



North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind



Biennial Report 2011-2013



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Superintendent**

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**NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (NDVS/SB)
AGENCY FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION**

Our Mission

To function as a statewide comprehensive resource working cooperatively with related agencies in providing a full range of services to persons of all ages who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.

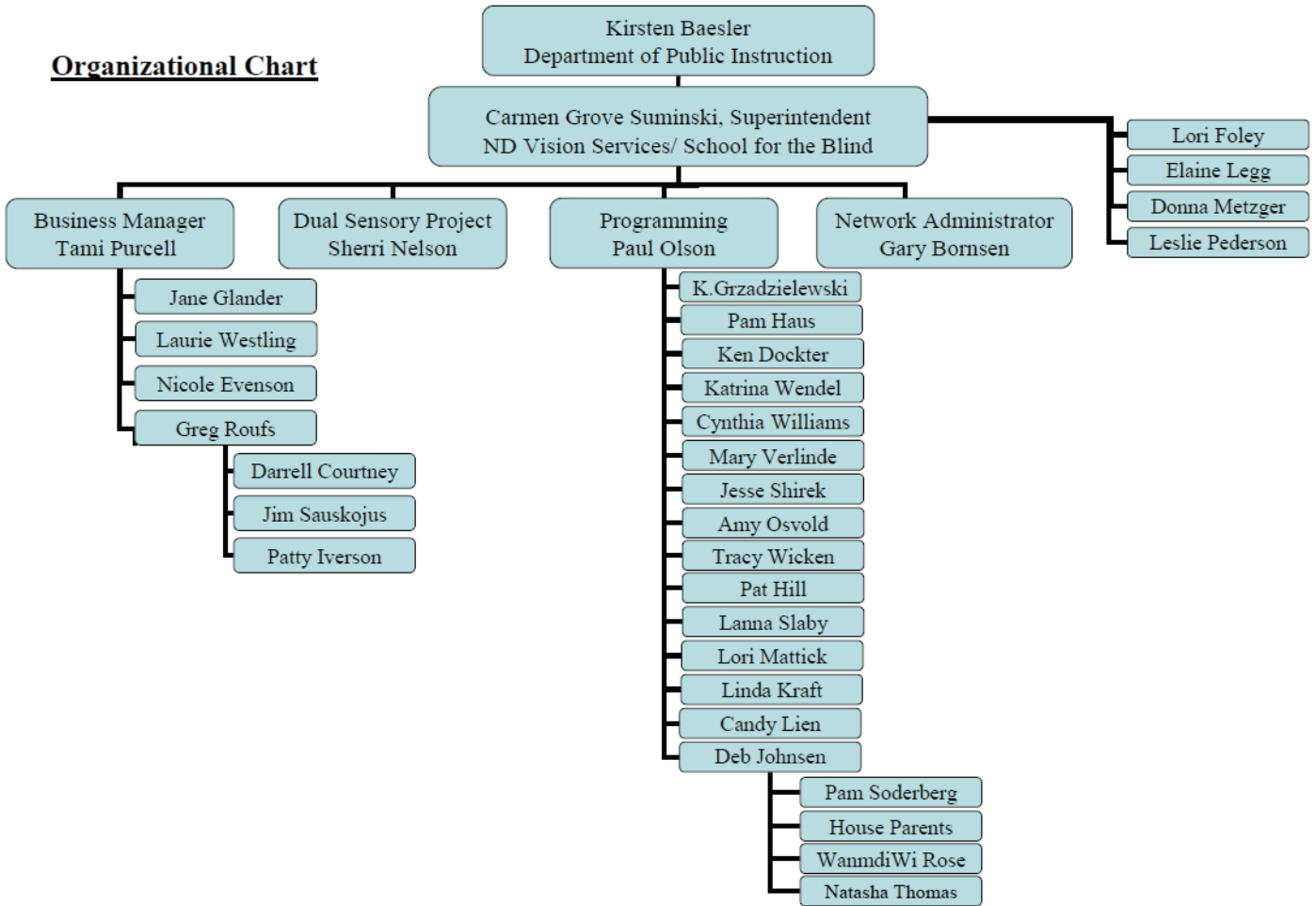
Our Vision

To inspire hope and the desire to achieve in our students as we strive to be leaders in the field of visual impairment.

History of NDVS/SB

- 1908** North Dakota School for the Blind opens in Bathgate with 25 residential students
- 1961** Modern facility opens, with relocation to Grand Forks
- 1967** NDSB Band performs at the Multi-District Lions Convention in Regina, Saskatchewan; they end their visit with a "Command Performance" for Princess Alexandra, cousin of the Queen
- 1974** The school obtains its first piece of adaptive equipment--a talking calculator
- 1980** NDSB Pop Singers ... accompanying themselves with electric guitars, bass, drums and keyboard ... perform at the opening session of the Helen Keller Congress held in Boston on her 100th birthday
- 1980** NDSB begins an annual tradition of sending students to Close Up in Washington, D.C.
- 1991** NDSB becomes a division of the ND Department of Public Instruction
- 1994** State legislature changes programming focus to outreach model
- 1996** Major renovation completed converting the former residence into instructional centers and offices
- 1997** State legislation enables operation of The Store to provide a convenient source of low-vision aids
- 1998** Major renovation converts former pool building to accommodate center-based programming needs
- 1999** Braille Access Center begins operation
- 2001** State legislature officially changes name to North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind
- 2001** Legislature clarifies mandate for NDVS/SB to serve persons of all ages
- 2007** Legislature grants resource to expand adult services
- 2008** NDVS/SB commemorates centennial.
- 2009** Legislature grants 2nd FTE for adult services

Organizational Chart



STATUTORY/CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAPTER 25-06—EDUCATION OF BLIND PERSONS



25-06-01. North Dakota vision services – school for the blind – Maintained – Location. There must be maintained at Grand Forks, in Grand Forks County, a statewide service, resource, and referral center for the education and training of all residents of this state who are blind or have a visual impairment which must be known as the North Dakota vision services - school for the blind.

25-06-01.1. Definitions. For purposes of this chapter, an individual who is blind means an individual who is totally blind or whose central visual acuity does not exceed twenty/two hundred in the better eye with corrective lenses, or the widest diameter of the visual field is no greater than twenty degrees; and an individual with a visual impairment means an individual with an impairment in vision which, even with correction, adversely affects the individual's functional ability.

25-06-02. Duties and responsibilities of North Dakota vision services – school for the blind. Within the limits of legislative appropriation, North Dakota vision services – school for the blind shall:

1. Provide vision-specific services that include consultations, evaluations, information, training, and educational services, including instruction in orientation, mobility, Braille, Braille music, daily living skills, technology, vocational training and recreation.
2. Collect and distribute information on vision services and resources available in the state.
3. Coordinate loans of adaptive devices, equipment, and materials.
4. Maintain a data base of residents who are blind or have a visual impairment.
5. Facilitate collaboration with agencies and programs providing services to individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment.
6. Assist residents to access appropriate services, including services available from the vocational rehabilitation division, independent living centers, infant development programs, developmental disabilities programs, the state library, local education programs, and advocacy programs.

25-06-02.1. North Dakota vision services – school for the blind – Appointment of superintendent, budget, staff, and reporting structure. The superintendent of the North Dakota vision services – school for the blind is appointed by and reports to the superintendent of public instruction. The North Dakota vision services – school for the blind must have a separate budget and separate staff from the department of public instruction.

25-06-02.2. Superintendent – Special duties. The superintendent of the North Dakota vision services – school for the blind may also be the superintendent of the school for the deaf.

25-06-03. Superintendent to possess certain qualifications. The superintendent of the North Dakota vision services – school for the blind must possess those qualifications, educational and otherwise, as in the opinion of the superintendent of public instruction may qualify that person to instruct and minister to the needs of the blind persons.

25-06-04. Qualifications for admission to school for the blind – Residents of state entitled to free education. Repealed by S.L. 2001, Ch. 257, § 5.

25-06-05. Services to nonresidents. Individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment who are not residents of this state may receive services from North Dakota vision services – school for the blind if the individuals pay the cost of the services as determined by the superintendent of public instruction. Nonresidents may not receive services to the exclusion of residents of this state.

25-06-06. Transportation of indigent persons. Repealed by S.L. 1979, ch. 336, §3.

25-06-07. Instruction at school for the blind. Repealed by S.L. 2001, ch.257, § 5.

25-06-08. Accounts for clothing – How collected. Repealed by S.L. 1997, ch. 244, §4.

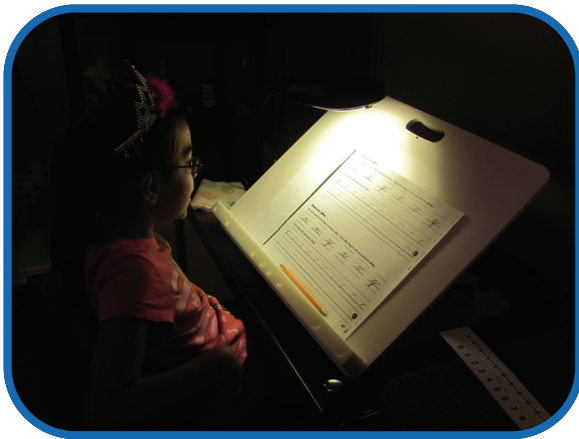
25-06-09. Blind person – Duty to report. Repealed by S.L. 2001, Ch. 257, § 5.

25-06-10. Purchase and resale of vision-specific adaptive aids, devices, and appliances – Revolving fund – Continuing appropriation. A revolving vision aids, devices, and appliances fund is hereby established in the state treasury to be used by the North Dakota vision services – school for the blind to purchase and resell vision-specific adaptive aids, devices, and appliances to be used by blind and visually impaired persons resident in this state. The North Dakota vision services – school for the blind may apply service charges when needed to cover the cost of purchasing, invoicing, and shipping, and all revenue from the sale of aids, appliances, devices, and shipping and postage fees must be deposited in the fund. The North Dakota vision services – school for the blind may receive gifts, grants, and donations for deposit in and use by the fund. All moneys in the revolving fund are hereby appropriated to the North Dakota vision services – school for the blind on a continuing basis for expenditure for the purposes of this section.



MAJOR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB) provides regionalized outreach services and center based programming to persons of all ages; namely, infants and their families, students, and adults with blindness and visual impairment, including those with multiple disabilities. Information and resources are available to enable persons to maintain their independence.



Vision Resource Center

The Vision Resource Center at NDVS/SB serves patrons from ages birth through end of life: this includes but is not limited to students, teachers, vision professionals, parents, and people with visual impairments or blindness. We manage and administer materials obtained through federal and state funding as well as grant funding sources. We strive to offer the latest in both professional and practical information for individuals whose lives are touched by visual impairment or blindness. We provide standard materials in non-standard formats, educate patrons in information literacy, and support the rights of all to the freedom of access to information.

The Vision Resource Center is committed to the state-wide accessibility of its collec-

tion through ODIN and to a working partnership with the North Dakota State Library in providing all patrons within the state access to information despite physical or geographical limitations. Public relation activities and education are, therefore, an important component of our mission. Requests for materials are taken over the telephone, mail, email, etc.

APH Quota Funds: The Ex Officio Trustee at NDVS/SB administers the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) program for all legally blind students and eligible adults in the state. The system through which these specialized materials are distributed is known as the Federal Quota Program. Through it, textbooks and aids are provided free to eligible blind students in educational settings ranging from early intervention programs for visually impaired infants to rehabilitation for elders who have age-related vision loss, from center-based and residential school programs to the regular classroom.

A wide variety of specially designed and adapted materials are available from APH, such as core curriculum materials for teaching reading, social studies, mathematics, and science. Also, available are materials for assessing and improving the use of low vision aids and expanded core curriculum materials for cultivating emergent literacy and concept development. These materials are also useful for facilitating sensory, motor, and perceptual development, for developing self-help and prevocational skills. Other examples of available research-based materials are braille teaching programs, talking computer software, low vision development programs, infant intervention materials, and motor skills improvement kits.

Educational tools include adapted audio recording equipment, devices for writing braille, and talking computer hardware. Special supplies such as braille and bold-line papers, special binders and notebooks, and other consumable materials used in the classroom are also available.



Large Print and Braille Textbook Repository: In response to requests from local vision teachers and/or special education directors, NDVS/SB staff locate and obtain textbooks in alternative formats and loan them to students for the school year. If a textbook is not available in the NDVS/SB collection or through APH, another option is to search the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC).

NIMAS: NDVS/SB has been designated as the provider of NIMAS materials for eligible students in North Dakota.

IDEA mandated the establishment of the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) as a national repository for publisher source filesets of textbooks and related core printed materials that are created according to the technical specification included in the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard, commonly known by the acronym NIMAS. The NIMAC has been established by the American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. (APH) in Louisville, Kentucky.

When a publisher creates a NIMAS fileset for a textbook or other print material and deposits the fileset in the NIMAC, that fileset can be converted into student-ready specialized formats, such as braille, large print, audio, or digital text. NDVS/SB staff can search the NIMAC database for availability of materials or a request may be made to have a fileset created. This part of the process is done free of charge, but it is important to note that the cost of creating large print or braille materials that are properly formatted, may cost the local education agency/school to have it produced. NDVS/SB can help local agencies/schools identify accessible media producers if needed.

Talking Book Machine Lending Agency: NDVS/SB maintains the National Library Service (NLS) Talking Book Machine Lending Agency. This service is available to anyone who is unable to read standard print materials as a result of temporary or permanent visual or physical limitations. Digital and cassette talking book machines, headphones, and pillow speakers are examples of available equipment. Most books are played on cartridges on the newer digital talking book machines and some are still available on the older cassette machine. The service and all of the equipment are free. Applications are available from the Vision Resource Center.

Sensory Education Library: Young students with additional disabilities can benefit from specialized toys and equipment to enhance their auditory, tactual and visual interaction with the world around them. Children learn best when it is done in a multi-sensory manner. Toys that vibrate, light up, or have unique textures may help students develop greater awareness and resulting communication skills. Switches can assist students with limited dexterity

and range of motion interact with technology in a meaningful way.

NDVS/SB Regional Coordinators work closely with local teachers and parents to select the toys and equipment that are best suited to the individual needs of children.

Descriptive Videos: Patrons may borrow videos with a description of the visual elements of a movie spoken during natural pauses in the dialogue.

Professional Collection: This collection provides time-tested references as well as current resources for vision professionals, families and other educators who need to research particular topics. New curriculums, journals and textbooks cover a wide range of topics. It is essential that this collection reflect the most current research in this ever changing field. These materials are particularly important given the fast pace of changing technology, educational trends and medical treatment for visual impairment.

Fiction and Non-Fiction Books: A consumer library of fiction and non-fiction books in braille and large print is maintained. In addition, the library stocks numerous titles with tactile adaptations for the pre-braille reader.

Access to Information: A collection of 50 brochures, handouts, and booklets relating to visual impairment are free to families and teachers throughout the state.

The Store: The goal of The Store located in the Vision Resource Center is to provide persons who are blind or visually impaired direct access to a sampling of low-vision aids that they may need for daily living and enjoyment. The hope is to bridge that difficult first step in selecting low-vision aids. Some examples of items for sale are canes and tips, labeling and writing

supplies, magnifiers, sewing and measuring aids, talking clocks, and a wide variety of recreational games. Print catalogs are available as well as a virtual catalog on the NDVS/SB website ndvisionservices.com. Individuals are encouraged to access the catalog on-line to read product descriptions and view pictures of products. Whether someone is shopping for themselves or for a loved one, this catalog will help customers select the best product. Phone orders are welcome and staff is happy to answer questions.

An additional benefit to North Dakota customers is that we do not charge shipping or handling fees.

Braille Access Center: The mission of the Braille Access Center is to provide equal access to print materials for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Materials are made available in braille and large print. Items prepared include agendas, programs, catalogs, flyers, brochures, reports, menus, tactile concept books, greeting cards, conference handouts and correspondence. Customized braille materials are provided on a fee for service basis.

Technology Center

The purpose of the Technology Center is to provide assistance and information to those persons who are blind or visually impaired and who wish to use technology



to meet their needs at school, at work or at home.

A collection of technology for the blind and visually impaired is maintained in the Technology Center. This includes devices such as closed circuit television systems for enlarging print; talking calculators; computers with large print, braille or synthetic speech output; and computerized reading machines for the blind.

Services offered by the Technology Center include:

- On site hardware and software demonstrations for consumers and professionals.
- A file of current vendor information, including demonstration cassettes and disks, as well as information regarding equipment being utilized in the state.
- Hardware and software from APH for loan to eligible students, as well as other hardware or software which is loaned to qualified consumers for a specified amount of time, as available.
- Computer training for professionals and persons with a visual impairment; may include workshops, set-up and installa-



tion of equipment, and individualized training at either NDVS/SB or local setting.

Equipment in the Technology Center is updated on an ongoing basis. All equipment and software is adaptive and specifically designed for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Equipment is loaned for individuals to utilize at their home, school, or work site.

Regional Outreach Services

In providing a full range of services throughout the state, it is very important to sustain regional offices with highly trained teachers of the visually impaired. These teachers consult with local schools and other service agencies in the following areas: classroom adaptations, functional vision evaluation, orientation & mobility, technology, braille, vocational education, recreation, physical education, daily living skills and music.

Regionally based teachers (coordinators) provide consultation and limited direct service. Case management is always the responsibility of the local school, however, the NDVS/SB teacher works alongside the local educator as part of the IEP team. The regional teacher also works to coordinate consultation provided by other staff at NDVS/SB that specializes in areas of instruction like orientation & mobility and technology. The key to success in this model of service delivery is teamwork.

Family and home based service is also typical. Home visits to observe and work with infants and preschoolers are frequent. The goal during home visits and through regular communication with parents is to provide needed support and vital information.

Adult Services

NDVS/SB provides vision specific services to adults which may include evaluations, consultations, and instruction in the following areas:

- Access to Community Resources
- Adaptive Technology
- Communication (i.e., braille, large print)
- Daily Living/Self Care Skills
- Functional Vision Evaluation
- Low Vision/Adaptive Techniques/Aids
- Orientation and Mobility
- Recreation/Leisure Activities
- Vocational



It is the goal of NDVS/SB to assist individuals in reaching their personal and professional goals through the process of assessment and training. The process involves educating the consumer about available resources, determining training needs, evaluating the individual's ability level, delivering instruction, and providing follow-up services as needed.

Referrals may occur through self-referral or through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, which pays a fee for vocational related services for those consumers who are eligible. Services are provided at NDVS/SB and in local communities.

Regional rehabilitation specialists are available to consult with individuals in their homes. Some individuals need minimal adaptation to regain independence while others can benefit from instruction over a longer period of time to meet their personal goals. When intensive instruction is recommended, individuals often choose to participate in the adult training weeks that are scheduled periodically throughout the year at NDVS/SB.

The Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation System (CVES) is provided to persons who are blind or visually impaired ages 16 and older. This is a system specifically designed to evaluate essential verbal/spatial/cognitive, sensory/motor, and emotional coping abilities. This comprehensive report assists with case management and vocational/career planning.

Summer Camps

Themes and activities at summer camps change from year to year, but the inherent value and enrichment that students experience are timeless.

The primary goal of summer camps is to provide students with visual impairments additional experiences relating to skills that are unique to the visually impaired, but that are not included in the academic programs of the school year.

Teen Camp is held in June and provides students opportunity for building friendships with peers who also have a visual impairment. Together they learn about various careers, glean information from the AFB Mentor Bank, practice daily living skills, orientation skills, leisure recreation, community awareness and personal development. They have had opportunity to ice skate in the beautiful Ralph Englestad Arena, do some outdoor camping, and participate in fine arts projects.

Kids Camp is held in August and provides instructional time building literacy (braille or large print), orientation and mobility activities, daily living activities, team games, craft projects, music games and lessons, and special guest visitors from the community. Friendship skills are developed as they play with peers who understand what it is like having a visual impairment.

The Braille Music Institute was held in July of 2012. This specialized, week long experience balances expert music instruction with the fun of a camp-like atmosphere. Braille music code instruction is emphasized as well as music appreciation, production of music individually and as a group. This unique learning opportunity is unparalleled in both intensity and quality. (Future Braille Music Institutes are planned to occur every other summer based on interest and funding.)



Recreational Activities

Recreation and leisure skills may include traditional and adapted physical education activities as well as a host of other hobbies and pastimes that are enjoyed by the general public. However, a person with a visual impairment may need help in identifying the array of choices available. In addition, many of these activities require a degree of adaptation in order to make them accessi-

ble for participants with vision impairments.

There are activities specifically designed with visual impairments in mind. Goalball, Beep Baseball and Power Showdown are games designed for both entertainment value and competition for people with visual impairment. The list of other activities that are encouraged is limitless. Most board games, crafts, music activities, etc., can be made accessible. The goal of any programming in this area is to promote a wide range of interests to enhance the individual's quality of life.

How can NDVS/SB help an individual in this area?

During Center Base Programming, time is allowed to experience many activities. A formal leisure/recreation checklist can be used, or informal outings and opportunities can be arranged to experience a variety of selected leisure activities on an individual or small-group basis

Short-term Student Programs

Teen Weeks (7th—12th grade)

Kids Weeks (1st—6th grade)

JAM Mini-Session (Middle School)

Career Week (10th-12th grade)

Preschool mini-session

Summer Camps (Elementary & High School)

Short-term student programs consist of numerous one-week training sessions and two special mini-sessions.

The mini-sessions are designed to meet the needs of preschoolers and middle school age students. These sessions are 2-3 days in length and are structured to provide both skills training and opportunity for socialization.

The one week programs allow for instruction in vision specific areas known nationally as the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). The one-week programs allow students to spend time periodically at NDVS/SB to enhance skills and receive one-on-one instruction in the expanded core curriculum areas.



Lessons are taught based on input from parents/guardians and teachers, utilizing various checklists, and incorporating input from informal and/or formal assessments in various ECC areas. The daily schedule has time devoted for specialized instruction from Teachers of the Visually Impaired, personal development, study skills and social activities. Selected weeks may have a particular instructional focus.

After the week-long session, a written report is compiled and mailed to parents and the local school. If an on-site or home visit is desired, that can be arranged through our staff.

If parents or educational staff members desire to receive training to learn more about the ECC areas, they are welcome to spend time at Center Base. On-site housing can be arranged.

The **Expanded Core Curriculum** addresses the following areas:

- **Daily Living Skills:** Skills in daily living may include dressing, grooming,

food preparation, social graces, house-keeping, and clothing care.

- **Braille:** Braille instruction includes reading and writing braille, and may include instruction in braille music.
- **Orientation and Mobility:** Orientation and mobility may consist of instruction in white cane, public transportation, telescopic aids, street crossings, and stairway negotiation.
- **Technology:** Students learn how to access the computer using magnification or screen readers, keyboarding, computer terminology and concepts, and to use closed-circuit television systems and other assistive devices.
- **Career Education:** Career education includes interviewing skills, work attitudes, information about colleges, job shadowing, and job exploration.
- **Recreation/Leisure:** Instruction in recreation/leisure includes team of these games, athletics and other leisure activities that focus on the development of life-long skills.
- **Social Interaction Skills:** Students



learn ways to relate to others and to examine their own personal development.

- **Visual Efficiency Skills:** Students learn techniques to use their existing vision with proper medications and aids
- **Self-Determination Skills:** Students are encouraged to make decisions, and learn how to define life goals which can affect their future careers. Self-determination has been described as “The ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself” (Field and Hoffman, 1994).



In-service Training

The Outreach Program offers in-service training for parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and additional staff working with persons with a visual impairment. These individuals have the opportunity to attend training sessions at NDVS/SB or outreach personnel may provide the training in the home, school, job site or workshop. Areas of training may include:

- Braille reading and writing
- Technology
- Daily living techniques
- Visual enhancement
- Orientation & mobility techniques
- Vocational skills

- Recreation/leisure
- Music and braille music

Statewide trainings held during this biennium included the following:

- Visions Forum, October 20, 2011
- Visions Forum, October 18, 2012
- Dakota AER, May 11-12, 2013
- Presentations to University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy students are ongoing every semester.
- Two staff presented at the Crossroads Conference (ND Department of Human Services) in Bismarck in October 2011
- The Sensory Disabilities Course (4 sessions) at Minot State University was taught by two NDVS/SB staff--October 2012

Inservices were also provided by staff per request at local and private schools, homes, worksites, and senior facilities. Persons participating totaled 1,732.

2011-2013 BIENNIUM LEGISLATION

The 63rd Legislative Assembly provided a significant investment to improve the facility. This includes: a comprehensive remodeling project to update the West Wing, the installation of an elevator for the South Wing to provide access to the second floor and several mechanical improvements for \$3,274,000. Currently, Grand Forks Public Schools is leasing the West Wing.

2011-2013 RESPONSIBILITY ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

During this biennium, the superintendent was a shared position between School for the Deaf and NDVS/SB. The Legislature authorized contingent salary funding and .5 FTE upon hiring a full-time superintendent. This occurred in August 2013.

EVALUATIONS

Accomplishments and Activities

- Carmen Grove Suminski continued in the role as dual superintendent of both NDVS/SB and NDSB.
- Completion of the self-review and on-site National Accreditation Council (NAC) process with a full 5 year accreditation granted (2012-2017)
- An NDVS/SB Facebook site was developed to enhance public awareness. Parent involvement and interaction was the primary objective.
- Collaboration with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation continued to develop. Joint meetings to develop a strategic plan to meet the needs of adults with visual impairment were very successful—with plans to continue regular meetings.
- Long-range planning for buildings and grounds continued. In March of 2012 a Master Facility Plan was completed that projected deferred maintenance priorities for a 5 year period.
- The yearly Family Weekend events (which are held every spring) continue to be well attended and provide



valuable support to families who are learning how to foster development in their children.

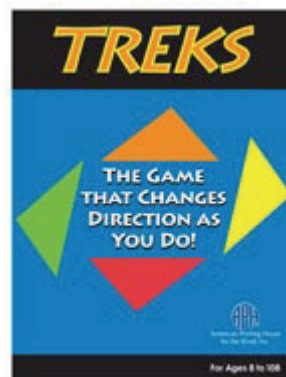
- The NDVS/SB Expanded Core Curriculum Profile was developed as a tool to measure progress of students attending short-term programs in all areas of the expanded core curriculum.
- NDSB Foundation presents annual grants to students and adults who are blind and visually impaired. These grants provide for equipment and services that are not available to the individuals through their local schools or other organizations. In 2013, the Foundation awarded \$10,000 to students, and \$1,350 to adults. In 2012, \$10,000 was awarded to students.
- NDVS/SB continues to partner with the NDSB Foundation to acquire grants. \$14,000 was awarded by the ND Department of Public Instruction in 2012 to hold the first Summer Braille Music Institute at NDVS/SB.
- The webinar titled "Introduction to Vision Loss" was developed by Paul Olson and embedded in the Department of Public Instruction website for viewing by parents and educators.
- There are many examples of collaboration with Lions Clubs throughout North Dakota. There are particularly strong relationships with the clubs in Grand Forks as evidenced by donations, speaking engagements and partnership on projects and events.
- The Video Magnifier Lease Program with the North Dakota Lions Foundation

continues to help North Dakota citizens with visual impairment be independent. The collaboration with the Lions Foundation and Vocational Rehabilitation is exemplary.

- Collaboration with the Interagency Project for Assistive Technology (IPAT) has increased. NDVS/SB put together a team of bike riders for the annual Pedaling for Possibilities fundraiser and was the top fundraising team.
- Continued partnership with the North Dakota Association of the Blind. Support of the yearly events (Ski for Light, Family Adjustment Seminar, Convention and NDAB Camp) are ongoing. The NDAB Convention was held in Grand Forks in May 2013. This involved numerous staff and a portion of the convention was held at NDVS/SB.
- The Advisory Team meets two times per year with representation from partner organizations, state agencies, parents and other stakeholders.
- NDVS/SB staff work closely with the Director of the ND Dual Sensory Program to provide direct services to students with both hearing and visual impairment. The Dual Sensory Program has subsidized numerous out-of state training needs of NDVS/SB staff. There is also collaboration with the ND Dual Sensory Project to meet training needs of other agencies and schools as well as the families that we serve. A sample of trainings include:
 - ◆ “Intervention Strategies for Children Who are Deaf-Blind and/or have Significant Disabilities”, held September 28-30, 2011, in Fargo.
 - ◆ Communication Matrix Training

10-29-12 with the SD Deaf-Blind Project. This was distance training through for all Technical Assistance staff in ND.

- ◆ Family Weekend for ND Vision Services/School for the Blind in Fargo in April, 2013. Sixteen families attended.
- Two students served by NDVS/SB were winners of a national competition sponsored by the American Printing House for the Blind. These two students were featured in videos promoting products designed and produced by APH. NDVS/SB teacher, Katrina Wendel, videoed the students and submitted the entries.
- The Treks game (designed by Paul Olson) was made available by the American Printing House for the Blind beginning in October of 2012. It is available to students throughout the US through the APH Quota Program.



- The bi-annual survey process which samples stakeholder satisfaction went through re-evaluation. Streamlining of the random survey process came under consideration for efficiency and to better measure program effectiveness. The evaluation team decided to move toward electronic surveys in the upcoming biennium.

| Summary of Surveys | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|-------|----------------|-----|
| | VGood | Good | Fair | Poor | N/A |
| 1. How well were your specific needs meet | 23 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Timeliness of service provided | 22 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3. Courtesy and respect shown to you | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 4. Coordination with schools/agencies/families | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 5. Were you satisfied with the overall service you received? | YES: 24 | | NO: 0 | NO RESPONSE: 1 | |

- Program evaluation of the center-based adult program continued to rely on direct phone interview after client participation in training weeks. Qualitative information is consistently gathered and evaluated to respond to participant outcomes and consistently yielded positive results.

Directional Trends

- Participation in short-term program for students has increased dramatically. Increases have averaged from 5-8% each biennium over the last 10 years. It is anticipated that the number of participants will remain stable or grow more modestly. Staffing will be monitored to maintain quality instruction for participants.
- The Visions team at NDVS/SB must monitor and respond to a national movement to improve services for students. There has been increasing awareness that many students with visual impairment are lacking essential services to meet their needs. The Anne Sullivan Macy Act is proposed legislation that identifies and proposes to remedy serious problems. Excerpt from this legislation: *“Expectation that states would conduct strategic planning, and commit such planning to writing, to guarantee that all students who are blind or visually impaired within each state receive all specialized instruction and services needed by*

students with vision loss provided by properly trained personnel.”



- Proliferation of access technology for students and adults with visual impairment will necessitate more extensive professional development for staff. Access technology is wide ranging and fully integrated into all aspects of the expanded core curriculum. Staff require regularly scheduled, ongoing professional development in this area.

Short and Long Range Plans and Goals

- Implementation of major recommendations made by the National Accreditation Council (2012):
1. The State Department of Public Instruction restore the superintendent position at NDSV/SB to a full time position as funds allow and recruit a

highly trained and experienced person to fill this position upon retirement of the current Superintendent in order to ensure that current high quality services remain in place for visually impaired persons in North Dakota.

2. NDVS/SB develop an intake process that documents objective long-range and short-range goals for clients and incorporate the information into a written plan for evaluation of program of services.
3. The NDVS/SB should consider providing focus events for parents so they can acquire skills necessary to assist their children in applying compensatory skills acquired during short term programs in the home setting.
4. The administration and staff develop a process for adding program outcomes and reports to consumer satisfaction surveys that provide useful information for future service plans that best meet the needs of the children and adults served by the NDVS/SB.
 - Full review of the Strategic Plan will occur in 2013-2015 to align with NAC recommendations and new emphasis on trend data.
 - As part of the accreditation process which took place in 2012 departmental goals were established. Each department will be assessed based on their respective goals. The department goals include the following:

Administration: To provide sound policy, budget, facility and human resources to support the services that directly serve individuals with visual impairment in North Dakota.

Vision Resource Center: To provide accessible materials to individuals of all ages and to support the wide range of services that are provided by NDVS/SB.

Short-term Programming for Students: To provide high quality instruction to students to facilitate independence in the expanded core curriculum and provide a foundation for overall academic achievement.



Outreach Services—School Age Students: To conduct functional vision assessment and other expanded core curriculum evaluation for at risk students and assist in determination of eligibility for vision related services. To deliver consultative services to students, parents and local education agencies to help eligible students achieve academic success in school and age-appropriate independence in their home and community.

Infant and Preschool Outreach Services: To provide support and assistance to parents of visually impaired children and other related service providers with an emphasis on collaboration.

Adult Center-Based Program: To provide high quality instruction to individuals to facilitate independence and assist in meeting their individual goals.

Adult Outreach Services: To deliver consultative and direct service to persons

with visual impairment to enhance quality of life and meet their personal and vocational goals.



Strategic Plan

Objective 1: Design, refine, & implement technology systems

Strategy A: Increase staff awareness of technology/systems

Strategy B: Increase client awareness of technology/systems

Strategy C: Explore funding sources for training/equipment

Objective 2: Address high unemployment/underemployment rate

Strategy A: Continue Career Week and vocational specific skill sessions

Strategy B: Keep current on employment incentives

Strategy C: Continue follow-up of graduates

Strategy D: Assist clients in seeking employment

Objective 3: Continue agency relationships to increase awareness

Strategy A: Work with Public Relations team to promote our services

Strategy B: Keep brochures updated for Vocational & Technology areas

Strategy C: Continue relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation

Objective 4: Design and implement methodologies for enhancing public understanding, acceptance, and awareness.

Strategy A: Implement traveling training program

Strategy B: Establish a dynamic public awareness team

Strategy C: Provide public awareness to multiple groups

Strategy D: Maintain relationships with national organizations

Objective 5: Define and as necessary and feasible, expand programs, services, staffing, and opportunities.

Strategy A: Refine outreach procedures

Strategy B: Access correct structure of outreach delivery model

Objective 6: Evaluate programs/ services (efficiency, accountability, follow-up).

Strategy A: Development of program evaluation forms

Strategy B: Development of program evaluation process (outcome of sources)

Strategy C: Collaborate with other state agencies to develop, disseminate, and access information

Strategy D: Maintain Accreditation

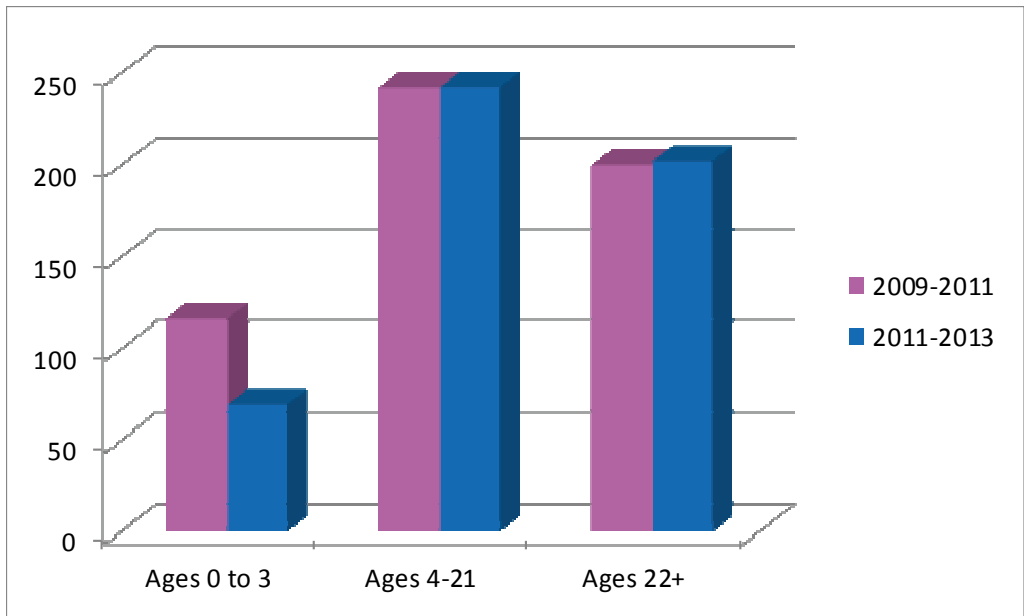
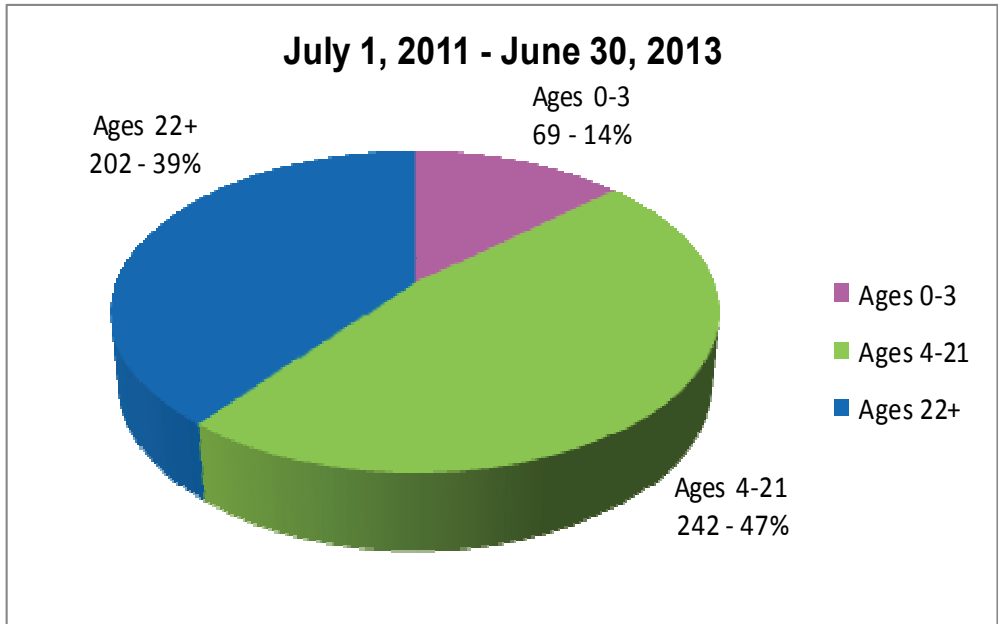


STATISTICAL INFORMATION

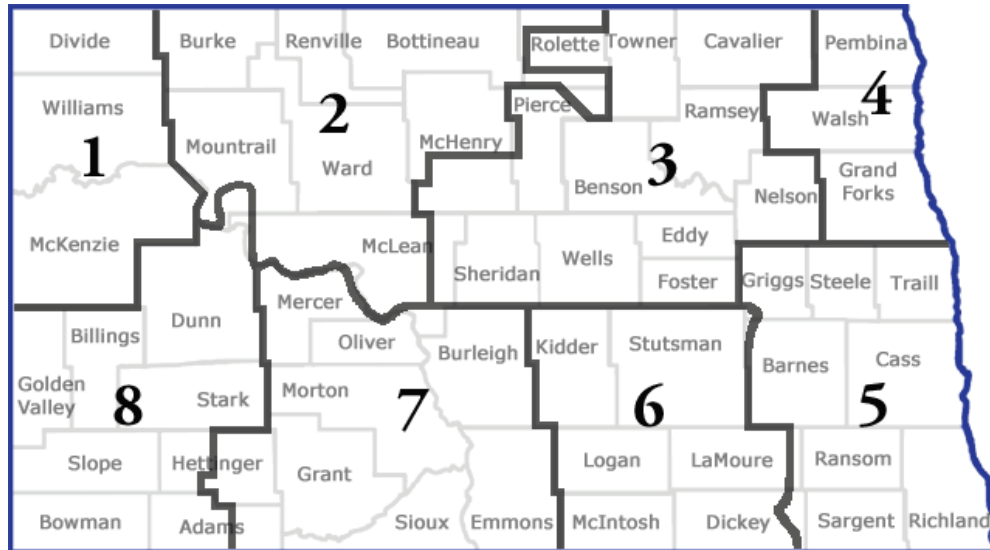
| Services Provided | 2009-2011 Biennium | 2011-2013 Biennium |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Clients Served (Unduplicated): | | |
| Infants/Students | 362 | 307 |
| Adults | <u>196</u> | <u>206</u> |
| Total | 558 | 513 |
| Vision Resource Center: | | |
| Items Circulated | 36,341 | 33,764 |
| Talking Book Machines (quarterly) | 2,222 | 1,776 |
| "Reaching Out" Newsletter (circulated quarterly) | 1,603 | 1,394 |
| APH Federal Registry | 303 | 275 |
| Store Sales (Invoices) | 480 | 511 |
| Braille Access Center (pages) | 23,947 | 17,014* |
| Short-term Center Based Programs (Persons Served): | | |
| Short Term Programming | 132 | 149 |
| Adult Week | 41 | 63 |
| Summer Camps | 40 | 43 |
| Evaluations, Consultations and Instructions (Services Provided): | | |
| Consultations | 1,621 | 1,669 |
| Evaluations | 433 | 330 |
| Instruction | 8,146 | 9,366 |
| In-Service Training (Attendees) | 1,025 | 1,732 |

* 3rd Quarter of 2012 was estimated due to staff turn over and lack of data.

PERSONS SERVED BY AGE



**CLIENTS SERVED BY REGION (UNDUPLICATED)
JULY 1, 2011 to JUNE 30, 2013**



Region 1

Infants/Students – 11
Adults – 8
Total: 19

Region 2

Infants/Students – 46
Adults – 24
Total: 70

Region 3

Infants/Students – 26
Adults – 6
Total: 32

Region 4

Infants/Students – 51
Adults – 60
Total: 111

Region 5

Infants/Students – 63
Adults – 53
Total: 116

Region 6

Infants/Students – 34
Adults – 19
Total: 53

Region 7

Infants/Students – 45
Adults – 18
Total: 62

Region 8

Infants/Students – 22
Adults – 9
Total: 31

Relocated/Out of State

Infants/Students – 9
Adults – 9
Total: 18

**Total Infants/Students Served: 307
Total Adults Served: 206
Total Persons Served: 513**

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES

Revenues by Source:

| | | |
|---|----|------------------------------------|
| Lease - Rent of Building (GFPS,HECN) | \$ | 376,594.00 |
| Donations | | 41,837.00 |
| Admissions (Vocational Rehabilitation/Specific Skills) | | 32,710.00 |
| Lease - Rent of Land (UND) | | 5,800.00 |
| Miscellaneous Revenue | | 103.00 |
| Transfer from Common Schools/ Ellendale Fund | | 247,429.00 |
| Braille Access Center | | 1,146.00 |
| | | Total Revenue for 2011-2013 |
| | \$ | 705,619.00 |

| Expenditures by Program | General Fund | Federal Fund | Special Fund | Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Maintenance & Utilities | \$ 506,738.00 | \$ - | \$ 114,481.00 | \$ 621,219.00 |
| Administration | 374,204.00 | - | 50,654.00 | 424,858.00 |
| Adult Program | 237,412.00 | - | 11,571.00 | 248,983.00 |
| Outreach (Age 0-5) | 146,540.00 | - | 20,662.00 | 167,202.00 |
| Outreach (Age 6-21) | 1,357,513.00 | - | 172,288.00 | 1,529,801.00 |
| Technology | 425,166.00 | - | 45,022.00 | 470,188.00 |
| Short Term Programs (K-12) | 263,516.00 | - | 102,587.00 | 366,103.00 |
| Vision Resource Center | 476,212.00 | - | 42,915.00 | 519,127.00 |
| Braille Access Center | 7,881.00 | - | 6,462.00 | 14,343.00 |
| Summer Camps | 1,946.00 | - | 962.00 | 2,908.00 |
| | | | | |
| Total Expenditures | \$ 3,797,128.00 | \$ - | \$ 567,604.00 | \$ 4,364,732.00 |

Breakdown of Expenditures by Line Item

Salaries & Wages

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|--------------|------------------------|
| Salaries & Wages | \$ | 2,349,624.00 | |
| Temporary Salaries | | 165,898.00 | |
| Fringe Benefits | | 1,077,345.00 | |
| Total Salaries & Wages | | | \$ 3,592,867.00 |

Operating

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|------------|--|
| State Employee Travel | \$ | 163,073.00 | |
| Utilities | | | |
| Electricity | | 49,573.00 | |
| Water & Garbage | | 15,548.00 | |
| Steam Heat | | 64,100.00 | |
| Natural Gas | | 3,781.00 | |
| Telecommunications | | 35,503.00 | |
| Data Processing | | 51,520.00 | |
| IT - Software/Supplies | | 11,542.00 | |
| Postage | | 5,816.00 | |
| IT -Contractual Services | | 9,813.00 | |
| Lease/Rent - Equipment | | 8,951.00 | |
| Lease/Rent - Bldg | | 26,024.00 | |
| Professional Development | | 22,107.00 | |
| Operating Fees/Services | | 4,072.00 | |
| Repairs | | 55,522.00 | |
| Professional Services | | 27,512.00 | |
| Insurance | | 7,393.00 | |
| Office Supplies | | 13,382.00 | |
| Printing | | 6,927.00 | |
| Profess. Supplies & Materials | | 20,042.00 | |
| Food & Clothing | | 11,463.00 | |
| Bld,Grnds,Vehicle Supplies | | 33,824.00 | |
| Misc. Supplies | | 15,412.00 | |
| IT Equipment under \$5,000 | | 19,087.00 | |
| Other Equip under \$5,000 | | 26,900.00 | |
| Office Equip under \$5,000 | | 3,239.00 | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Total Operating Expenses | | \$ 712,126.00 |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Capital Improvements | | \$ 59,739.00 |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Total Expenditures | | \$ 4,364,732.00 |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------|

RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

1. "Reaching Out"
 Newsletter – Published Semi-Annually
2. Store Catalog
3. Center Based and General Services Brochures
4. Website — www.ndvisionservices.com
5. Facebook

Materials published by the NDVS/SB are available in alternative formats (i.e., braille, CD, large print, audio recording) upon request.

CONCLUSIONS

North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind was privileged to be served by Superintendent Carmen Grove Suminski during the entire biennial period. In the spring of 2013 Superintendent Suminski announced a planned retirement indicating a retirement date of August 15th. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction proceeded to advertise for the superintendent position and announced in July that Paul H. Olson was selected. The start date for Superintendent Olson began August 5th 2013. The compilation of this biennial report was conducted by Mr. Olson with the assistance of Business Manager Tami Purcell and Network Specialist, Laurie Westling.

Service to individuals continues to be the hallmark of what NDVS/SB is all about. Over time there will be fluctuations and plateaus in direct service, but it is particularly important to be aware of and respond to increased demand when that occurs. In the short-term it is important to maintain quality of service with the given resources. In the long-term it is important to track trends and adjust resources accordingly. The 2011-2013 biennium statistics do illustrate increased service in a number of categories. There was an 11% increase in the participation in short-term programs for students. Consultations remained fairly static—with a decrease in evaluations. What was noteworthy was an overall increase of 15% in instructional sessions with students in the areas of expanded core curriculum—like braille lessons, technology, etc.

Two other areas that are considered important measures are the number of adult clients served and the number of attendees at in-service trainings provided by NDVS/SB staff. The number of adults served overall was very similar to the last biennium, but participation in the adult training sessions at NDVS/SB increased by 54%. This very significant increase may be attributed to increased referrals by our rehabilitation specialist staff. In regard to in

-serve training provided by NDVS/SB staff, there was a 69% increase in the total number of attendees. The total number increased from 1025 to 1732. We are very proud of this accomplishment.

NDVS/SB is well positioned to meet the needs of individuals with visual impairment and is very effective in serving as a statewide resource. However, there are significant challenges that continue to exist. For example Individuals with visual impairment in every state continue to contend with unemployment and under employment. There are many root causes that contribute to this problem that begin with access to an appropriate public education. NDVS/SB will continue to work toward improving access and opportunity for students of all ages.



NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION ND Vision Services/School for the Blind

ND Vision Services/School for the Blind does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, sex (wages) or genetics in its programs and activities. For inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, please contact: Tami Purcell, Business Manager, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, 500 Stanford Road, Grand Forks, ND 58203, (701) 795-2707.