

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

SB 1 Hearing February 7, 2011: Response to Request for Additional Information:

Student Enrollment Clarification/Enrollment Trends

- TSBVI's 10% budget reduction included an estimated reduction of the number of students who could be served equal to approximately 10% of current enrollment—12 to 16 students. Restoration of the 10% reductions would allow TSBVI to continue to serve to our current capacity. This information is provided for clarification. At the hearing, it was unclear as to whether the 12 to 16 students were above current capacity or merely brought us back to current capacity—which is the case.
- TSBVI's enrollment for the current and past four school years is as follows:

School Year	Student Enrollment*	New Students
2006-2007	151	36
2007-2008	152	39
2008-2009	143	36
2009-2010	151	47
2010-2011	161	36

*Student enrollment numbers are based on the total number of students served during the school year and are different from the number of students enrolled at any point in time. For example, to date this year, we have served 161 students; 152 of this number are currently enrolled.

- We anticipate referrals for admission to increase because of the improved facilities and the constraints on local resources, including eliminating local and regional positions for Teachers of the Visually Impaired.

Deferred Enrollment of Admitted Students/Pending Applications

- The enrollment date for 12 students admitted to TSBVI for the 2010-11 was deferred because of lack of staff resources and physical space in the dormitories. The students were admitted when other students transitioned to their local school districts. The respective amount of time for deferred enrollment was: three students/deferred for three months; one student/deferred two months; eight students/deferred for 5 months (start of 2011-12) school year.
- Current enrollment on campus is 152. We anticipate that 35 students will either graduate or transition back to their local school districts during the remainder of this school year. ($152 - 35 = 117$). We have deferred the enrollment dates of 8 admitted students until the start of the 2011-12 school year ($117 + 8 = 125$). We have 20 applications pending for enrollment for the 2011-12 school year. ($125 + 20 = 145$). Between February and the end of the school year, we receive an average of 15 applications for admission ($145 + 20 = 165$). Thus, we could potentially be above current enrollment at the start of the next school year.

Key Performance Measure. TSBVI's primary student achievement measure is:

Members of the Senate Finance Committee expressed concern at the reduction to 89% of the target success rate on TSBVI's key performance measure of student success. TSBVI shares this concern. The lowered estimate of success is based on the reduction in the numbers of teachers, teacher assistants, specialists and residential instructors whose positions would be eliminated to achieve the 10% budget reduction.

- The key performance measure is:

Percent of students achieving moderate (+10% to 19%) to substantial (+20% or more) progress in all or all but one area of the core and expanded core curricular areas in which they receive programming.

TSBVI achieved a 96% level of success on this measure in FY 2010.

- In the event that TSBVI's budget is reduced by 10%, TSBVI's estimated achievement of success on this key measure is 89%.
- At TSBVI, reducing staff reduces student progress. The majority of our students, and especially those with significant cognitive impairments, do not learn unless they are continuously engaged with an instructor, unlike more typical school learners who spend large portions of their day working independent of direct engagement with a teacher.
- Because of the way the key measure is calculated, it is an extremely high standard that could be compared to moving up one to two letter grades or more in a purely academic setting. This measure not only includes a calculation of student success in the more traditional core curricular areas such as math or science, but also a calculation of the many additional areas of learning our students require to achieve independence. These additional areas are known as the "Expanded Core Curriculum" and include Orientation and Mobility (cane travel), Independent Living Skills and the use of Specialized Technology for the Blind.
- **Restoring the Target.** Restoration of all or part of the school's priorities (1 and 4) relating to the campus-based Comprehensive Programs, puts this key measure back up in the range of 2010 levels.

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ARRA Funds. TSBVI received a total of \$443,828 in ARRA funding in FY 2010.

- \$14, 897 was Title I funding distributed by ADA formula to all school districts and was used by TSBVI to purchase training and materials related to working with students who have autism in addition to visual impairment. \$28, 931 was IDEA-B formula that was used to provide statewide technical assistance in Deafblindness. \$400,000 was from TWC to provide specific jobs skills training. Coursework for this program included Office/Clerical; Screen Printing and Embroidery; Horticulture; Sound Engineering; Animal Care Services; Barista Training; and Hospitality Services.

The grant paid for \$212,370 in equipment and supplies; \$107,190 in personnel costs; and the remainder spread over contractual, travel, and other costs. TSBVI does not have additional on-going expense related to this training as it will be subsumed into the school's larger career education program moving forward, using existing personnel.

No Recent History of Litigation/Impact of Budget Reduction

- TSBVI has not been involved in a special education required mediation, administrative hearing or litigation since 1989. For students with deferred enrollments, we have successfully worked with districts and parents to agree on an enrollment date without resorting to either formal conflict resolution.
- Reductions in the TSBVI budget will result in fewer educators and dorm staff and will impede the transition of students back to their local school district programs. As was pointed out in the hearing, it is not possible to accurately predict the possibility of increased litigation related to deferring the enrollment date of admitted students.

Substitute Employees

- For a typical state agency, the calculation of the number of agency FTEs is determined by counting the number of full-time and part-time persons employed by the agency. For TSBVI, however, the methodology for calculating FTEs includes not only the number of full-time and part-time employees but also the number of hours worked by substitute employees hired to work for absent employees. (2080 hours of substitute employee time per year = 1 FTE).
- TSBVI hires substitute employees for absent employees 1) to ensure student care and safety (cafeteria, nursing and security staff) and continued education and supervision (teachers, teaching assistants, residential instructors, bus drivers and aides); 2) to operate the central switchboard to allow incoming communications statewide; and 3) to keep our facilities clean during the transition from old to new facilities (custodian).
- The calculation of use of substitute employees can equal up to 25 FTEs per month. So, although TSBVI currently actually has around 350 people hired in full- or part-time positions, our official FTE count is 373 because of use of substitutes.