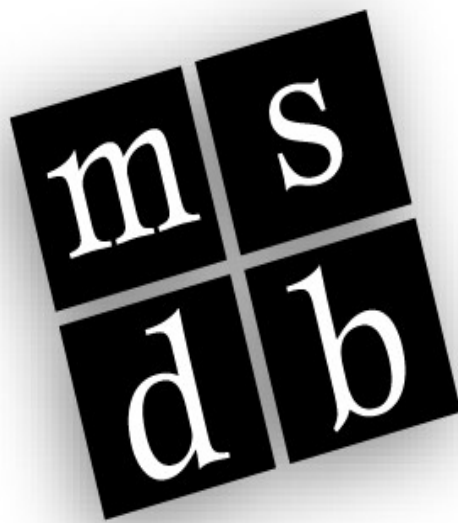


*Communication, Education,
and Independence for Life*



MONTANA
SCHOOL *for*
Deaf & Blind
CHILDREN

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Report to the School Renewal Commission
By Steve Gettel, Superintendent
Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind
Great Falls, Montana
September 8, 2003

Abstract	1
Overview of Programs and Services	2
Agency Funding	4
Critical Areas of Need.	5
Challenges for LEAs	6
Regional Comparisons	7
Proposed Solution	8
Challenges in Providing Transitions Services	8
Proposed Solution	9
References	10
Codes Related to MSDB	11
Program Indicators	12

Abstract

The purpose of this document is to provide the School Renewal Commission, established by the 2003 Legislature, with information about the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind which assists the members of the Commission in understanding the role and purposes of the school in serving the needs of sensory impaired children in Montana. The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind is an integral part of the P-12 public education system, serving deaf and blind children, ages 0 through 21, across the state. MSDB is an executive branch agency providing the following programs and services upon the request of local education agencies and community based service providers:

- Campus-based, P-12 education and post 12th grade transition programs for day and residential students.
- On-campus living facilities and health services for students who attend MSDB as residential students.
- Outreach services through regionally located consultants to provide technical assistance and training to Local Education Agencies (LEA) personnel, community based service providers, the medical community and parents.
- Contracted family advisors who provide home-based training for families with infants and toddlers.
- Campus-based evaluations for determination of eligibility and assistance in developing Individual Education Plan recommendations and goals.
- Summer camps and family learning weekends to extend opportunities for education and socialization and to provide family support.

The major challenges facing the LEAs and MSDB in meeting the educational needs of sensory impaired children include:

1. Providing for early identification and tracking of sensory impaired children and the early implementation of communication models or compensatory skill development programs to give them the best opportunity for a complete education.
2. Providing for appropriate educational options based on adequately trained personnel and/or adequate access to specially trained consultants who can provide training and technical assistance to LEA personnel necessary meet the identified needs of students.
3. Providing for adequate opportunities for transitional students to develop functional and compensatory skills necessary to live independently and be successful in the workplace.

MSDB is committed to improving the educational opportunities for sensory impaired children whether they attend school on the MSDB campus or in their home school districts. MSDB is committed to serving as a state-wide resources for all LEAs and community based programs and has developed proposals which, if supported by the Governor's Office and the Legislature, would provide a cost effective means for enhancing the level of service that the school can provide to LEAs ensuring that students receive adequate and appropriate education services.

Of all the students served through Montana's special education system, through appropriate services, MSDB believes that sensory impaired children have the greatest potential to become independent and self-supporting citizens in our state. MSDB stands ready to be utilized by the P-12 education system to meet the challenge of ensuring that all deaf or blind children, anywhere in Montana, receive an adequate and appropriate education.

Overview of Programs and Services

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind opened in Boulder in 1893 on the campus of the Montana state training school. In 1937 the school opened in a new single building facility on an 18-acre campus in Great Falls. Today the campus comprises 8 buildings including two academic buildings, two residential cottages, a dining facility, gymnasium and a heating plant with a combined space of over 180,000 square feet. MSDB is located directly across Central Avenue from two Great Falls Public School facilities, Lewis and Clark Elementary and East Middle School and a mile from Great Falls High School.

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind is an integral part of the Montana public education system providing a residential and day school for children and adolescents who are deaf or blind or whose hearing or sight is so defective that they cannot be successfully taught and are unable to receive a sufficient or proper education in the public schools of the state. MSDB provides a placement option for the education of sensory impaired children, to local school districts, and is the only education agency mandated to serve children ages 0 to 21.

In accordance with its objects and purposes, the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind serves two primary functions. First, by the use of specialized methods and systems, MSDB provides an education for the hearing impaired and visually impaired children of this state that is commensurate with the education provided to nonhandicapped children in the public schools and that will enable children being served by the school to become independent and self-sustaining citizens.

Second, in compliance with its statutory objects and purposes, MSDB serves as a consultative resource for parents of hearing impaired and visually impaired children not yet enrolled in an educational program and for public schools of the state where hearing impaired or visually impaired children are enrolled. The school upon request shall ensure that services and programs for hearing impaired or visually impaired children are appropriate and sufficient.

All students who attend MSDB do so under an Individual Education Plan developed by the parents, local school district and MSDB staff. Students are referred and evaluated for placement at the request of Local Education Agencies (LEA). When a student attends MSDB it is because the parents, the local school districts and MSDB have agreed that MSDB provides the most appropriate and least restrictive environment for the student to receive an education. All services provided by MSDB are at no cost to the LEA or parents.

The critical needs for deaf and hearing-impaired students are communication skills, access to a peer group that uses similar communication models, opportunity to develop a cultural identity, and support for transitional programming including independent living and work attainment skills. The IEP related issues include access to the curriculum through sign language and qualified sign language interpreters, and support services provided by professionals with training specific to the unique need of deaf and hearing-impaired children.

The critical needs for blind and visually impaired students are communication models which may include Braille or the use of adaptive technology to access information, orientation and mobility instruction, instruction in the expanded core curriculum and support for transitional

programming including independent living and work attainment skills. The IEP related issues include access to the curriculum through modification of materials, and support services provided by professionals with training specific to the unique need of blind and visually impaired children.

The on-campus programs serve as a model for the LEAs in supporting sensory impaired students in their home schools. LEA personnel frequently visit the MSDB campus to observe teaching techniques, to consult on their students, to gain awareness of technology used in educating sensory impaired students, and to learn about disability specific curricula and materials.

Education Programs MSDB currently serves 76 students in its campus-based program in grades preschool through the post high school transition program. The current enrollment falls in the range of 75 to 85 students enrolled over the past 4 years.

MSDB has a staff of 21 teachers, 16 of whom have advanced degrees in either deaf or blind education. Like other public schools, MSDB provides 180 days of instruction to our students during the school year that runs from late August through early June. There are 7 specialists who provide assessment and therapy for campus based students as well as educational, functional vision, speech and language, occupational and physical therapy and audiological assessments for public school students at the request of an LEA for the purposes of program special education eligibility determination or making Individual Education Plan (IEP). Last year our specialist assessed 29 students 12 of whom were placed at MSDB by their parents and an IEP team.

Interpreter Tutor Program MSDB employees 11 full-time and 3 part-time educational sign language interpreters/tutors who work with 21 hearing impaired students who take some or all of their classes in the mainstream setting in the Great Falls Public Schools at Lewis and Clark Elementary, East Middle or Great Falls High School through an interagency agreement with Great Falls Public Schools. They provide 78 periods of interpreting and formal tutoring for students everyday. The IEP team determines all classes taken by students in the mainstream setting. The interpreter staff also serves 13 students who are participating in extracurricular and club activities with the public schools. Having an adequate number of skilled interpreter tutors and grouping students together allows MSDB to develop a cost effective, yet appropriate educational plans for any deaf student who comes to our school.

Residential Program The residential program operates four cottage wings providing a home away from home for 37 children who come to MSDB from across the state to attend school. Students are divided by age and gender. There are separate cottages for visually impaired and deaf elementary boys, junior boys, senior boys, and visually and hearing impaired junior and senior girls. Having four wings allows flexibility in grouping students by age and disability to best meet social, communication and program needs.

The cottage program is staffed approximately 235 calendar days during the school year by 4 counselors and 23 cottage life attendants and night watch staff. Along with creating a safe and nurturing environment for our students who live in the cottage, the residential staff plans and supervises healthy recreation programs and supports the development of independent life skills for the junior and senior high school students who participate in the Independent Life Skills Program. All of the cottage staff has completed a certified training program under the National Association of Child Care Workers. Our health services program is directed by a registered

nurse and staffed by 3 licensed practical nurses assuring parents that their children have access to medical triage and care and the safe dispensing of medication at all times.

Outreach Program Currently MSDB's 5 Outreach consultants are serving 292 children, 15 are between the areas of 0-2 and 277 are between the ages 3-21. This is an average caseload of 58 students per consultant. This service is provided at an annual average cost \$1,022 per child. Two consultants for the deaf serve 104 students and are currently based in Boulder and Billings. The 3 consultants for the blind serve 188 students and are currently based in Missoula, Bozeman and Great Falls. These consultants provide public school districts with technical assistance in serving students with information, advice and support to parents of infants and toddlers regarding essential early intervention activities.

To meet with school district personnel, community based service providers and parents, MSDB's 5 consultants drive between 15,000 and 17,000 miles annually. The average travel radius is 150 miles for the 3 consultants for the blind and 180 miles for the 2 consultants for the deaf. Because each consultant has specific training and experience, they are frequently requested to travel in excess of 300 miles, one way, to consultant with school districts and parents.

The work of these five consultants is critical because on the 2002-2003 Child Count, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) reported that there were 291 hearing impaired or deaf, visually impaired or deaf-blind students being served in Montana's public schools, including 186 hearing impaired or deaf, 65 visually impaired, and 7 deaf-blind children. Seventy-three of these children were served at MSDB during the 2002-03 school year. This number does not include infants and toddlers, ages 0 to 2, served by regional Part C intervention programs. It is not known how many deaf, blind or deaf-blind children are served under Part C because data on reported on disabilities to Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is not disaggregated.

Fewer than 1/3 of these students are served in LEAs by teachers trained in their specific disability areas and who can modify curriculum, evaluate progress toward IEP goals and make recommendations, based on disability specific experience or training. Across the state there are only 4 school districts, which employ specialists or teachers trained in the areas of deaf (3) or blind (1) education. MSDB consultants for both disability areas assist public school districts with student assessment and technical assistance in designing Individual Education Plans.

Summer Programs Week long summer camps for deaf and blind students are provided through the collaborative efforts of MSDB, OPI and the MSDB Foundation. These camps are designed to give students from both the LEAs and MSDB, an extended opportunity to learn how to communicate and develop technology based communication skills, socialize with their peers and develop independence.

Through the same collaborative effort, MSDB also provides families and school personnel of deaf or blind students with the opportunity to participate in "Family Learning Weekends." These weekends are designed to provide opportunities for learning related to their child's disability, information on disability related resources, and an opportunity to develop supportive networks with other parents and professionals who work with deaf or blind children.

Agency Funding

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind is an executive branch agency of state government. Funding for the school is provided via direct appropriation from the Montana Legislature. The legislature appropriated to the school in fiscal year 2004 total funding of \$3,932,597, consisting of \$3,494,225 general fund, \$341,676 state special revenue, and \$96,696 federal revenue.

Because approximately 90% of MSDB's total annual budget is allocated from general fund dollars, legislative appropriation of a consistent funding stream has been difficult to maintain because of fluctuations in revenue collected from individual and corporate income taxes. A greater percentage of revenue from state special revenue and federal flow-through dollars would help to shield MSDB's budget from the reductions experienced in the past two years.

Critical Areas of Need

During the 2002-03 school year, MSDB's outreach consultants evaluated their caseloads to determine to what degree, local districts were able to provide services and support to meet the specific needs of their sensory impaired students in the areas of access to a communication model, access to the curriculum, delivery of instruction, access to a peer group, support for transition activities and access to extra curricular activities.

Through this analysis, three critical issues in providing appropriate educational services to Montana's deaf and blind children, were identified. First, the state must establish an integrated system for identifying and tracking infants and children who have sensory impairments. Second, the state must provide appropriate educational options for deaf and blind children, both in home based and school based programs. And third, there are inadequate opportunities for older students to develop functional and compensatory skills necessary to live independently and be successful in the workplace. In a rural state like Montana, this necessitates extensive community based education for the numerous professionals who provide child find, early intervention, direct instruction, technical services and support to educational programs. These include neonatal and pediatric doctors and nurses, audiologists, speech and physical therapists, regional Part C providers, Indian Health Services, the Department of Public Health and Human Service and county health departments, and public schools.

Early Intervention Early identification of sensory impaired children is critical to the long-term educational success of sensory impaired children. This is particularly true with children who have a hearing impairment or deafness, which is sometimes referred to as "the invisible disability." Children with profound deafness tend to be identified between 12 and 18 months of age. Children with severe or moderate deafness, which is still a major disability when left without intervention, are typically not identified until they are between the ages of 2 and 4.

Through a longitudinal study by Dr. Christine Yoshinaga-Itano, Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at the University of Colorado, Boulder, findings show that with appropriate early intervention during the first six months of life, 90% of the 350 deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers developed vocabulary skills within the range of normal development in the first three years of life. This contrasts with children who were later identified as deaf or hard of hearing (after 6 months) where only 25% had vocabulary development within the normal range. The result is that these children have vocabularies similar to the bottom 10% of children

with normal language development. Children in the early identification intervention group had non-verbal development, such as symbolic play, motor skills, self-help and emotional skills, which was at similar developmental levels to verbal development. Children at 2 years of age, identified early and received appropriate early intervention programming, who demonstrated normal motor skill development were likely to demonstrate language skills at the 2 year level also. In contrast, a later identified 2 year old child with a significant hearing loss, was likely to demonstrate language skills at an 18 month level, 25% lower than other developmental skills.

Nationally the average reading level for a deaf student graduating from high school is between the 3rd and 4th grade. This statistic holds true in Montana whether a child receives his or her education in the public school mainstream classroom setting or in the residential setting at MSDB. The ability of a child to develop literacy is critically affected by the factors of when and how he or she is presented with a language model.

Through a HERSA grant the DPHHS established the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) Program in 2002. Now fully implemented, over 955 of all newborns are screened for a hearing loss before they leave the hospital and follow-up evaluation and diagnosis of a suspected hearing-loss is completed within 2 months of birth. The UNHS program results in the ability to identify congenital hearing loss at about two months of age, rather than the average age of identification nationally at 2 to 2 ½ years of age.

With a successful early detection program for identifying deaf or hearing-impaired infants, attention could be focused during the 2003 legislature to the passage of Senate Bill 42 which expanded MSDB's purposes to include establishing a system of tracking sensory impaired children from the point of identification through their exit from special education services. MSDB is now in the process of developing rules to implement a registry and tracking system which will provide a central depository of information related to sensory impaired children being served by community based or P-12 education programs. The information provided by the tracking system will allow Part C programs and LEA to project and plan for the students so that necessary and appropriate services will be available for each child.

Challenges in Providing Appropriate Educational Services by the LEAs

School Based Programs for the Deaf The most difficult challenge faced by the P-12 education system in serving Montana's sensory impaired children is ensuring that qualified staff are available to determine what the needs are for each child and in providing qualified staff to deliver those services. In the 2002-03 school year, analysis of outreach caseloads for deaf or hearing-impaired students, MSDB's consultants found that in the area of curriculum and instruction, 23 of the 83 students, or 28% had a trained teacher of the deaf who either teaches or serves as a case manager. Of the other 70, 10 students from 3 school districts had a case manager (someone on their IEP team) who is a trained teacher of the deaf. In spite of the limited number of trained teachers of the deaf working with students in public school districts, MSDB outreach consultants reported that 34 students, or 41% receive appropriate curriculum modifications.

Regarding the ability to provide technical assistance, MSDB outreach consultants reported that, of the 83 deaf and hearing-impaired students on the caseloads, they were not able to meet the contact needs of 58, or 70% of the students they serve because they did not have enough time, primarily to schedule regular visits beyond the visits to districts where new students were

enrolled, requests by teachers for site evaluations and IEP meetings. Again, in spite of limited trained professionals, outreach consultants reported that 48% of these students receive appropriate program monitoring and follow up by people from their district or special education cooperative.

Regarding access to communication models, MSDB outreach consultants reported that 36 of 83, or 43% of the students did not have at least daily access to appropriate or adequate communication models both at school and in the home. Of 20 students served by interpreters in public school districts, the IEP goals and needs of 11 students were met. Six of the students were served by interpreters who were either unskilled or have minimal skills for the level of need by the student. For the 47 students who had adequate access to a communication model, all but 4 students had access both at school and at home. These 4 students did not have adequate access to communication in the home. Of the 83 students, only 20, or 24% had adequate access to a peer group that uses a similar communication mode.

School Based Programs for the Blind In the 2002-03 school year, analysis of outreach caseloads for blind or low vision students, MSDB's consultants found that in the area of curriculum and instruction, MSDB outreach consultants reported that 156 students, or 85% had no one on their IEP team with training in the area of blind education and only 26 students, or 14% received instruction in their school by a trained teacher of the blind. In spite of this fact, MSDB outreach consultants reported that 73 students, or 40%, were being served with appropriate curriculum modifications which indicates that public school teachers, specialists and program directors are doing the very best they can to serve these students.

Regarding the area of technical assistance, MSDB outreach consultants reported that of 125 students, 60% were not seen enough by the consultants. For 125 students, 60% of contacts went unmet because there was not enough time for consultants to respond to all requests for service. Consultants reported that appropriate program management occurred for less than 50% of the students because there was no one available with qualifications to provide instruction necessary to meet student needs. This is evidenced by the fact that across the state 20 students needed Braille instruction, however, only 60% of them, or 12 students were receiving instruction commensurate to their needs. Additionally, 49 students needed instruction in orientation and mobility however only 25%, or 12 students received this instruction.

Federal and state regulations require that all students who are deaf /hearing impaired or blind/visually impaired must have a representative sitting on the Child Study Team when the decision for eligibility for special services is determined. In Montana fewer than 19% of our sensory impaired students were served in public school districts by teachers trained in their specific disability areas and who could modify curriculum, evaluate progress toward IEP goals and make recommendations, based on disability specific experience or training.

Regional Comparisons of Outreach Service Delivery Models

The state of Oregon has 20 educational service districts where instruction is provided by itinerant teachers, with caseloads of approximately 15. In central Oregon, the Linn-Benton-Lincoln Educational Service District, there are 3 teachers of the deaf with caseloads of 14-16 students between the ages of 3 and 21. They serve an area with a radius of between 60 and 75 miles and provide direct instruction and consultative services similar to that provide in Montana, to students from 8 hours a week to 2 hours a month. The South coast Educational Service district

covers 2 counties on the Southern Oregon coast. Three teachers for the deaf serve the program needs of 44 students ages 0 to 21 and 1 teacher of the blind serves the orientation and instruction needs of 17 students.

The Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind serves 308 deaf students, 223 of them through consultation with 11 outreach staff. Thirteen outreach consultants serve 393 blind students. Though caseloads vary based on the needs of students, the average caseload for each consultant, serving, in a similar capacity to our outreach staff in Montana, is 26 students.

The Utah School for the Deaf and the Blind currently serves 1155 deaf and blind students, ages 0 through 21 with 48 consultants and parent advisors located around the state. Though most of the 837 students served in school based programs receive direct instruction, the average caseload for each outreach consultant is significantly less at 23 students per consultant than the caseloads of our staff in Montana.

At the Southeast Regional Cooperative based in Tucson, Arizona, 32 teachers of the deaf and 9 orientation and mobility instructors and teachers of the blind serve 310 students in a 5 county area. They provide direct instruction with contact limited to 25 hours per week to allow for driving and preparation time. In this direct service model, the average caseload is 9 students.

Proposed Solution

Prior to the 2003 legislative session, MSDB made a proposal to the Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP) for the expansion of the outreach program to increase, by five, the number of outreach consultants serving the LEAs across the state. By doubling the number of consultants, caseloads and travel time would be reduced significantly. This would increase time for preparation, consultation, correspondence, follow-up and staff training opportunities offered to the LEAs. Though the OBPP was unable to support this proposal, MSDB believes expansion of outreach services remains an effective and efficient first-step to providing LEAs with the expertise necessary to appropriately serve their sensory impaired students.

Challenges in Providing Transition Services for Sensory Impaired Students

In 2002-2003 MSDB served 16 high school students through its on-campus transition program. MSDB has provided vocational programs through a variety of models dating back to the earliest years of the school. The transition program focuses on independent life skills and career awareness and work skills training. By giving students specific skills and training, they are then able acquire and maintain employment and an apartment after graduation. These skills are critical for students whether they are going on to post-secondary education or from school to work. For those students who have limited communication skills or cognitive ability, MSDB collaborates with local developmental disability service providers and the Great Falls Public Schools to provide skill development and work adjustment opportunities. The MSDB Foundation has been supportive by providing funding to support community based, supported work placements and wage subsidies for private sector work placements.

The 2002-03 survey of outreach consultant caseloads indicated there were 13 visually and hearing impaired high school students who have a need for transitional programming. Of 87 deaf students served by MSDB outreach, 16, or 19% were in need of transition services that include work adjustment and independent life skills. Seven of the 16 students, or 44% were in

districts that do not have work adjustment/independent life skills programming. Of the 16 students, the families of 6 students would consider placement at MSDB for transition programming.

Of 182 blind students served by MSDB outreach, 27, or 15% were in need of transition services that include work adjustment and independent life skills. Twenty-five, or 93% of these students served in public school districts do not have work adjustment or independent life skills training, as part of their IEP. Of the 27 students, MSDB outreach consultants reported that the families of 13 students would consider placement at MSDB for transition programming.

The local school districts serving these children were not able to meet their needs for work adjustment and life skills training for a variety of reasons but primarily because there is a lack of knowledge among school personnel and community members about how deafness or blindness effects communication and social interaction, both key factors for successful work placement and community involvement. Additionally, some communities were just too small to be able to provide practical and appropriate employment options to meet the individual needs of these students.

It was projected that in addition to the 16 students, ages 14-21 served on the MSDB campus in the existing transition program, with adequate and appropriate resources MSDB would receive referrals to serve an additional 13 students.

In 1994, the last time such an analysis was conducted, it was reported that profound deafness causes a yearly income loss to our national society of an estimated \$2.5 billion (Downs, 1994). That figure is based on the 350,000 manually communicating deaf in this country whose earnings, according to Schein and Delk (1974) are 30% less than that of the general population.

Proposed Solution

MSDB made a proposal to the Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning prior to the 2003 legislative session, for the expansion of its on-campus transition program. Though the OBPP was unable to support the proposal, it is still seen as viable in promoting the kinds of educational services necessary for sensory impaired students to develop the skills necessary to be independent and self-supporting before they exit the K-12 special education system.

The proposed program expansion consists of a curriculum to address the independent life skill, career awareness and work adjustment skills. Students with minimal skills will be served through classroom based instruction, and on-campus work and residential living placements. As students develop increased skills they will move to off-campus, supported work placements and off-campus apartment living. The addition of 2 teachers and 2 job coaches will be necessary to support the classroom and work placements. The addition of a counselor will be necessary to supervise the off-campus, apartment living placement. The program would support up to 10 students in off-campus work placements with subsidized wages for up to 20 hours per week for 20 weeks. It would also support off-campus apartment living for up to 10 students sharing 5 rent subsidized apartments for up to 6 months.

References

Downs, M., (1994) The Case for Detection and Intervention at Birth, Seminars in Hearing, Volume 15, Number 2

Schein, J.D., & Delk, M.T. (1974) The Deaf Population of the United States, Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf

"20-8-101, MCA. Montana School for Deaf and Blind -- state-supported special school.

The school for the deaf and Blind, located in the city of Great Falls, is known and designated as the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind and must be conducted as a separate and independent unit and special school of the state of Montana under the general supervision, direction, and control of the Board of Public Education. However, the transfer of that school or any change in the name of the school or in the objects or purposes of the school may not be considered or construed to impair or work any forfeiture or alteration of any rights, grants, or property made to or acquired by that school or by the state for the use and benefit of that school."

"20-8-102. Objects and purposes -- assistance to programs -- tracking sensory impaired children -- fee. (1) The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind is a residential and day school for children and adolescents who are deaf or blind or whose hearing or sight is so defective that they cannot be successfully taught and are unable to receive a sufficient or proper education in the public schools of the state.

(2) The school shall serve as a consultative resource for parents of hearing impaired and visually impaired children not yet enrolled in an educational program and for public schools of the state where hearing impaired or visually impaired children are enrolled. The school upon request, shall ensure that services and programs for hearing impaired or visually impaired children are appropriate and sufficient. The school may provide assistance to the programs that the school determines is needed. The school may collect a reasonable fee for the assistance from the public school or other responsible agency receiving the assistance.

(3) The school shall establish a system for tracking a child identified as hearing impaired or visually impaired from the time of impairment identification through the child's exit from intervention or educational services.

(4) The object and purpose of the school are to furnish and provide, by the use of specialized methods and systems, an education for the hearing impaired and visually impaired children of this state that is commensurate with the education provided to nonhandicapped children in the public schools and that will enable children being served by the school to become independent and self-sustaining citizens."

"20-8-103. Board of Public Education rules. The Board of Public Education shall adopt and prescribe rules as the board considers necessary and proper for the maintenance and government of the school, the admission of children in conformity with the provisions of this chapter, and the qualifications and compensation of the superintendent and teaching staff of the school, provided that the superintendent must have a ready and working knowledge of the sign language."

"20-8-104. Eligibility of children for admittance. Upon proper application for admittance, as prescribed by the rules of the Board of Public Education, and either pursuant to an individualized educational plan developed jointly by a child's local educational agency and the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind or by direct application by the child's parents, hearing impaired or visually impaired children who are not more than 21 years of age residing within the state of Montana and nonresident children who are not more than 21 years of age may be admitted to the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind if the child's local educational agency and the Montana School for the deaf and Blind determine that the admittance constitutes the most appropriate educational placement for the child."

MSDB Report to School Renewal Commission
Program Indicators for the 2005 Biennium – Year 1

Indicator	Actual FY 1999	Actual FY 2000	Actual FY 20001	Actual FY 2002	Estimated FY 2003 / Actual FY 2003	Estimated FY 2004	Estimated FY 2005
Campus Based Services 20-8-102 MCA, 10.61.102 ARM							
Total Served	148	316	287	314	297 / 439	396	459
Education Program - Deaf/Hearing Impaired	62	55	51	53	47 / 48	52	57
Education Program – Blind/Visually Impaired	26	30	28	27	23 / 25	28	31
Residential Program	40	40	39	42	37 / 40	44	48
Evaluations – Educational	20	26	22	32	30 / 29	32	35
Evaluations – Audiological	-	165	147	160	160 / 297	240	288
Outreach and Itinerant Services 20-8-102 MCA, 10.61.102 ARM							
Total Served	173	229	246	255	273 / 292	300	305
Consultation Services - Deaf/Hearing Impaired	14	52	59	75	76 / 89	90	90
Parent Advisor Program	9	13	13	10	10 / 15	20	25
Consultation Services - Blind/Visually Impaired	150	164	174	170	187 / 188	190	190
Summer Programs 20-8-102 MCA, 10.61.103 ARM							
Total Participants	148	154	139	206	223 / 248	261	267
Summer Skills Program for Blind/Visually Impaired	8	9	6	8	8 / 10	11	12
Summer Camp for Deaf/Hearing Impaired	22	19	26	21	25 / 28	30	30
Family Learning Weekend - Blind/Visually Impaired	34	0	0	57	65 / 85	90	95
Family Learning Weekend – Deaf/Hearing Impaired	84	126	107	120	125 / 125	130	130
Professional Development – Parents, School Districts and Education Associations - (Not including training for MSDB staff) 20-8-102 MCA							
Total Participants	198	550	441	785	775 / 1100	1290	1484
Number of Training Sessions	11	20	13	43	40 / 54	59	65
Total Population Served	667	1249	1113	1560	1568 / 2079	2247	2515
Percent Change Over Previous Year		+ 87%	- 11%	+40%	+33%	+8%	+12%

- Data not available