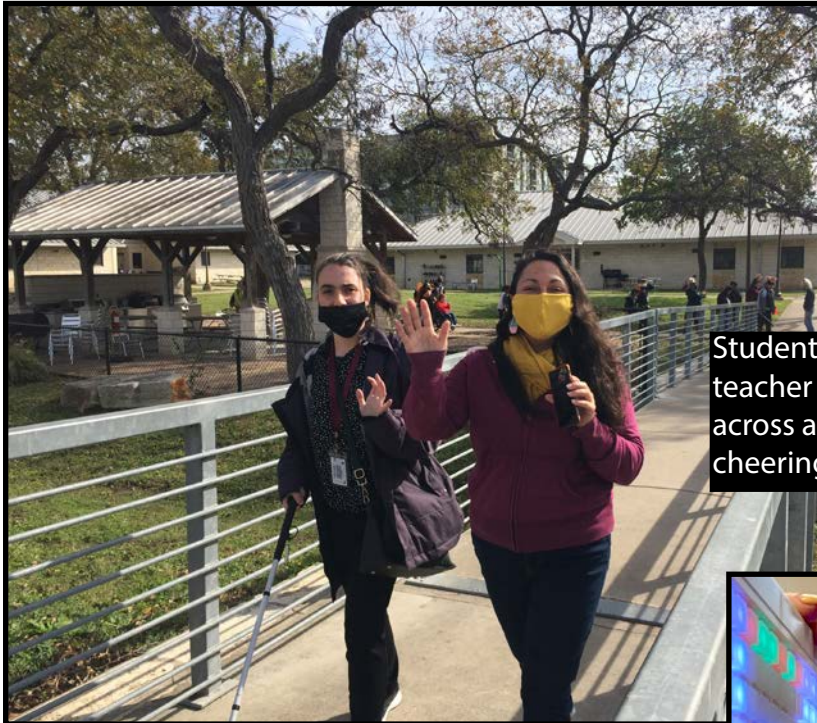


Student riding a tricycle laughing

“Outreach consultants are outstanding! They really take the time to listen and understand the concerns of the professionals and family involved in the consultation. They were always available to discuss new information and enthusiastic about working through challenging situations.”

Outreach Programs Survey Responses From Parents, and Local School Districts

"I'm fortunate that teachers at TSBVI were able to show me the ropes of where to begin."



Student and teacher walking across a bridge cheering

"Great job to the entire team, presenters and organizers! Learning from the experts and the lessons learned/insight from others was extremely valuable. Thank you so much for all you do!!!!"



Teacher and student working on a lesson together

Curriculum Development Department

Debra Sewell, Director

The Curriculum Department at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired develops curriculum written by teachers and other certified professionals serving students with blindness and visual impairments. Curriculum and resource guides are developed, peer-reviewed, published, and sold world-wide to assist the certified teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVI), the certified orientation and mobility specialist (COMS), the classroom teacher, and the family in the delivery of instruction in the areas of the Core Curriculum and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). ECC programming includes: independent living; career education; assistive technology; compensatory skills instruction such as concept development and braille; orientation and mobility; recreation and leisure, self-determination, sensory efficiency skills, and social interaction skills. Each guide contains evaluation tools and instructional methodology.

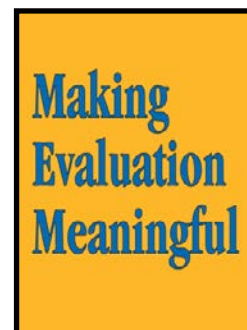
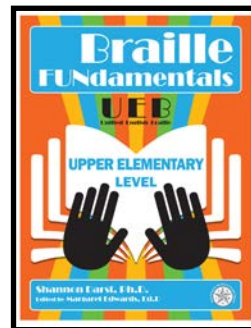
Publications

- ▶ A total of 4,835 publications were sold in this fiscal year, equaling a total dollar amount of \$279,098, after the \$10,675 employee discount was taken into account.
- ▶ Essential Tools of the Trade: A "How-To" Guide for Completing Functional Vision, Learning Media and ECC Evaluations was at the top of our best-seller list. We sold a total of 649 copies of the ETT publication. It is reported that several universities are using this publication in coursework.
- ▶ TAPS Orientation and Mobility Curriculum, 3rd Edition, continues to be in demand and was second on the list with 523 sold. That total includes 269 print copies of the curriculum, 147 copies of the evaluation booklet and 107 copies of the flash drive.
- ▶ A total of 503 copies of the Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments were purchased, making it the third on the list of sales. APH continues to purchase this publication for inclusion in a package with calendar boxes.
- ▶ One of our newest publications, Finding Wheels: Strategies to Build Independent Travel Skills, was fourth on our list of top sellers. We sold 436 copies this year.
- ▶ Also sold during the school year were: 211 copies of Nemeth At A Glance: A Math Resource, Grade-Level Chart and Evaluation Tool; 179 copies of A Paraeducator's Handbook for Working with Students Who Are Visually Impaired; 145 copies of Texas 2 STEPS: An Early Intervention O&M Curriculum and Evaluation booklet; 131 copies of Expanded Core Curriculum: Resources for Evaluation and Instruction publication; 88 copies of EVALS; Evaluation Tools for Core and ECC Areas; and 32 copies of Empowered, our Self-Determination curriculum.

► The Primary and Upper Elementary levels of the UEB updated Braille Fundamentals curriculum have been completed and are in production. Since its release in January, 109 Teacher's Guides and Student Materials sets have been sold for a total revenue of \$46,260.

Publications Under Development

- Update of Making Evaluation Meaningful
- Middle School and High School levels of Braille Fundamentals (UEB)
- FVE/LMA Guidebook, Essential Tools of the Trade 2, for students with Deafblindness
- EXIT Curriculum designed for students who have received credits for graduation and are working on skills needed for adult life



Curriculum Support (School-wide and State-wide)

- The Curriculum Department provides training, in Texas as well as out of state, on the use of our publications.
- The Curriculum department provides support to classroom teachers in daily instruction, completion of the Performance Indicator Evaluations, and use of appropriate curriculum.
- Curriculum is being adapted for students receiving modified instruction in Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. AGS curriculum products from Pearson, Study Island and The Unique Learning System program are being used as the basis for some of these courses.
- The Curriculum Director collaborated with Outreach staff on several projects: Literacy for Little Ones (emergent literacy instruction for braille reading students); and the Progression of Tactual Learning (a profile of early tactile development). The Literacy for Little Ones training is occurring at several ESCs and will be packaged for future use. The Progression of Tactual Learning information will be made available on the TSBVI website later in 2021.

Performance Indicator Evaluations

- The Curriculum Director continues to evaluate, refine and create the performance indicator evaluation tools that guide IEP development and instruction for TSBVI students.
- Curriculum staff is beginning to convert PIs from Word documents to Google Sheets
- The Curriculum Director continues to submit a report to TEA detailing the yearly progress made by our students as determined by our Performance Indicator Evaluations.

Information Resources Department

Achievements

► Support of Transition to Hybrid Work and Learning

As school and work slowly started to return to normal as COVID-19's grip on Austin lessened, demand for hybrid working opportunities increased. The IR team contributed by providing technology solutions to help students, faculty and staff effectively work remotely. This transition included a broad transition from desktop-based computing environments to laptops and tablets and all of the infrastructure required to support a more hybrid environment.

► Technology Infrastructure Improvements

Part of the journey to modernize our campus network involves removing old, outdated equipment. A significant amount of progress was made this year with evaluating what equipment was designed to do what and to remove equipment no longer in use. Making these changes has simplified efforts to document the remaining equipment so that further modernization efforts can continue.

► University of Texas Programming Partnership

This year we leveraged the skills and enthusiasm of graduating UT Systems Engineering students by proposing 2 programming projects for them to tackle. Once our projects were accepted for implementation, our team worked with the students and their professors to build out a system named Comet that tracks volunteers, volunteer projects and donations. The other project allows the Career Education team to track hours of student workers. Both projects have been very successful and encourage us to do more work with the UT team.

Campus Security Report (Required by TEA)

There were no violent or criminal offenses resulting in disciplinary action in the 2020-2021 school year.

Executive Management Team

Emily Coleman	Superintendent
Miles Fain	Principal of Comprehensive Programs
Sara Merritt	Principal of Short-Term Programs
Kate Borg	Director of Outreach Programs
Cheryl Williams	Director of Human Resources
Dan Hampton	Director of Information Resources
Pamela Darden	Chief Financial Officer
Susan Houghtling	Planning and Evaluation Coordinator
Matt Schultz	Residential Director

Thank you to the many donors and volunteers that help make our school such a wonderful place!



Students playing music outside with their teacher



Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Established in 1856

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