

Department of Special Education-Visual Impairment Program
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 27, 2022

Purpose of Report

To present the Board with an update of services provided by the Denton ISD Visual Impairment Program.

Board Goal

II. Teaching & Learning. In pursuit of excellence, the district will advocate, and practice true accountability based on measurement of individual student progress over time, regardless of external mandates.

History

Denton ISD continues to provide a continuum of services to students, ages birth through 21, who qualify as a student with a visual impairment or as a student with Deaf blindness. Denton continues to collaborate and partner with the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program to provide services for students, ages 0-through 2, in their natural environment.

The growth in this program has been slow; however, continues to increase as noted in the chart below.

Year	Visual Impairments	Deaf Blindness
2018-2019	22	4
2019-2020	21	4
2020-2021	31	6
2021-2022	36	6

Status

The Denton ISD Visual Impairment Program currently serves more than 50 students and families in homes (in collaboration with ECI) and on multiple campuses throughout Denton ISD. The district employs three certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI), two Orientation and Mobility Specialists (O&M) and a Brailist. Through the ARP funds, the Department was able to add the second additional O&M specialist which was necessary to provide travel training to students. The Brailist is responsible for braille instructional materials for students to access the general curriculum for students in kindergarten through 18+ transition programs.

The Visual Impairment team has the responsibility to evaluate students to determine educational needs then provide support to classroom teachers and services to students. Students generally considered eligible as visually impaired (eligibility is determined by the ARD committee) include: 1) Infants and toddlers (birth to three) who are blind or have a “serious visual loss” after correction, which is interfering or is expected to interfere with normal patterns of development. 2) Students (ages three through 21) whose visual loss, after correction, is so severe that it adversely affects their educational performance in regular or special education classes. 3) Students (birth through 21) who have a progressive medical condition that will result in no vision or a serious visual loss after correction. Eligibility is determined by an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or by an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. It is based upon an eye medical report, functional vision evaluation, a learning media assessment and an orientation and mobility evaluation.

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The team of itinerant staff provide direct instruction of the Expanded Core Curriculum to students with visual impairment. The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is a disability-specific set of skills that compensates for vision loss and is foundational to all other learning. The ECC covers Compensatory Access, Assistive Technology, Sensory Efficiency, Career Education, Recreation and Leisure, Self-determination, Social Interaction, Independent Living, and Orientation and Mobility. Orientation and Mobility is a related service and is provided only if deemed necessary by an IEP/ARD committee. Visual impairment services, including orientation and mobility are based on the student's individual, unique needs. For those students that qualify as Deafblind, services are provided by the team in collaboration with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing professionals employed by Denton ISD. Other professionals (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, assistive technology specialists, adapted physical education teachers, and music therapists), as determined by the ARD/IEP committee, provide related service.

Summary

Although this population of students is small, students identified as having a visual impairment or as deafblind continue to grow in Denton ISD. These students are served by teachers of the visually impaired, deaf education teachers (as appropriate), adapted physical education teachers, speech pathologists, and the related services staff. As the population of students grow, the need for additional staff to provide services and support teachers will be necessary.