

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: 7 – B
DATE: July 31 – August 1, 2024

SUBJECT

SDSBVI School Accreditation and Improvement Plan

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[SDSBVI Strategic Plan](#)

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI) is accredited through the South Dakota Department of Education. This is a key component of all planning that occurs strategically and annually for the SDSBVI. The SDSBVI approved their last Strategic Plan in June of 2019 and annually review the plan and strategies for improving the SDSBVI. At this BOR Meeting, SDSBVI is seeking approval for the new 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, presented as item 7-C. The evaluation of the strategic plan and the accreditation evaluation facilitate the next years’ growth opportunity for school administration as they are planning for the academic year. Attachment I is the updated evaluation.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

Updating the improvement plan and evaluating the strategic plan on an annual basis will assist SDSBVI staff, administration, and their various stakeholders develop the school’s mission and further support meeting the needs of the students attending or being serviced by SDSBVI. Each year SDSBVI will bring an updated evaluation for the Board of Regents.

This is an informational item for the Board as to the accreditation and strategic planning evaluation that was conducted.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – SDSBVI Accreditation and Improvement Plan

INFORMATIONAL ITEM



SD School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

School Improvement Plan

(May 2024)

SDSBVI Mission Statement

Preparing students to step forward with confidence and a vision of lifetime success.

SDSBVI Vision Statement

All South Dakota children who are blind or visually impaired will have full access to educational resources that prepare them for life.

SDSBVI Beliefs

- We foster each child is an individual, deserving of uniquely designed learning opportunities focused on helping them achieve their highest level of independence.
- We promote families, communities, and school districts as key partners in meeting the needs of each child.
- We support knowledgeable and caring professionals who provide experiences for each child in the least restrictive environment.
- We use innovative technological tools to meet the needs of the individual child.
- We provide safety and security in a positive healthy environment.
- We commit to the highest level of independent readiness as each child embraces adulthood with a sense of opportunity.

Needs Assessment

SDSBVI students that receive on campus educational services in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11 are given the Smarter Balanced Assessment each year. The students may be eligible to take the alternate assessment depending on their individual needs or disability. Due to the low number of students (less than 10) in each class, SDSBVI cannot generate grade level data. SDSBVI does, however, maintain individual testing results which are used internally for individual student growth monitoring. The students' home school district also maintains this data. Student growth is also monitored using special education achievement and ability scores generated during

student evaluations. Individual scores for the students are distributed to parents/guardians and home school districts when results are received.

School Profile

History

The South Dakota School for the Blind was officially opened in Gary, South Dakota, on March 1, 1900, under the South Dakota Board of Charities and Corrections. In 1945, the School for the Blind was placed under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Board of Regents where it remains today.

In 1957-58, the idea of relocating the school surfaced. The major contentions were the inadequacy of the facilities at Gary, the lack of opportunity for city travel experiences, and the proximity to a college. In 1959, the State Legislature passed a bill authorizing relocation of the school to Aberdeen. Classes began in the new facility in Aberdeen on September 18, 1961.

In 1970, the name South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped was adopted. This change reflected the fact that students who are visually impaired as well as blind can receive services. In 1979, serving students who were deaf-blind was added to the responsibility of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped.

On the recommendation of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped Advisory Council and with the support of the South Dakota Board of Regents, the South Dakota Association of the Blind, and the National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota, the school requested a name change during the 1998 legislative session. On July 1, 1998, the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped became the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The South Dakota Board of Regents approved the construction of the current South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI) building in October 2017. The SDSBVI building was financed in collaboration with Northern State University (NSU), the Northern State University Foundation, and Governors Dugaard and Noem's State's Future Fund. NSU and SDSBVI swapped land to meet the needs of both facilities. The approximate cost of the SDSBVI building and grounds was \$13.85 million.

From the start of the new building process, Northern State University and the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired joined together to make the project fit both organization's needs. This collaboration developed into teaching, learning, and student opportunities that dually benefit the two organizations. On January 13, 2020, the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired started classes at its new home on the former grounds of Jerde Hall located on the east side of the Northern State Campus.

The South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired building site and architecture was selected based on the needs of the students and staff that utilize the South Dakota School for

the Blind and Visually Impaired. Special consideration was given to ensure orientation and mobility opportunities for students.

Services

The South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has demonstrated a commitment of developing and using the best instructional practices and accommodations to educate students who are blind and visually impaired. SDSBVI offers tiered educational programming to meet student needs throughout the state of South Dakota.

Students with vision loss may receive comprehensive functional low vision, academic, cognitive, social/emotional, transition, and speech-language educational evaluations performed by expert staff at SDSBVI. After students have completed their evaluations, SDSBVI personnel can provide guidance with designing instructional materials and methods that support children who are blind or visually impaired on campus or via Outreach consultation.

SDSBVI offers a quality on campus teaching and learning environment. Classroom teachers have a South Dakota teaching certificate and a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) endorsement or master's degree. SDSBVI is recognized as an accredited K-12 school by the South Dakota Department of Education. Students who are provided services on SDSBVI's campus receive academic instruction which includes special education and the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). Students who attend their home schools during the academic year may attend SDSBVI during the summer to increase their utilization of the specialized skills of blindness from the school's ECC offerings.

Outreach vision consultants aid children, families, and educators throughout South Dakota. Services include staff training, technical assistance, educational material loans, and development of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP), Individualized Education Programs (IEP), or 504 Plans.

Selection Goals, Intervention Strategies, and Assessment

- A. **Goal:** Increase local, state, and national understanding of SDSBVI's roles and responsibilities as a resource for children in need of specialized vision services.

Intervention Strategy: Develop online and face-to-face learning opportunities for classroom teachers, parents, and community providers.

- Intervention Strategy:** SDSBVI staff and administration will attend state and national conferences to inform the greater community about our services and distribute informational materials.
- Intervention Strategy:** SDSBVI will collaborate with teacher preparation programs and related services training programs throughout South Dakota to inform future teachers and service providers about our services and distribute informational materials.
- Intervention Strategy:** Structure, grow, and market SDSBVI's Learning to be Equipped for Adulthood Program (LEAP) to increase the awareness of customized transition services for students who are seeking work or post-secondary education after meeting graduation requirements or working towards a certificate of attendance.
- B. **Goal:** Expand and enhance outreach service support to assure equitable access to consultative services statewide.
- Intervention Strategy:** Increase collaboration with South Dakota Birth-3 Program via personal contacts and resources to increase number of infants and toddlers with vision loss being referred to SDSBVI resources.
- Intervention Strategy:** Create and distribute informational text and online media to inform parents and teachers of available services through SDSBVI.
- Intervention Strategy:** Develop, distribute, and analyze survey data from parents, teachers, and school administrators about outreach service effectiveness and needs.
- C. **Goal:** Establish a statewide center of excellence in vision loss resources for families and providers of children who are blind or visually impaired in South Dakota.
- Intervention Strategy:** Create a physical resource library on SDSBVI's campus of materials to be loaned out by families, teachers, and other providers.
- Intervention Strategy:** Market the resource library through presentation and online platforms.
- D. **Goal:** Review South Dakota Smarter Balanced Assessment results on an annual basis to identify longitudinal trends for individual student growth and proficiency in the areas of math, English language arts, and science.
- Intervention Strategy:** Identify students' individual academic areas of need.

Intervention Strategy: Generate action plans for improving the areas of academic needs through IEP goals, accommodations, and curriculum revision.

Staff Development

SDSBVI has nine staff development sessions allotted in the 2024-2025 school calendar. SDSBVI administration will arrange professional development opportunities during these sessions for training and collaboration focusing on achieving the selection goals. The professional development committee will be consulted before staff development sessions are finalized.

Documentation

IEP Goal Monitoring:

Student Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals are reviewed and addressed each year during the student's annual IEP meeting. The IEP team makes determinations on the goals to be included in the IEP based on the student's individual strengths and needs. The goal progress is reported to the parent/guardian and the Local Education Agency on a quarterly basis per the state of South Dakota and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Waivers of Administrative Rule

Not Applicable