

TASK FORCE ON BLIND STUDENT ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL PERFORMANCE BLIND TASK FORCE (BTF)

Minutes

Regular Meeting of Committee Representatives

February 9, 2012

A regular meeting of the committee representatives of the Task Force on Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance Blind Task Force (BTF) was called to order at Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA), 2100 I-70 Drive, S.W., Columbia, Missouri, at 10 a.m. pursuant to the notice sent to all directors in accordance with the bylaws.

The following committee representatives were present: Stephen Barr, DESE Representative, Kyle Borah, Student Representative, Donna Borgmeyer, Rehabilitation Council for the Blind Representative, Julie Brown, Public School Special Education Administrators Representative, Doreen Frappier, Parents of blind or visually impaired students attending public school in Missouri Representative, Kelly Helmick, Public School Building Principals Representative, Diana Lawson, Public School Building Principals Representative, Keith Roderick, Department of Social Services Representative, Juliet Salih, Consumer Organization: National Federation of the Blind Representative, Patti Schonlau, Consumer Organization: Missouri Council of the Blind Representative, Ian Shadrick, Institutions of Higher Education Representative, Diane Stockman, Teachers of the Visually Impaired Representative, David Wilson, Public School Special Education Administrators Representative, Louise Whitworth, Teachers of the Visually Impaired Representative, Patty Yocum, Missouri School for the Blind Representative

The following committee representatives were absent: David C. Ekin, Employers Representative, Mike Charland, Orientation & Mobility Specialist Representative

Guests: David Baker, Missouri Assistive Technology

Patricia Schonlau, Chairman, presided and Regina Miller, Administrative Assistant, recorded the proceedings of the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions: P. Schonlau

1. Roll Call of BTF Members: *Keith Roderick*
2. Review and Approval of February 9, 2012 BTF Agenda:
After discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, agenda for today's meeting were approved.
3. Review and Approval of November 8, 2012 Minutes:
After discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of last meeting were approved.
4. Ms. Schonlau introduced the following new members to the Task Force.
Juliet Salin, National Federation for the Blind Representative, Diana Lawson, Public School Building Principals Representative, Louise Whitworth, Teacher of Visually Impaired Representative.

5. Patricia Schonlau, Consumer Organization: Missouri Council of the Blind Representative and 2012 Chairperson of Task Force on Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance (BTF) presented a demonstration of various types of technology currently available to students with visual impairments. Many of the devices presented are also currently available through Assistive Technology and Missouri State University.
6. Membership Updates: P. Schonlau
Task Force vacancies yet to be filled are as follows: Two (2) Student slots; one (1) Employer slot; and one (1) Parent slot.
7. DESE Update: S. Barr
Discussed several items calling attention to the need to focus on outcome, proficiency and expectations for students with disabilities. Need more uniformed standards for measurement in the area of Early Childhood Outcomes. Full report can be found on DESE website: <http://dese.mo.gov/se/SPPpage.html>.
8. Standing Committee Updates: P. Schonlau
(See attached: *Updated Committee List and Membership List*)
The floor was opened for discussion on how the Task Force could be more proactive in the goal to make a difference in the lives of visually impaired/blind students in Missouri. Do we need to reevaluate our current standing committees? Ms. Schonlau asked the committee chairpersons to familiarize themselves with members currently serving on their committee and to come up with at least two (2) items of focus to present to the task force members during the May meeting.

a. Student Achievement: Julie Brown, Chairperson

Members: Doreen Frappier, Kelly Helmick, Stephen Barr, Patty Yocum, Kyle Borah, Mike Charland, Ian Shadrick, Louise Whitaker, Julie Salih

Charge: To evaluate, determine, and report the degree of academic success of blind and/or visually impaired students in Missouri public schools.

Discussion centered around working to better understand the Student Achievement's role and establish clearly defined standards by which this committee can accomplish their goals. Familiarize themselves with the services offered and the best resources available to produce statistics that would be both useful and effective. DESE should be considered a resource for the information you might require. It was suggested that a phone conference be arranged to discuss and determine what questions need to be ask in order to provide the most comprehensive data. The findings are to be shared with DESE.

b. Academic and Vocational Services: Patty Yocum, Chairperson

Members: Julie Brown, David Ekin, Keith Roderick, Mike Charland, David Wilson, Ian Shadrick

Charge: To address transition services, development and educational needs (birth through high school) to assist students and their families in setting goals and implementing strategies through the life continuum, commensurate with the student's aptitudes, interests and abilities.

Need to be better informed and knowledgeable of the applications currently available for the committees use in reviewing the definition of baseline data that will allow the state to better align the current federal system to the state's accountability system. How can student learning be improved? Are there sufficient resources available and if not, what limitations may exist? Do we have adequate mobility expertise? Should a monitoring tool be established to see that Blind Skill Specialists are using their time in the field wisely? It was suggested that the committee might want to ask various BSS personnel to attend the Blind Task Force meetings to make us more aware of what is being offered in the field and provide recommendations to DESE when and if problems should arise.

Educate the districts on what services are available to them at no cost. Realign/improve current programs to increase the capacity and availability to the districts. Focus on better contract tracking. There are people that are certified but are getting no contracts for students in the areas where assistance is needed. What can be done to increase advertising to the districts that will keep them better informed. Can we improve our current recruitment process? Need to better monitor the resources currently available on the various websites as it relates to availability of services in particular areas throughout the state. Is grant funding available?

- **Missouri School for the Blind**

Contact Susan Bonner, 314-776-4320, ext 3255 or email Susan.Bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov

- Missouri Deaf/Blind Technical Assistance Project:
<http://msb.dese.mo.gov/Outreach/WhatistheMissouriDeafblindTechnicalAssistanceProject.htm>
- Service Provider Listing: (For School Districts)
<http://msb.dese.mo.gov/schools.htm#splisting>
- Resources: <http://msb.dese.mo.gov/resources.htm>
- Recruit more Parent Advisors. Currently, many of them have a large area to cover.
 - Training is available June 22-24, 2012, Session I: INSITE Training for MoSPIN parent advisors-St. Louis, Missouri, Contact Ginny Williams, Lead Parent Advisor at gjinwilliams@aol.com, 573-295-4808.

- **Missouri State University**

<http://www.missouristate.edu/equity/ats/>

- Currently updating list to better inform parents of what's available in early education services.
- Looking for candidates to fill remaining vacancies.

Survey district special education directors asking them what services are currently needed in their district. What services are they currently aware of? How might this information be generated? What resources are available to help facilitate the survey process?

- What are the transition needs of VI students?
- Determine what the focus of the survey will be.
- Have a clear understanding of the specific questions you want answered.
- Understand and formulate exactly what you will want to accomplish with the data.
- Talk to the RPDC Transition staff or target your state transition groups that currently work as contacts. (DESE, Barb Gilpin, 573-751-7661). Also, consider VI teachers currently employed by the districts asking them to describe more concretely the services they can make available to the students.
- Monthly LACE Meetings (Local Administrators of Special Education). Perhaps administrators should consider taking their VI person with them to these meetings? Contact Patty Yocum, Patty.Yocum@dese.mo.gov and let her know how she might assist you in this matter.
- SELs: Currently, some district email filter systems are not "SELs friendly". Current DESE SELs protocol dictates that SELs messages go out to district superintendents and therefore may not always be forwarded to special education directors.
 - ALL SELs sent by DESE are currently posted on the website:
http://www.dese.mo.gov/se/Listserv_Archives.html
- APH Website: American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. Can some of the questions represented here be used to help facilitate our survey?
<http://www.aph.org/edresearch/#current-surveys>
- Survey Monkey
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>
- Once survey data has been compiled, consider making a presentation to the BTF discussing your findings.

c. Rules: Patty Schonlau, Chairperson

Members: Julie Brown, David Ekin, Keith Roderick, Mike Charland, David Wilson, Ian Shadrick

Charge: To work at the discretion of the Blind Task Force (BTF) Chair to investigate and define rules and policies of the Blind Task Force.

d. Children's Vision Summit: Doreen Frappier, Chairperson

Members: Donna Borgmeyer, Kelly Helmick, Keith Roderick, Patricia Schonlau, Kyle Borah, Ian Shadrick

Charge: Plan and conduct the Children's Vision Summit

Should this committee consist of all members of the Blind Task Force?

April 29, 2013 – Tentative date for Children's Vision Summit.

Funding – Know your max!

- Projected costs? (\$23-\$26,000 previously)
 - Most of the costs will go toward conference facilities, equipment, lodging and meals.
- Create the framework of the conference – Determine what services will be needed.
 - Conference theme
 - Activities (NCB-activities for High School age)
 - Presentations (Assistive Technology)
 - Will you charge a conference fee?
 - CEU's (Certification fee and application process involved)
 - "Donate for a Booth" (\$500-\$1,000 donation – Use of a booth at conference)
 - Grants
 - Checking account is not permissible.
 - How many participants?
 - Guest Speaker
 - Equipment
 - Breakout Sessions
 - Meals
 - Promotional costs
 - Length of conference
 - Location
 - Suggestions: Jefferson City, Columbia, Lake of the Ozarks, large church with gymnasium and classrooms, a college campus, a community center.
- Make contact/send out correspondence to various organizations asking for donations.
 - On Sunday, January 30, 2012, the Missouri Guide Dog Users (MDGU) Board, Nick Whitney, President, met and approved to pledge \$500.00 to support the Children's Vision Summit 2013. (See attached email correspondence from Patricia Shonlau)
 - Lighthouse for the Blind (One year donated \$3,000 toward transportation costs)
 - National Federation for the Blind (Juliet Salih)
- Obtain Bids (Hotels, food services, equipment, lodging)

9. Current Workshops/Events in the State 2011-2012

Date	Title/Contact/Phone
March 15	A Road Map to the Future: Person Centered Planning-Columbia Contact: Jennie Mascheck at jennie.mascheck@msb.dese.mo.gov ; 314-776-4320, ext. 1250
March 24	"Putting the Pieces Together" A Multidisciplinary Approach to Autism-St. Louis Contact: Lisa Rohr, Early Intervention Coordinator, Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments, 314-776-1300, ext. 102
March 28-29	Session III of Hand in Hand: Understanding Deafblindness for Educational Teams of Students Who are Deafblind-Cape Girardeau
March 28-30	Session II of VIISA Course I: Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Vision Impairment and Their Families-St. Louis
March 29	"Tech It Up a Notch" Technology Day at Missouri School for the Blind (Grades 6-12) Contact: Joy Waddell, Assistant Superintendent, joyce.waddell@msb.dese.mo.gov 314-776-4320, ext. 1140
April 21	MRI Findings and the Implications on Child Development-St. Louis Contact: Lisa Rohr, Early Intervention Coordinator, Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments, 314-776-1300, ext. 102
April 2-3	Assistive Technology: 2012 PowerUp Conference
April 23	Availability for Learning: The Forgotten Senses of Balance and Pressure-St. Louis Contact: Susan Bonner at susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov ; 314-776-4320, ext. 3255
June 22-24	Session I: INSITE Training for MoSPIN parent advisors-St. Louis Contact: Ginny Williams, Lead Parent Advisor at ginwilliams@aol.com , 573-295-4808

10. The next meeting of the Blind Task Force will be held on May 8, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

11. There being no further business, it was, on motion duly made and seconded, adjourned 2:08 p.m.

Dear Nick:

Since 1999, Missouri state law has provided for the formation of a Task Force on Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance (BTF). The purpose of the task force is to work with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri Department of Social Services to promote literacy and vocational performance among students with visual impairment.

State appropriations and state-level professional development funds have been made to DESE and the Task Force to fund 5 Blindness Skills Specialists, blind literacy studies, BTF meetings and other selected activities. For the past several years, the Children's Vision Summit has been a high priority for the Task Force. The summit is meeting a great felt need in the State. It has grown from a small attendance of 40 at the beginning to nearly 300 at the 2008 summit. Outstanding keynote speakers, special interest sessions dealing with the medical and educational issues related to visually impaired students, and exhibits have provided meaningful information to parents, students, educators, and consumer groups. In the past, the BTF has provided funds for lodging and meals for all participants attending the summit. At this time, The BTF desires to hold a Blind Children's Vision Summit in 2012.

We are in need of outside funding sources to provide assistance for the 2012 Children's Vision Summit. In reviewing the 2008 registration list, which only listed 205 individuals and thus did not include walk-ins, the participants represented 75 school district staff, 35 state agency staff, and approximately 95 parents, students, private agency staff and others.

At the November, 2011 meeting, the Task Force discussed three options on funding. One was to secure funding for only parents and students. The second was to seek funding for teachers and paraprofessionals. The third was to provide for all in attendance. The Vision Summit committee of the Task Force was instructed to explore possible outside sources of funding. Contacts are being made with consumer groups, community service providers, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and others to seek such funding.

The consideration of this funding request by MGDU would be sincerely appreciated. It is suggested that the MGDU Board consider providing \$500.00. The BTF would like MGDU to have a booth and give a presentation in a Break Out Session to provide information of how a guide dog used as a mobility tool can enhance a blind person's self-confidence and enable the person to live more productively as a competent, independent adult in their work and living environment.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Patti Schonlau
BTF Chair