

2018-20 Executive Progress Report

Commonwealth of Virginia
Secretary of Education

Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

At A Glance

The mission of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind is to provide educational programs and services to students ages 0 through 21 who are deaf, blind and sensory impaired with other disabilities. Educational and residential services shall promote:

V - Value for each person and his/her unique abilities

S - Success in meeting each student's academic goals

D - Diversity in instruction to meet the needs of all students

B - Building opportunities that foster expertise in technology and its integration, communication, and achievement for all staff and students and their families.

Staffing 157 Salaried Employees, 0 Contracted Employees, 185.5 Authorized, and 52 Wage Employees.

Financials Budget FY 2019, \$12.09 million, 89.20% from the General Fund.

Trends Legend ↑ Increase, ↓ Decrease, → Steady

Key Perf Areas ↑
 →
 →

Productivity Legend ↑ Improving, ↓ Worsening, → Maintaining

For more information on administrative key, and productivity measures, go to www.vaperforms.virginia.gov

Background and History

Agency Background Statement

The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind was established in 1839. Virginia students ages 0-21 who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired and multi-disabled who meet admission criteria are potential candidates for admission.

As of July 1, 2009, § 22.1-346 of the Code of Virginia, was established by the General Assembly transferring the property; rights and duties to the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind; supervision of school; appointment and removal of officers and faculty; and certain funding initiatives.

§ 22.1-346.2 established the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (Board) as a policy agency in the executive branch of state government under the name of the "Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind" for the purpose of governing the educational programs and services to deaf, blind, and multi-disabled students enrolled at the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Major Products and Services

VSDB serves students who are ages 0-21 and who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, deafblind, and sensory impaired with other disabilities. Students are referred through their local school division and must participate in the admission process for considered enrollment. VSDB works closely with the school divisions to ensure a smooth application process. VSDB has a rolling admission policy and currently serves

79 students in grades preschool through 12. Admission criteria are established by the Board of Visitors and are in compliance with the Code of Virginia. Students who qualify to apply to VSDB for enrollment must be served through special education services with deafness or blindness as their primary disability category. VSDB serves students on the vision continuum from low vision to blind. In addition, VSDB serves students who are deaf or hard of hearing and supports students who utilize American Sign Language, cochlear implants, and/or are more oral. In the multiple disabilities area, students are served who are deafblind or sensory impaired with other disabilities and who are able to function at a participatory level within the classroom.

Students are admitted as day or residential students. Residential students live on campus Sunday evening through Friday and return home every weekend. VSDB is seeing an increase in the need of services for students with emotional issues, students who are sensory impaired with autism, students who are multi-disabled and students who are more oral and want to learn American Sign Language as a communication option.

Customers

Customer Summary

Customer Table

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Student	Deaf and blind students and students with multi-disabilities in addition to deafness and/or blindness	79	200	Stable

Finance and Performance Management

Finance

Financial Summary

VSDB administers a budget of approximately \$12 million dollars which includes general and non-general funds. VSDB receives federal grants that are managed under the specified mandates for each grant.

Fund Sources

Fund Code	Fund Name	FY 2019	FY 2020
01000	General Fund	\$10,784,090	\$10,784,090
02218	Vsdb Special Revenue Fund	\$410,183	\$410,183
02860	Recycl Mtrl Sales-Nongen/Nonhe	\$1,000	\$1,000
02870	Surp Suppy/Equip Sale-Gf-Nonhe	\$10,000	\$10,000
10000	Federal Trust	\$884,899	\$884,889

Revenue Summary

VSDB's main source of funding is state general funds. The agency receives federal funds from ESSA and IDEA grants. A portion of the revenue comes from Medicaid reimbursement for services performed by our clinical staff for students.

Performance

Performance Highlights

VSDB offers comprehensive educational programs and support services to students with sensory impairments as specified on each child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The school provides both residential and day options for children depending upon the distance from the child's home and his/her needs. VSDB provides the following services/programs:

- Educational opportunities for students to gain access to all diploma options
- Students who are deaf/hard of hearing enjoy direct interaction through American Sign Language with peers and adults
- Braille instruction and literacy
- Career and technical training
- Family-centered and language based developmental programs for infants, toddlers, and pre-school aged students
- Weekly orientation and mobility instruction for all ages of students who are visually impaired
- Daily living skills instruction
- Nutritional meals that meet dietary requirements developed with student's input
- Dormitory living in a nurturing residential setting for students starting at 5 years of age
- Variety of sports programs for students who are deaf and blind
- Transportation for residential students

- Extracurricular clubs
- Deaf/Blind services
- Services for students who have sensory impairments and autism
- Outreach which includes consultations
- Parent infant services
- Interpreters provide off campus communication

Selected Measures

Measure ID	Measure	Alternative Name	Estimated Trend
218.0003	Percentage of high school students who are enrolled in secondary post education vocational programs or have achieved employment within one year of graduation.		Improving
218.0004	Total number of practicum students and/or interns who complete practicum/internships within the scope of programs and services at VSDB.		Maintaining
218.0005	Total number of students who access the residential programs and services at VSDB.		Maintaining

Key Risk Factors

VSDB strives to meet the needs of a complex student population with over 85% of students being served through special education services for more than one disability. Approximately 90% of its high school student population is predicted to graduate with an Applied Studies diploma. VSDB is challenged to maintain both an academic and a functional/life skills program. As a result, VSDB teachers are challenged with multi-grade, multi-skill level classrooms. In addition, due to the specialized skill set required of the teachers, VSDB is challenged to retain employees and to recruit new hires.

VSDB’s most significant barrier continues to be the lack of awareness, across the Commonwealth, of its program and services. As a result, enrollment is not where it should be. However, VSDB has been working for the past several years to establish a more solid financial base, develop new programs to meet the needs of the state, and to enhance and expand programs and services. As a result, the focus for the 2019-20 school year will continue to be to increase awareness of VSDB’s programs and services through an expanded marketing campaign.

Agency Statistics

Statistics Summary

The following statistics provide a breakdown of the students VSDB is serving as of July 2019.

Statistics Table

Description	Value
Number of residential students	50
Number of day students	25
Number of deaf/hard of hearing students	37
Number of blind/visually impaired students	28
Number of multi-handicapped students	10
2019 graduates	10

Management Discussion

General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

Over the past few years, VSDB had made great strides in establishing a more effective and sustainable foundation for its future. Financially, VSDB is stable and operates consistently within its budgetary guidelines. Programs and services have been reviewed, expanded and enhanced with the addition of many new programs. VSDB offers many programs that are unique to the Commonwealth, including but not limited to the following:

- **Independent Living Apartments-** located on campus and offering students a nine-week experience of supervised independent living. This program is supported by a VSDB designed curriculum to address the needs of its complex student population.
- **Residential Program for students who are 18 years and older-** allows adult students to live more independently within a supervised residential setting.
- **Multi-year High School Program-** allows high school students the opportunity to expand their education beyond the typical four-year program. Students are encouraged to continue their high school program until they age out of special education services at age 21 years

old. This allows them to take advantage of the multiple programs and services that VSDB has to offer in order to be better prepared for life after graduation.

- **Work Experience Program-** provides opportunities for high school students to explore and experience various career fields both on and off campus. Work site placements are fully accessible and are designated and supported to meet the interest and the needs of the student.
- **The VSDB CROPS Program-** consists of the VSDB Educational Urban Farm and the VSDB Greenhouse components. The VSDB Educational Urban Farm is the largest in the Commonwealth and provides opportunities for students to be involved in every aspect of the growing process. The CROPS program exposes students to a healthier lifestyle including healthy food choices. Produce from the farm supplies the VSDB cafeteria where students can enjoy the “fruit of their labor”.
- **Nationally Certified Interveners-** VSDB offers the most experienced and largest Intervener program in the Commonwealth. VSDB’s Interveners are nationally credentialed and provide unique support services for students who are Deafblind. The support of an Intervener for a student who is Deafblind has proven to have a significant impact on the student’s educational progress.

The VSDB Foundation has been a crucial support to VSDB in its efforts to establish a more prosperous and sustainable agency. With its assistance, during the 2019-20 school year, VSDB will focus on marketing efforts throughout the Commonwealth in order to increase awareness of VSDB and its programs and services. VSDB’s marketing plan consists of a full revision of its website, updated program marketing materials, and Public Service Announcements.

In addition, VSDB has worked to increase its community partnerships as well as its partnerships with other agencies of the Commonwealth. VSDB collaborates with its partners in the development and implementation of its programs and services.

Information Technology

VSDB has made great strides in modernizing the IT offerings for Students, Teachers and Parents over the last 5 years. VITA’s allowances for semi-autonomous decision making in the School IT Infrastructure have supported VSDB’s ability to focus on bringing and keeping services online. Current investments include hardware and software maintenance and licensing. The current focus is regulatory compliance. A Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment was completed in 2017-2018 which formed the foundation of VSDB’s IT Security Plan. The IT Security Plan is in its final phase of development with a completion date during the 2019-20 school year.

For the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind the factors impacting IT needs are the complexity and costliness of overlapping Federal and State legal and regulatory mandates. The unique needs of the students in the area of assistive technology are complicating factors in the effective and compliant delivery of services. VSDB maintains the same Student Information Systems, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) systems, Building Automation, and Security Systems as any other school district. These obligations add complex dynamics to VSDB IT.

Workforce Development

The retention of employees in the educational and residential programs has been challenging. A significant factor is the increasing specialized skills required for all staff who provide direct student services and increased workload due to staffing shortages. In the past, VSDB has struggled to maintain competitive salaries with local school systems and organizations. However, with a more stable and more efficient management of the budget, over the past three years, VSDB has been able to implement salary alignments that supported more competitive salaries. The goal is to maintain competitive level which will support more effective retention and recruitment efforts. We are meeting most of these needs with wage staff; however, the retention of these employees is difficult due to the lack of benefits and low compensation.

Physical Plant

VSDB has an approved capital project for the renovation of the exterior of Main Hall, an original building from 1839 and currently houses administrative staff. The project to renovate Bradford Hall should be completed this calendar year. Bradford previously housed the infirmary and they will return to the building. VSDB has also received a project to Expand Emergency Generator Systems. This will be bid out this fiscal year. Through Maintenance Reserve, VSDB is completing painting projects, railing projects, and some roof repairs.