

1997-98 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Senate Committee on
Education(SC-Ed)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

- Appointments ... Appt
- **

- Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule
- **

- Committee Hearings ... CH
- **97hrSC-Ed_Misc_pt17**

- Committee Reports ... CR
- **

- Executive Sessions ... ES
- **

- Hearing Records ... HR
- **

- Miscellaneous ... Misc
- **

- Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP
- **



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction

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John T. Benson
State Superintendent

Steven B. Dold
Deputy State Superintendent

February 3, 1998

Dear Legislator:

I am pleased to present the Department of Public Instruction's response to the recommendations of the Task Force on Statewide Service Needs for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Disabled. The task force was an integral component of the proposal to enhance state services to all visually disabled children in Wisconsin and did an outstanding job responding to the charge it was given.

Another component of the proposal included the recommendation to close the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped in Janesville. That proposal is now before the legislature in Senate Bill 310 and Assembly Bill 603. This is a difficult and controversial issue, and the legislature may choose to conduct its own study regarding the allocation of resources and delivery of services to the visually disabled in Wisconsin.

I have pledged to cooperate should such a study proceed. This report is submitted in that spirit of cooperation. The recommendations will complement any additional study the legislature may choose to conduct. They provide an outline of a needed statewide network and system of support for students with visual disabilities. Key provisions include expanded outreach through an evaluation and training center, enhanced regional services, and expanded services through local education agencies.

At the December 16 joint hearing on SB 310 and AB 603, we heard incisive and thoughtful testimony from many citizens. Although there was disagreement on aspects of the legislation, including whether or not the school should be closed, nevertheless a clear message from all the testimony was an agreement that services to all visually disabled children in Wisconsin can be improved upon. I believe this report provides us a roadmap to reach that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John", written in a cursive style.

John T. Benson
State Superintendent

enclosure



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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John T. Benson
State Superintendent

Steven B. Dold
Deputy State Superintendent

DATE: January 29, 1998

TO: Teachers of Students with Visual Disabilities
Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services

FROM: Juanita S. Pawlisch, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent
Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

SUBJECT: Recommendations from Task Force on Statewide Service Needs for
Students Who are Blind or Visually Disabled

We recently held the final meeting with State Superintendent Benson's Task Force on Statewide Service Needs for Students Who are Blind or Visually Disabled. The final recommendations from the task force and the Department of Public Instruction's response to those recommendations are enclosed for your review. The task force did a really excellent job of framing an outline of a comprehensive system of support for schools and their students with visual disabilities.

As you may know, Mr. Benson has been very concerned about the adequacy and availability of services for students with visual disabilities throughout the state. These needs are reflected in the recommendations from the task force and the department's response. To highlight just a few concepts reflected in these recommendations and what we hope they can mean to you:

- Parents and students with visual disabilities would have access to more direct services such as instruction in Braille, additional orientation and mobility, technology assistance, etc., based on the individual student's needs. These enhanced services are envisioned as being provided locally or as near the student's home school/district as possible.
- Parents, students with visual disabilities, and their teachers would also have access to regional support (through regional service centers and a comprehensive assessment and training center) with emphasis on state-of-the-art information and best practices regarding students who are blind or who have visual disabilities; support regarding parental rights; expanded core curricula experiences including summer school or extended school year (ESY) services, weekend skill training, or workshops; additional support pertaining to transition planning and services; low vision clinics, etc.

- Additional training opportunities for new or continuing teachers will be available in orientation and mobility, Braille, use of technology, and other specialized instructional skills through development of an experimental training program (through the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater).

Many of you may be thinking, so where will the dollars come from to expand services? Some of these expanded programs or services will not be available unless there are additional or reallocated dollars. Mr. Benson did propose to reallocate GPR dollars currently supporting the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped at Janesville to provide 100% categorical aids for any locally developed (district or cooperative educational service agency) new or expanded vision programs for five years (as a second draw on the state categorical aid formula). This proposal has not been acted on by the legislature.

I am specifically writing to you to encourage your careful review of the programs and services which you are providing for students who are blind or visually disabled. I believe some of the task force ideas are achievable without additional dollars. Some can/will be advanced through discretionary grants with funds from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). I encourage all of you as teachers of students with visual disabilities and as administrators of special services programs to advocate for the type and quality of services which you genuinely believe a specific student with visual disabilities needs. Mr. Benson has repeatedly expressed his concern for students that may only be receiving services based on "what is available" rather than programming needs. The provision of programs/services within a student's individualized education program (IEP) as categorically aided services are outside of the revenue limit, so some concerns regarding local costs may be somewhat offset. With this request/encouragement, we recognize that only an IEP team can make this type of qualitative judgment call pertaining to an individual student's program and service needs.

Please feel free to share copies of the attached reports with students, parents, other colleagues. We hope your review of these recommendations will capture your enthusiasm as they have ours. We look forward to your support in pursuing many of these recommendations.

klm

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Attachments

cc John T. Benson, State Superintendent
Andy Papineau, State Consultant for Visually Impaired Programs

January 16, 1998

DPI Response to the Recommendations of the *Task Force on Statewide Service Needs for Students Who are Blind or Visually Disabled*

The Department of Public Instruction believes that members of the task force have done an outstanding job of responding to the charge that was given to them and that their recommendations merit careful consideration by all the stakeholder groups that have an interest in the education of children with visual disabilities. There are some elements of the task force recommendations that the state superintendent is especially interested in exploring more fully:

Evaluation and training center -- We strongly concur with the task force that there is a need for a statewide evaluation and training center for children who have, or are suspected to have, a visual disability. This evaluation and training center should be comprehensive in scope and should be able to function as the most authoritative, comprehensive and up-to-date source of information and service relating to the educational and related service needs of children with visual disabilities. The evaluation and training center should not be viewed as a "first line" service provider but as a support to local and regional service providers. Although the existing state school (WSVH) "outreach center" provides some of the functions envisioned for an evaluation and training center the existing outreach program is much more limited in scope and can be seen only as a point of beginning for the more comprehensive center recommended by the task force.

* The new evaluation and training center should have expanded capabilities to conduct more complex evaluations directed towards eligibility for services (M-team evaluations under current state law), program development (IEP), and diagnostic teaching and evaluation of instructional strategies related to special needs and conditions. It should also be a source of information on "state of the art" technology related to children with visual disabilities and it should provide assistance in the use of this technology. The evaluation and training center staff

should be prepared to conduct educational evaluations over a period of days or even weeks and the evaluation and training center should make arrangements for the residential needs of the student during the period of the evaluation. Although we agree that some students with visual disabilities need long term educational *programming* in a residential setting we do not believe long term programming is an appropriate function of an evaluation and training center.

* The center should serve as a resource for parents and school staff on a very wide range of issues related to the educational and related service needs of children with visual disabilities. To accomplish that function the center will need to maintain a comprehensive materials center and a highly trained staff who will be able to respond to emerging questions and issues. Those staff will need to maintain "state of the art" awareness of issues in the education of children with visual disabilities and will need to establish and maintain relationships with national and other state operated information and research centers. Staff employed by the center will need to be skilled in communicating with parents and school staff through a variety of methods. For example, in addition to conducting one-to-one and small group meetings, center staff may want to schedule workshops and conferences, establish newsletters, create an internet home page, and other forms of information distribution.

* There is a clear need for continued regularly scheduled low vision clinics that are accessible to children, parents, and school staff throughout the state. The department believes that the staff from the evaluation and training center should be responsible for coordinating these low vision clinics, if not for directly staffing the clinics. The clinics should be provided throughout the state so children, parents, and school staff will not be required to travel to the evaluation and training center site.

* The department strongly endorses the creation of non-school-term programming opportunities that are accessible to all children with visual disabilities in Wisconsin. We believe that the responsibility for planning these programs should rest with the evaluation and training center although the programs may be delivered on a regional basis in order to be more accessible to students. Summer school and extended school year programs, weekend workshops, after school clubs and athletic events, and other opportunities should be planned and delivered (regionally or locally) to address specific areas of the expanded core curriculum as well as meeting IEPs that have been developed for individual children.

Regional Services -- The department agrees with the task force that, in order to enhance service accessibility, there is a need to establish up to four regional centers that can support local school district and CESA vision services. The department believes that to promote both economic efficiency and coordination of services, these regional centers should be closely coordinated with the existing CESAs and may even be housed within CESA offices. However, the regional centers should be coordinated by the evaluation and training center with strong local support from school districts and CESAs. The purposes of the regional centers should include provision of support to parents, local school districts, and CESAs as well as provision of those services that can only be efficiently delivered only when there is a broader population base than exists in most CESAs. The services that are provided by each regional center will vary depending upon the capability and needs of the local districts and CESAs in its region.

At a minimum, the regional centers should perform a planning and coordinative function sufficient to ensure that all of the following services are accessible to each child with visual disabilities who resides within that region: orientation and mobility services, instruction in learning to use Braille; vision services specifically directed to preschool and primary school-aged children; coordinated technology and assistive technology services; transition services; coordination of services for children with multiple disabilities; all of the related services that are specified in

state and federal special education law, and low vision clinics. A focal point of the regional programs should be to promote a wider understanding of an “expanded core curriculum.”

Each regional center should be guided by an advisory committee that includes parents of children with visual disabilities and school staff who are qualified to provide a full range of vision services.

Each regional center should employ a “parent advocate/trainer” who has a working knowledge of the elements of an expanded core curriculum for visually disabled students, available resource centers to which a parent may be referred for guidance on specific issues related to visual disabilities, advocacy skills, and due process rights contained in special education law. In addition, the parent advocate/trainer should be skilled in conducting workshops and presenting information at meetings. In these ways, they will promote vision programming throughout their region.

One of the most important functions of the regional centers would be to provide, within guidelines provided by the evaluation and training center, opportunities for students with visual disabilities to participate in summer school, weekend workshops, extended school year programming, and parent training and networking opportunities.

Expanded Local Education Agency Services -- The department agrees that there is a need to expand services to children with visual disabilities and believes that these services should be provided through a combination of school district and CESA programs. How the services are provided in each CESA would depend upon the unique needs and decisions of the CESA and the local school districts within the CESA. The department emphasizes that the development of an individual student’s IEP must reflect the needs of that child as determined by the child’s parents and local school staff rather than being based upon a state prescribed curriculum. IEP

services should also be provided through a variety of arrangements including local school district programs, CESAs, regional programs operated by both school districts and CESAs, and other public and private agencies.

The department believes that there are three primary inhibitors to making a full range of vision services more widely accessible to all children with visual disabilities. These inhibitors include (1) a uniform understanding of the elements and importance of an "expanded core curriculum" for children with visual disabilities and the need for this expanded core curriculum, (2) the severe shortage of qualified staff in the area of vision, and (3) the fiscal barriers to employing additional staff and otherwise increasing the costs of services.

The department will support a major staff development and parent awareness initiative to publicize and promote every child's right to all elements of an expanded core curriculum, depending upon their unique needs and abilities rather than upon currently available services. This initiative will be incorporated into the department's broader plan for implementing a "comprehensive system of personnel development" which is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Target audiences will include teachers, parents, and school administrators.

The department, in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater is currently pursuing the development of a training program in the area of visually disabilities. The program will be submitted for approval to the department by UW-Whitewater under Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 4.025, Experimental and Innovative Teacher Education Programs, and will meet the requirements of the Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 3.31 leading to licensure in teaching of children with visual disabilities. When the program is approved, it will be recognized within the Graduate Bulletin under an existing program. The long range plan would be to approach the UW Board of Regents to solicit their support of the program with its own identity and state funding. The program is projected to have a starting date of fall 1998.

It should be apparent to everyone that finding adequate funding to support expanded vision programming as well as overcoming other fiscal inhibitors will be a major challenge. The department is committed to working with stakeholder groups, the legislature, and the governor's office to address these issues. We recognize that although there might be some new funding for expanded vision programming, it will be necessary to rely primarily upon reallocated funds.

Interagency Collaboration -- The department agrees with the task force that there currently is inadequate collaboration and coordination between the various "systems" that provide services to children with visual disabilities and their families. Although we do not agree that it is appropriate or feasible to create a "governing body" with "decision making authority", we do believe that there is a need for an interagency coordinating initiative at both the state and regional levels. We will be meeting with other state agencies to further develop this proposal and will be encouraging local education agencies to do the same with their counterpart agencies.

Possibly in no other area is the need for interagency collaboration more important than in meeting the IEP transition needs of children with visual disabilities. Although both state and federal special education law specifically mandate that a child's IEP include a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages for children with visual disabilities, it would be appropriate to include these kinds of statements throughout a child's school career. Transition planning for children with visual disabilities should begin before the child even begins the school experience. The department believes that transition is less a program than it is a philosophy and an attitude. State and national follow up data show that far too often students with visual disabilities leave school unprepared for work and independent living. This situation must change, but if it is to change "we can no longer view, plan, or implement students' educational programs in isolation from the students' community living, working, continued education and social environments." (Source: *Overview of Transition Services and Developing IEPs Which Incorporate Them*, Wisconsin Departments of Public Instruction and Vocational Rehabilitation)

The state superintendent and staff of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction endorse *The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities* as the most authoritative and applicable statement on meeting education and related service needs of children with visual disabilities. The *National Agenda* will be used by the department as the benchmark for evaluating all proposals for improving vision services in Wisconsin.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FORMED BY THE TASK FORCE ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

- I. What services should be provided? The following list of services are: 1) equally important and are not presented in any type of rank order, 2) are a continuum of services, with an emphasis on choice for families and students.

A. Evaluation and Training Center

An Evaluation & Training Center should be established that provides:

- 1) Residential facilities for short and long term placement
- 2) Informational clearinghouse for parents and families
- 3) Diagnostic services for M-Team, IEP and general assessment
- 4) Materials Center with adaptive books and technology
- 5) Resources for educators in schools and CESAs
- 6) Summer School Program
- 7) Low Vision Clinic

B. Improved Regional Services

Several Resource & Technology Centers (possibly 4) should be strategically placed around the state. These centers should provide the following services and staff dedicated to providing both outreach and in-house services:

- 1) Orientation & Mobility
- 2) Expanded Early Childhood Services
- 3) Technology Coordinator
- 4) Transition Coordinator
- 5) Multiple Handicap services
- 6) Recreation and Leisure Coordinator with the necessary adaptive equipment
- 7) Low Vision Coordinator
- 8) Counseling and Assessment services provided by professionals with expertise in the areas of psychometric assessment and counseling of students and families with visual impairments.
- 9) Outreach Teams will be established to provide expanded core curriculum learning opportunities and will include an experienced parent as a key member of the team along with an orientation & mobility professional, and a teacher of persons with visual impairments.

C. Enhance CESA Services

That a Legislative Mandate be proposed to insure that positions are available at the 12 CESAs so that each is equipped with a minimum of: 1) one full time teacher of students with visual impairments and 2) one full time orientation and mobility teacher. This would assist districts in their continued responsibility to provide services to students with visual impairments.

D. Expand Resource Programs

Resource Programs should be dispersed throughout the state in conjunction with school districts to provide one on one assistance to students with visual impairments when needed (e.g., to teach Braille skills, provide technological assistance).

E. Increase School District Staff

There should be an increase in staff to serve students with visual impairments within the LEAs.

F. Provide Summer School and ESY Services (See Appendix A)

Compensatory skill instruction is needed to occur within the extended school year including summer school, vacations. Therefore resources, including educators, funding etc. are needed to support the ESY curriculum/services and summer school.

G. Create VI Training Programs at the University Level

Establish a University VI Teacher Training Program w/in WI

II. How might access to these services best be provided?

A. Create a Governing Body

The purpose of the governing body is: 1) to insure uniformity of services, and 2) to oversee content and fiscal management of service delivery. The governing body will be made up of educators, administrators, parents, and a DPI representative. The governing body should have decision making authority.

B. Strengthen Collaborative Efforts among Councils

Increased collaboration between/among currently existing councils is recommended. For example, sharing of minutes as well as periodic joint meetings should occur.

C. Professional Advocate

A professional position will be established to promote and advocate for the educational services available to persons with visual impairments. This position(s)/professional will provide information to families, educators, medical providers and others who initially assist families and persons with visual impairments, and/or who provide ongoing services. Some of the tasks within the VI Advocate position may include:

- 1) Promoting available programs and resources for persons with visual impairments to numerous organizations and professionals (e.g., WI Medical Association, WI Hospital Association, WI Nurses Association, County Public Health Nurses, WI Public Radio, Local Public Radio, Advertising Council, Head Start, Lions Clubs, Pupil Services, Local and County Libraries, Internet)

- 2) Working Directly with Hospital Social Workers
- 3) Developing Informative Videos
- 4) Helping Educators to Coordinate Services

III. How can information and skills be effectively provided to parents?

- A. "VI Advocate", as described above, would provide needed information to parents and teachers.
- B. The Evaluation and Training Center would serve as a resource for information to both families and educators. (See Appendix B)
- C. CESA's can implement joint staff development opportunities to include parents and educators. Multiple CESA's can coordinate to provide in-service trainings.
- D. In-service training within school districts for administrators and educators.
- E. As students participate in expanded core curriculum opportunities, parents would also be receiving parallel training.
- F. VI Pre-service component for all teacher training programs (e.g., all areas of special education and "regular" education) within WI at the College level.
- G. Provide classroom teachers with the necessary time and resources to adequately plan for students with visual impairments.
- H. Work with the Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children and the National Association for Parents w/Visual Impairments (NAPVI) within Wisconsin.

IV. How can the expanded core curriculum be effectively fulfilled? (See Appendix C)

- A. Extra time is needed outside of regular school day that will include, for example, long weekends, summer school, etc.
- B. Each of the 8 areas of the expanded core curriculum requires task analysis to determine appropriate sequence for teaching as well as developmental appropriateness.
- C. Insure that the expanded core curriculum is considered for inclusion as part of the IEP.
- D. Students with visual impairments will have the option of completing expanded core curriculum courses for credit as part of their High school curriculum. LEAs and Boards of Education will consider expanded core curriculum courses for elective credit.

- E. Create more support and interactive opportunities for students with visual impairments and peers (VI and sighted), in a variety of recreational opportunities, for example, after school clubs such as a Braille Club.
- F. Regular and Adaptive Physical Education Teachers will receive in-service training in the use of adaptive equipment for students with visual impairments.
- G. Human Growth & Development is an aspect of Social Skills Training that may require specialized instruction and guidance.
 - 1) Outreach will gather materials and resources.
 - 2) The resources available to teach human growth & development will be provided in the form of a list and distributed to parents, CESAs...

V. How and by whom will these services be funded?

- A. Creating a sum sufficient appropriation for five years, for payment under the existing general/categorical aid formula for local districts, CESAs and the CHCEBs for costs related to educating children with visual impairments.
- B. Fund for five years the full costs of new or expanded educational and related programs and services for children with visual impairments, including the full cost of salaries, fringes, and other approved costs as identified in the recommendations.
- C. Adult services need to be coordinated with other agencies outside the public schools. Should the DPI fund adult services? Adult services have other funding sources.

Many ideas and opinions of individual members were shared with the Task Force. At the request of some members, the task force has attached written opinions that were received.

Information UPDATE

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/John T. Benson, State Superintendent/125 S. Webster St./P.O. Box 7841/Madison, WI 53707-7841

BULLETIN NO. 96.07

November 1996

TO: Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, Business Managers, and District Administrators

FROM: Juanita S. Pawlisch, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent
Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

SUBJECT: Funding for Summer School

This is a follow-up to Information Update No. 96.01 and is intended as a reminder that state categorical reimbursement for permissive summer school programs will end with payment for the Summer 1996-97 program (actually operated in the summer of 1996, but claimed as a part of the 1996-97 school year and aidable in 1997-98). In addition, federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds may not be used to pay for a permissive summer school program operating after the summer of 1996 for children who currently are identified as having exceptional educational needs (EEN).

Summer school programs are permissive. Typically, these programs operate on a set schedule for a number of weeks during the summer and generally are responsive to groups of children. They are not designed with the objective of meeting the unique needs of an individual child in order for that child to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). Permissive summer school classes are not required special education and related services.

Extended school year (ESY) services are required special education and related services carried out beyond the limits of a school term which are necessary to ensure the provision of FAPE for an individual child. ESY services are provided in accordance with an individualized education program (IEP) based on the EEN of an individual child.

State special education categorical aid and IDEA funds are granted to school districts to offset the costs of providing required special education and related services for children with EEN in order to receive FAPE. ESY services will continue to be eligible for special education categorical aid.

For PI-2300 reporting, the current designations of summer and regular sessions will be eliminated, as ESY is not summer school, but an extension of the school year, and may be provided at other times schools are not in session. Beginning and ending dates for staff will be used to determine when a specific staff person is providing ESY services.

If interested, business managers may contact the director of special education or pupil services or the district administrator for a copy of Information Update No. 96.01, "Extended School Year Services For Children With Exceptional Educational Needs," which was mailed in March, 1996.

If you have questions about programming, please contact Paul Halverson, Director, Exceptional Education Team, (608) 266-1781. If you have fiscal questions, you may contact Bob Sainsbury, Senior Accountant, State Aids Distribution, (608) 267-9205.

This information update can also be accessed through the Internet:
<http://www.state.wi.us/agencies/dpi/een> or
<gopher://badger.state.wi.us:70/11/agencies/dpi/programs/except/>

If using the gopher, under "Exceptional Education," select *Information Updates*.



Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children

P.O. Box 46124 • Madison, WI 53744-6124 • (608)848-9722

APPENDIX B

Following is a list of resources recommended by Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children to the Department of Public Instruction.

A. Parent Information and Support:

1. Distribute literature and information about Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children (WPBC).
2. DPI should sponsor a cane travel seminar featuring Joe Cutter, M.A.T., nationally-renown expert in cane travel skills.

B. Training for Blind Students:

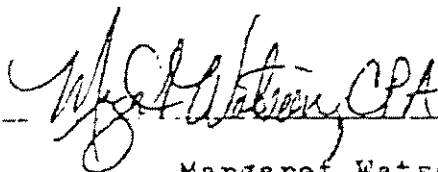
1. Summer School Program: BLIND, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.
2. Transition training: JOB (Job Opportunities for the Blind) An NFB program run in co-operation with the US Department of Labor.

C. Teacher Training:

1. Teachers should receive training at International Braille and Technology Center, Baltimore, Maryland.
2. DPI should sponsor a cane travel in-service featuring Joe Cutter, M.A.T., nationally-renown expert in cane travel skills.
3. Teachers should attend National Federation of the Blind Conventions.

D. Recommended Literature:

1. Handbook for Itinerant and Resource Teachers of Blind and Visually Impaired Students, Doris M. Willoughby and Sharon L. M. Duffy.
2. The Bridge to Braille, Carol Castellano and Dawn Kosman.
3. Future Reflections Magazine.
4. "Braille Readers are Leaders National Contest."



Margaret Watson, CPA
President, Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children

Nov 25, 1997

Date

Educators define "core curriculum" as the knowledge and skills expected to be learned by a student by high school graduation. Generally, the core curriculum consists of knowledge and skills related to academic subjects. Mastery of the core curriculum is what both parents and teachers stress as essential for academic success in school, and later in life. In most states, opportunities are provided for students to meet other criteria in cases when those students cannot meet the academic demands of the core curriculum.

There are many versions of the core curriculum. In our country, each state assumes responsibility for minimum standards for high school graduation. This core curriculum becomes the foundation for almost all learning, from kindergarten through high school.

With respect to blind and visually impaired students, the existing core curriculum, as developed for sighted students, is entirely appropriate and generally available. Because educators of visually impaired students have developed expertise in curriculum adaptation, it should be possible to take any curriculum that has been developed and make it readily available for visually impaired learners. If blindness or visual impairment presents only the problem of accessibility to learning materials, then the issue of education of visually impaired students is solved by adaptation of the existing core curriculum.

Some educators of visually impaired students believe that it is true that the child in a regular classroom who has access to all curricular materials is as equally prepared to learn as her sighted classmates. But most professionals hold a strong position that there is an expanded core curriculum for visually impaired students that requires additional areas of learning.

There are experiences and concepts casually and incidentally learned by sighted students that must be systematically and sequentially taught to the visually impaired student. The core curriculum for visually impaired students is not the same as for sighted students. Indeed, it is much larger and more complex.

The concept of a core curriculum for visually impaired learners has been discussed by professionals and parents for many years. It has been called many things. It has been referred to as the specialized curriculum, or specialized needs, the unique curriculum, or unique needs, the non-academic curriculum, the dual curriculum, and most recently, the disability-specific curriculum.

These other terms are sometimes a distraction to the important issue. The term core curriculum has been used to define the basic educational needs of sighted students for many years. It is proposed that the term core curriculum for blind and visually impaired students be used to define the basic educational needs for this population. It conveys the same message as the original core curriculum. Words like specialized, unique, and disability-specific are not needed, and, indeed, may give an erroneous connotation to basic educational needs. The terms imply two separate lists of educational needs for visually impaired students. One list contains the elements of a traditional core curriculum. The other is a list of "disability-specific" needs. Two lists provide educators with options, such as one list being required and the other consisting of electives. There should be only one list, and that should consist of the required core curriculum for visually impaired students.

The existence of special needs, or a unique core curriculum for blind and visually impaired students, has been known for years. References to the subject of grooming skills date back as far as 1891. The need for social interaction skills appears in the literature in 1929 and again in 1948. Between the years 1953 and 1975, there are more than two dozen references to books and articles written about daily living skills and visually impaired students. Many more articles and documents have been written about orientation and mobility and career education. The expanded core curriculum now being promoted is not new--its need has been known for decades.

Although states determine the content of the core curriculum individually, most states demand that competencies in basic subjects be mastered. The following example incorporates these basic subjects and adds the expanded core curriculum for visually impaired students:

The Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Children and Youths

The Existing Core Curriculum:

English language arts	other languages, to the extent possible
mathematics	science
health	physical education
fine arts	social studies
economics	business education
vocational education	history

The Expanded Core Curriculum:

compensatory academic skills, including communication modes	orientation and mobility
social interaction skills	independent living skills
recreation and leisure skills	career education
use of assistive technology	visual efficiency skills

A short description for each of these areas of expanded core curriculum follow:

Compensatory or Functional Academic Skills. Including Communication Modes:

(Note: for this area of the expanded core curriculum for blind and visually impaired students, a distinction must be made between compensatory skills and functional skills. Compensatory skills are those needed by blind and visually impaired students in order to access all areas of core curriculum. Mastery of compensatory skills will usually mean that the visually impaired student has access to learning in a manner equal to that of sighted peers. Functional skills refers to the skills that students with multiple disabilities learn that provide them with the opportunity to work, play, socialize, and

Dave,

I just wanted to share with you my thoughts on the University Training Program. I personally do not believe that we need to have one within our state.

1. The start up cost is about \$200,000 at minimum
2. It is a very costly program to continue, excellent staff would be difficult to locate and maintain.
3. There are other State programs available that have open slots for interested individuals. Don't duplicate services, enhance services. Why not work on some type of reciprocity agreement based upon unique University programs and individual students? (Example: We have 2 interested individuals, so we will allow them to send 2 interested students from their State to Wisconsin for some program that only we have.)
4. I firmly believe that the reason that we do not have enough teachers is not because we do not have a teacher training program, but rather because people don't know about this as a career option. It is, after all, a Low Incidence Population.
5. Our efforts should go into career awareness--(High School Career Fairs, etc.) and not the development of a University Training Program for a few students.

I suggest developing an awareness program to locate individuals who are interested in pursuing careers in the area of Vision. Then if they are willing to sign an agreement to return to Wisconsin after completion of their program, we would contract an Out-of-state Tuition agreement with another States that has an existing University Training Program for Vision. This, to me, makes common sense.

Barbara Ditscheit
Task Force Member

Re: Funding for Services

I would like to see state funding for the following 3 items, with no limit on the number of years:

- 1) Evaluation and Training Center
- 2) 3 or 4 Regional Centers/Outreach
- 3) Minimum one VI, one O & M in each CESA

Lisa Tomberlin
Task Force Member

Regarding funding: It is premature to discuss funding for the programs contained in these Recommendations as the legal language and cost estimates are not yet known. However, the programs in these Recommendations, should they be implemented, should be funded by the state of Wisconsin without affecting the categorical aids for all other eligible special education programs.

Margaret Watson
Task Force Member

Ninety-five percent of what we learn is through our vision or is enhanced by it. If this is true, our visually impaired and blind children are at an undeniable disadvantage. This is because most of our initial concept development is through incidental visual learning. Children with vision are able to directly model what they see. This basic mode for concept development, when internalized, (learned) provides the concrete concepts upon which abstract concepts are built.

For the visually impaired and blind child this mode of development is completely missing or drastically altered.

One-to-one intervention is critical because it provides the only method by which our children can comprehend and model what has been physically presented, or demonstrated to them. It is critical for the formation of their fundamental concrete concepts. Only when these initial concepts are strong can the more abstract concepts be learned and built upon.

In the classroom one-to-one intervention, only partially, replaces the visual examples of the teacher. The classroom teacher does not have time to explain the visual examples: pictures, board diagrams, formulas, and demonstrations used in a primarily, visual instructional style. In the earlier grades individual intervention is more necessary because fundamental concepts and skills are presented with concrete visual examples and pictures. Later on the more abstract concepts of mathematics and science are built upon the basic concepts developed in the earlier grades. If basic concepts are well developed the need for one-to-one intervention may be decreased. It will always be necessary, however, when information is gathered through abstract demonstration, maps, diagrams, etc. Whenever possible one-to-one intervention should be minimized because it can affect, adversely, the development of a child's problem solving skills, social interaction, self-esteem, and independence.

Cheri M. McGrath, Task Force Member
Adult with Visual Disabilities and Teacher of Visually Impaired