

**South Dakota Board of Regents  
Joint Appropriations Committee  
South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Marjorie A. Kaiser, Ed.D. Superintendent  
January 27, 2009**

The SDSBVI continues in its mission to provide educational programs and support services for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind. We serve more students today than at any previous point in our 100 year history. This is possible because we have expanded our delivery options to better meet the needs of students, many of whom can remain in their local districts for much or all of their education with our support.

**STATEWIDE TASKFORCE**

- In March 2008, the South Dakota Board of Regents received the report of statewide study of educational programs for children with vision loss. It was conducted by a select Task Force, lead by Dr. Phil Hatlen. Dr. Hatlen is a nationally recognized leader in the field of blindness.
- The 25 member Task Force included parents, Office of Special Education, State Library, Adult Services, Birth to Three Connections, public school teachers, and special education directors, legislators, South Dakota Advocacy, Parent Connection, NSU, and SDSBVI faculty.
- The Task Force considered ten major areas that are critical components in providing an appropriate education to students with vision loss.
- Major findings included:
  - A need to expand our outreach services to provide more frequent contacts with families of children ages birth to three and students in public school programs.
  - A need for all visually impaired students to be taught the skills of blindness.
  - A need for more trained teachers of the visually impaired.
  - A need to expand the on campus student evaluation program.
- Progress Report:
  - The BOR approved our request for two additional Outreach Vision Consultants; the Governor did not include it in his budget. We understand this is not the time to ask for new FTEs, but outreach remains our highest priority and we will move forward when feasible.
  - We are working with Northern State University to explore the potential of expanding the teacher of the visually impaired offerings.
  - We have made some changes in our Evaluation Program to improve efficiency and provide more information to families and schools. Ours is the only program in South Dakota that provides comprehensive evaluations that address the impact of vision loss on learning and classroom adaptations.

**BUDGET REDUCTIONS**

- FY09
  - \$21,417 will be achieved by reducing consulting, travel, supplies, and capital asset purchases.
- FY10
  - \$5,435 will be achieved by eliminating the Artist In Residence Program

**MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

- The BOR provides funding for the two special schools Maintenance & Repair projects.
- We are fortunate to have a single building built in 1960 and to have had a maintenance staff who have been proactive.
- Over time we have made significant improvements to the building that have increased our energy efficiency as well as improved its safety and function.
- We have no critical deferred maintenance.