



KANSAS SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

STATEWIDE RESOURCES ON DEAFNESS AND BLINDNESS

www.KSSDB.org

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September 15, 2024

Mr. Adam Proffitt, Chief Budget Officer
Landon State Office Bldg.
900 SW Jackson Street, Room 504
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Dear Mr. Proffitt:

This is the FY 2026 Budget submission of the Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB). KSSB serves over 800 of the 1500+ students (ages 0-21) in Kansas who are blind or have low vision. Our agency equips these students to become independent adults, and KSSB stands alone as a champion for their educational needs and potential, improving both academic and functional skills. KSSB is more than just a school. It has become a vibrant, growing “network of services” across Kansas and a lifeline for children who are blind and their families. We remain grateful for the state's commitment that has fueled our transformation. Since 1867, we've grown from serving blind students to becoming a beacon of innovation, hope, and expertise.

Without intensive, specialized services, students who are B/VI are likely to fall further behind their peers. In December of 2023, the Vision Serve Alliance published a [report](#) that confirms that adults who are B/VI are less employed, less independent, and report more health issues than the general population. With the right support, however, individuals who are B/VI can achieve their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.

KSSB is committed to providing that support, offering a comprehensive education that equips students with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in school, their careers, and their communities. By fostering independence, promoting academic achievement, and cultivating lifelong learning, the school helps to mitigate the harmful effects of blindness and visual impairment, ensuring that students have the same opportunities as their sighted peers.

Recent KSSB budget enhancements are having real impacts for students who are B/VI and their families, as outlined below:

- **\$1.5m** for eight licensed vision teachers and one coordinator as part of the new Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program. This program has provided vision assistance to **214** babies and their families across Kansas in less than one year since its inception. By working in conjunction with Infant Toddler Networks and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), we ensure our youngest children with B/VI are building skills that prepare them for success in preschool settings.



EQUAL EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY
SCHOOLS



- **\$550k** for Extended School Year (ESY) programs to expand skill-based instruction in independent living, mobility, social skills, career development, etc. to over 125 students during three weeks in June. Our campus-based ESY was at full capacity (90 students) and our “ESY on the Road” served 35 students from western and central KS. KSSB originally planned three sites (Hutch, Wichita, and Dodge City), but we were unable to secure a location in Dodge City in the short window between the receipt of funds and when the program started. **We are therefore requesting the \$41,738 that was unspent in FY 2024 as a supplemental for FY 2025 to secure a third site for June of 2025.** For summer of 2025, we are expanding our campus ESY to 4 weeks (dual, two-week sessions) and will be adding more three-day stops as part of our “ESY on the Road”.
- **\$300k (one year only)** to develop an inclusive Early Childhood Program to expand enrollment and include typical children, beginning October 1. We have hired two Instructional Assistants, and anticipate hiring 4 more, for a total of 6, to accommodate growth in the program. We anticipate providing enrichment activities to a total of 25 children, both blind and sighted, by June 30th, 2025. The goal is for the EC Program to achieve self-sufficiency by generating revenue from market-rate fees for parents of sighted children. These funds will be used to cover the salaries and benefits of staff, ensuring the program's continued operation and growth.
- **\$273k** for two School Resource Officers (SROs). We have secured a full-time SRO (daytime) and are contracting with off-duty KCK police officers for evening and overnight coverage, ensuring that armed security personnel are protecting students and staff around the clock.
- **\$300k** for Related Services expenses. KSSB has expanded the hours for occupational, speech, and physical therapists serving students who are blind with multiple disabilities on our campus. IEP services for these therapies have increased by 15% over last year.
- **\$120k** for Information Technology support. With these financial resources, we have hired a software developer to create an updated database for our Low Vision Clinics, which allows us to have continuity and expand this valuable program.

KSSB is being asked to serve more children ages 0-21 who are blind or visually impaired than ever before. By August 2024, we had already received fifty (50) service requests to provide services to children from local schools and networks compared to sixteen (16) requests in August of 2023, a 213% increase. The majority of these requests seek to address the needs of students receiving itinerant or consultative vision services that are inadequate to keep pace with their sighted peers. Large gaps remain in the equity and accessibility of quality vision services for students who are blind in Kansas. For FY 26, KSSB is requesting one enhancement to address this issue.

KSSB requests a \$250,000.00 enhancement for FY 2026 to contract with certified vision teachers (TSVIs) who can provide vision services remotely or in-person to students who are B/VI.

Contract providers might be retirees, KSSB teachers working evening hours, vision teachers who are independent contractors, or teachers-in-training at university programs who would work under experienced KSSB staff. In this way, KSSB could effectively address the needs of Kansas students without

a qualified vision teacher in their home school by coordinating services and providing support for their vision and mobility, without hiring more FTE positions. Details are provided on page 56.

A firm resolve to ensure the 1,500 students (0-21) who are blind or have low vision across Kansas have access to quality vision services remains our core mission. Year after year, KSSB assembles the most talented vision professionals the region has to offer, and with our strategic partnerships we are now recognized as one of the most innovative, progressive schools for the blind in the country. Blind school leaders in the United States, Japan, and Guatemala have asked us to share our story regarding the growth and synergy of our campus and outreach services while honoring the concept of inclusion.

KSSB has programs for students who are blind that are offered nowhere else: A Makerspace and Mobile STEM Unit; A STEM inventor competition called Make48; student-led “Discover Podcasting”; a Computer Science course accessible for the blind; a new Early Childhood Center; Low Vision Clinics; an Instructional Resource Center; a Deafblind Project, Accessible Arts, Blind Soccer, Space Camp, and more. Our partnerships are award-winning and nationally recognized, such as the Voya Financial Services “Unsung Heroes” award, given last year in recognition of one of our staff, Lydia Moreno.

While we have vastly expanded our outreach to parents and students, having the option to enroll in KSSB’s school is important for families, districts, and students alike, as there is no “one size fits all” approach in special education. While the enrollment numbers (63 students, at present) will always be considered small by comparison with public schools, the opportunity for students to attend KSSB’s Pre-K through grade 12 school ensures that Kansas is meeting the needs of all its students who are blind, especially when they need intensive instruction. Parents have a right to invite KSSB to their child’s IEP meetings, and it’s critical that parents know that placement on our campus should be one of the options considered.

Through public/private partnerships, KSSB has been steadily improving our campus facilities. This fall, we will begin reconstruction of our gymnasium. Last year, we completed a walkway, i.e.: “Eagle Alley”, connecting our dorm and school, a new track, and a new elevator to our pool. The KC Blind All-Stars, a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to helping our school, has assisted these efforts by organizing an annual 5k run and seeking grants and donations from local philanthropies. Significant, private donations have augmented state funds to dramatically improve students’ access, safety, and pride in our school.

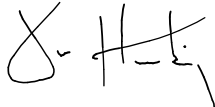
Kansas’ public schools, parents, and the general public often have a limited understanding about the effects blindness has on child development. It is KSSB’s goal to raise awareness and provide the specialized skills (e.g., braille, cane travel, assistive technology) needed by students who are blind, while helping local schools maximize each child’s potential. Student visits to the state capitol, mobile STEM outreach in schools, blind sports workshops, bustling summer school programs, and our Make48 competitions have captured the attention of media and impacted how the sighted population perceives blindness.

For over 157 years, the people of the state of Kansas have trusted KSSB to be there to educate children who are blind when they need help. It is a promise that these students will not be left behind or forgotten. KSSB’s leadership and presence matters more than ever. We are dedicated to ensuring that these

students, wherever they reside or regardless of their vision needs, have the same access to an excellent Kansas education and a bright future as their peers with normal vision do. That requires expertise, advocacy, and a firm resolve to showcase students' talents, skills, and resiliency.

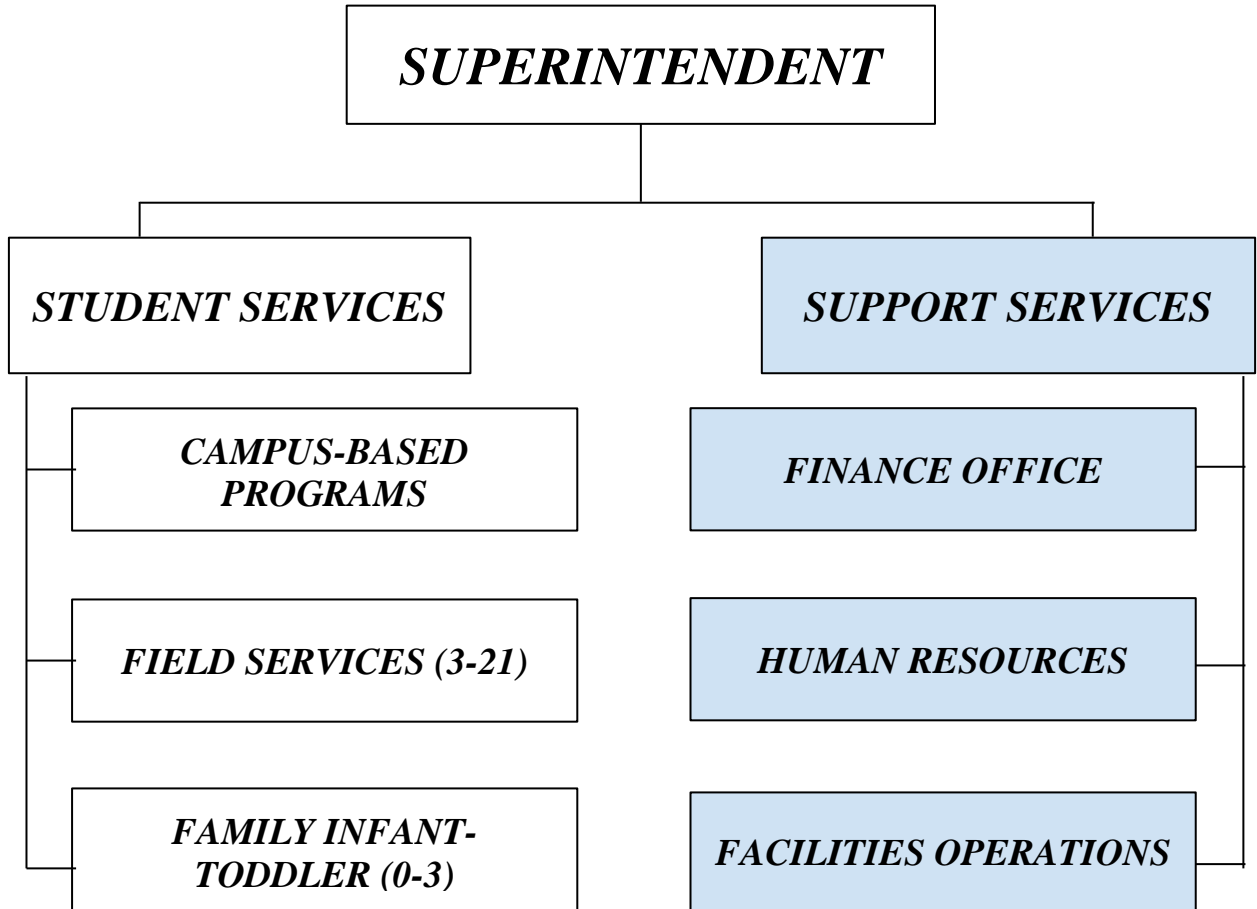
We are humbled and appreciative for the opportunity to present this budget to the Division of Budget and the Governor for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Harding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".

Jon Harding, E.Ds., Superintendent
Kansas State School for the Blind

KSSB ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

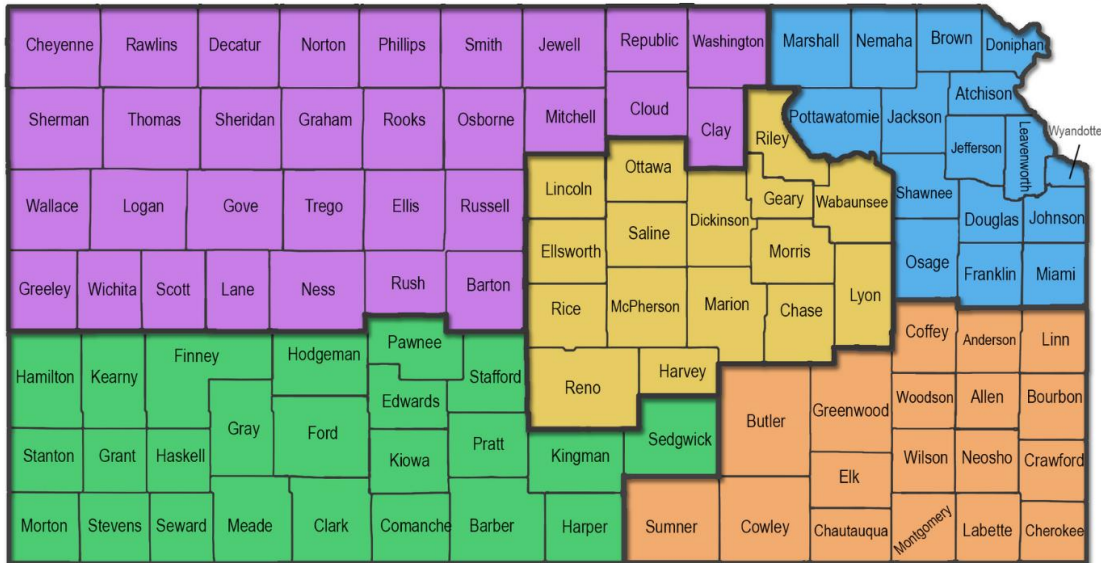


Shading represents areas in which some of the staff are shared with KSSD



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Kansas State School for the Blind
2024 - 2025



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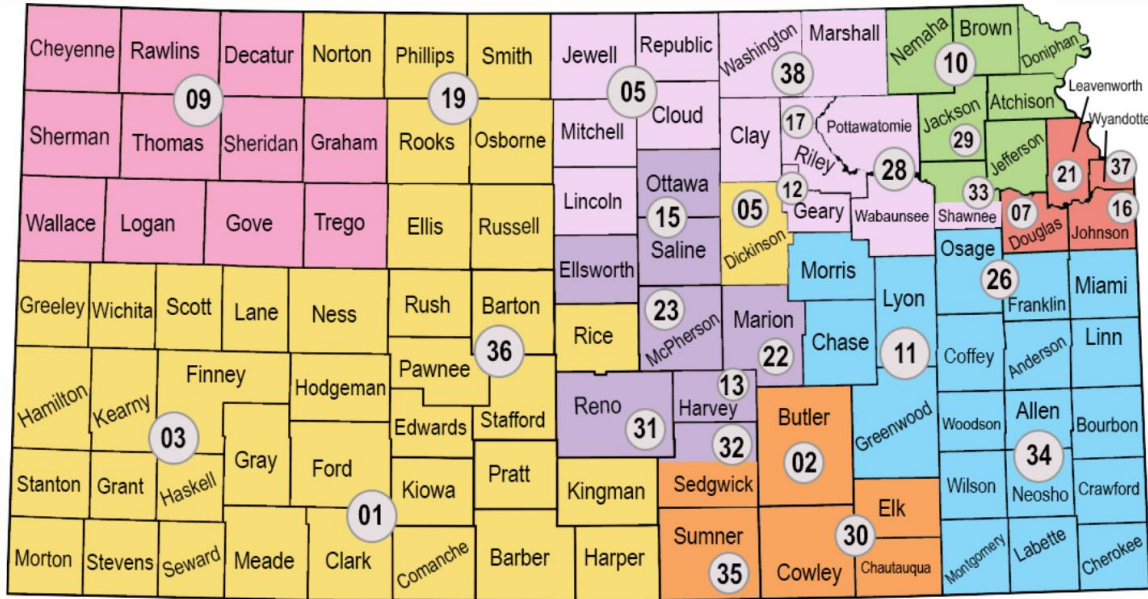
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*The right help, at the right time, in the right location for
students with visual impairments.*



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2024-2025



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The right help, at the right time, in the right location for young children with visual impairments.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

AGENCY HISTORY AND PRESENT CONFIGURATION

Kansas State School for the Blind has operated on our present site since 1867 when the school was established. KSSB is a state agency funded primarily from the State General Fund and is under the direction of the Kansas State Board of Education.

The needs of students, teachers, and schools in our state have changed over the years, but the need for the School for the Blind has never been greater. The State Board of Education’s “Kansans Can” vision emphasizes the acquisition of both academic and interpersonal skills for post-secondary success for all students. In Kansas’ quest to “lead the world in the success of each student”, children who are blind must also possess these skills. KSSB’s expanded outreach to students and teachers in all corners of our state brings this vision closer to reality.

KSSB is a trusted source of information and expertise related to vision services that can be called upon to help in times of need. KSSB assumes its part, in a shared responsibility between schools and Infant Toddler Networks across Kansas, for ensuring the success of over 1500 children who are blind or have low vision in our state. We offer support to families, providers, and schools by providing specialized expertise and assistance that, quite simply, is not available anywhere else.

KSSB is more than just a school. We have become a statewide “network of vision services”. Through new and imaginative programs, we are advocating for, and delivering, the skills that students need today and tomorrow. Just two small examples: In less than one year of existence, our new Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program, a partnership with KDHE, is providing 214 infants and toddlers and their families assessments, instruction, and information that better prepares these children for preschool; This fall we are finalizing licensing requirements for an campus “Early Childhood” program that will combine our Preschool for children who are Blind/VI with a daycare that will offer services to children who are “typical” (i.e.: without disability). This “peer model” program will be a first at KSSB.

The programs and services offered by KSSB are too numerous to list here, but our core and signature programs include: Campus Day/Residential School (ages 3-21), Outreach, Extended School Year (summer school), Celebrate Access + Braille, Blind Sports, Mobile STEM + Makerspace, Low Vision Clinics, Kansas Instructional Resource Center, Kansas Deafblind Project, Vision Teacher Training Program, and the annual Vision Symposium.

We know that academic skills, while critical, are not enough to prepare our students for adult success. By law, functional skills are required to be assessed and taught for students who are on

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Individual Education Programs (IEPs). At KSSB, we call these functional skills the “Expanded Core Curriculum” (ECC), the body of knowledge and skills unique to those who are blind or visually impaired. The ECC is a skill set established through research and endorsed by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). We find these skills are frequently not considered or, worse, dismissed by those who are entrusted with children’s education. Further, federal law requires that functional skills, and not just academics, must be assessed by schools when developing an IEP for students who are blind. The ECC functional skills include:

- Compensatory Access – includes braille reading and writing, the Nemeth math code, and communication skills.
- Orientation and Mobility – independent, safe, and efficient travel in home, school, and/or community to include both familiar and unfamiliar environments.
- Assistive Technology – specialized devices and techniques.
- Independent Living – all the tasks and functions to become independent adults including: hygiene, grooming, money and budgeting skills, eating skills, home maintenance, and food preparation.
- Self-Determination – believing in oneself while understanding limitations and abilities.
- Social Skills – those skills sighted students learn by observing them in others.
- Sensory Efficiency – learning to use residual vision including use of optical devices, hearing aids, and augmentative communication to assist with limited vision and integrating all remaining senses.
- Career Education – teaching awareness of most types of jobs and the skills needed to perform them; statistically, twenty percent of blind adults are employed nationally. This low rate of employment is often tied to lack of training and skills in the Expanded Core Curriculum.
- Recreation and Leisure – activities that can be enjoyed through adulthood, because lifelong fitness is important physically and socially for students with visual impairment including those with additional disabilities.

KSSB has 63 enrolled students on campus for the 2024-2025 school year (3-21). Placement is reserved for students whose instructional needs are unable to be met in their home schools. Students with less intensive needs often receive academic instruction in their home schools, but many of these students participate in KSSB’s ancillary programs or services. On those occasions

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where placement at KSSB is deemed necessary, our goal is to return the students to a less restrictive setting as soon as they are ready.

Vision teachers who work for other districts or service centers and support students in their home schools have full access to KSSB's resources and services including: workshops, professional development, braille and large print book resources, assistive technology (AT), specialized materials (e.g., tactile charts and graphs), and low vision devices. KSSB's campus school is available as an intensive placement option when vision services in their home school are insufficient. The student's IEP team must first agree that vision services in the home school are insufficient to meet the student's needs, and the local school district must initiate a request to KSSB to enroll the student at KSSB.

Our wide array of services is designed to ensure all Kansas children who are blind or have low vision, from all sizes of school districts, have equitable access to a high-quality education. The growing shortage of itinerant vision teachers, however, means that what is available is not always equitable or sufficient to ensure that students who are blind are able to keep pace with their peers or be prepared for postsecondary success. While KSSB is adamant in its support of the concept of inclusion and home school attendance, we are also resolute in our belief that students who are blind must receive the amount and intensity of vision services to enable them to make appropriate progress in light of the child's circumstances.

The number of requests KSSB has received from schools to provide direct services to students who are blind or have low vision has grown dramatically in the past 3 years. KSSB has never been asked to provide direct vision services for all students who are B/VI across the state, as the Kansas State Department of Education encourages local schools to recruit and hire their own vision teachers. However, the premise on which this approach is predicated must be reexamined. Even some of the state's largest suburban school districts are unable to meet the needs of their students who are blind because of vision teacher shortages.

FEDERAL AND STATE STATUTES

KSSB is governed by various federal and state statutes which provide direction in the supervision of the school and eligibility requirements for students, as well as federal and state special education requirements. All statutes are located in K.S.A. Chapters 72 and 76 and in federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations.

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AGENCY OVERVIEW

Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB) is a state agency and accredited school which is committed to the education of students who are blind, low vision, or Deafblind and is headed by a Superintendent and a small leadership team. Finance, Human Resources, and Operations staff are shared with the Kansas School for the Deaf where they have an active role in that school's mission and administration. At KSSB, all aspects of the agency's work are guided by the yearly goals listed in our strategic plan.

STATEWIDE SERVICES

KSSB's original mandate was to offer help to students across Kansas, and we remain committed to this charge. In addition to the specialized staff on our campus, we have experienced, highly qualified, and licensed Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) serving all regions of the state (see map). These specialists provide direct services to students, including white cane skills, braille instruction, vision assessments, home visits, independent evaluations, and participation in IEPs. Our vision professionals also provide professional development, recruit and mentor new teachers, and coordinate with our campus staff and local schools to help students transition between KSSB and their home schools.

An increasingly important part of our work is educating families on best practices and making sure they understand their rights as enshrined in federal law. Parents must first know what exists from KSSB before they can advocate for those services at IEP meetings. Parents often tell us that they are not familiar with KSSB and what we offer to children who are B/VI. KSSB's new Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program has 9 vision specialists and a coordinator available to conduct assessments and provide help to families with infants, ages birth to age 3.

AGENCY GOALS

New goals have been established for the next 5 years as part of our strategic planning process:

Goal 1

Empower and connect Kansas families of B/VI to promote informed decisions.

Goal 2

Ensure all children who are Blind or VI (0-21) in KS have access to licensed vision specialists, assistive technology, and literacy in their primary learning media.

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Goal 3

Provide innovative solutions to increase statewide coordination of vision services.

Goal 4

Expand community partnerships to maximize student success and opportunities.

VISION STATEMENT

THE RIGHT SERVICES, AT THE RIGHT TIME, IN THE RIGHT LOCATION is the basis of our work at the Kansas State School for the Blind. We believe that students who are blind or have a visual impairment are valuable members of society who contribute greatly to our communities when they are afforded equal access to a quality education and opportunities for independence. KSSB has twenty-five outreach vision specialists dedicated to providing help to schools, families, and students across our state. These experts provide the tools for students to succeed in their home communities and schools, when possible, or offer more intensive services on our campus. KSSB specialists provide these services not in isolation, but rather in partnership with a myriad of personnel from schools and agencies across the state.

MISSION STATEMENT

Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB) is a catalyst and leader in the development of exemplary programs and practices in vision services for students, birth to age twenty-one, in Kansas. We build local capacity throughout the state via strategic partnerships with local schools, parents, and communities to ensure learners with visual impairments are able to assume responsible roles in society and lead fulfilling lives.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ADMINISTRATION

KSSB Administration is responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the school. Expanding our outreach services dramatically, maintaining a vibrant campus, and creating a culture of innovation have been the focus of the present administration.

KSSB has a full-time Superintendent who oversees all aspects of the agency's operation and ensures the coordination of the different departments and roles within the agency. The Superintendent directs and guides KSSB in the execution of its mission and is a statewide voice for children who are blind or who have a visual impairment. The Director of Field Services, Director of Special Education, and the Coordinator of our Family Infant Toddler team assist the

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Superintendent in the coordination of our instructional “network of services.” The Directors of Operations, Human Resources, and Finance comprise our support services side of the agency.

LEADING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The 1,500+ students who are blind or have low vision in Kansas can only succeed when school districts, early childhood programs, and KSSB share our respective strengths. We view our agency as an extension of Local Education Agencies and Infant Toddler Networks across the state. As teacher shortages negatively impact the amount and intensity of services available to students who are blind, KSSB has evolved to mitigate the impacts on students. We have dramatically expanded our outreach while maintaining a quality day/residential school focused on intense skill-building in academics and independent living. Our skilled professionals help students meet their goals and become more independent.

Our new Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program launched in August 2023, in partnership with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). For the first time ever, KSSB is offering statewide, dedicated, and year-round services to children who are visually impaired, ages birth to three as part of the existing Kansas Infant Toddler Network. We now have nine (9) vision teachers and a coordinator who are serving 214 students.

KSSB provides instructional materials for students across the state via the Kansas Instructional Resource Center (KIRC), located on our campus. KIRC is funded by federal dollars with KSDE serving as the “flow-through” agency for the federal funding. New KIRC Director Kia Boyd ensures that accessible materials in large print, braille, and audio formats are made available to qualifying students, at no cost to families or schools. KIRC’s services are integrated as part of KSSB’s instructional services. Trainings and presentations are planned and hosted jointly, and the library is located in our main school building to facilitate staff access and collaboration.

KSSB operates a teacher preparation grant for Kansas school districts who wish to develop their own vision teachers (TSVIs) and/or mobility specialists (COMS). KSSB’s staff recruit and mentor these new professionals. While this teacher prep program is vitally important and has brought many new professionals to the field, perpetual shortages of trained, qualified vision professionals remain. The difficult reality is that we need new thinking in how we allocate scarce resources (vision teachers) to a growing and widely dispersed population of students who are blind and have low vision.

KSSB helps Local Education Agencies and Infant Toddler Networks recognize when students may have vision loss and where to find the specialized assistance these children need, whether from

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KSSB or another source. Our preference is for the student to remain in his/her home district, with the proper supports. However, placement at KSSB's school or preschool can also be the 'least restrictive' option. Schools do pay transportation costs (reimbursable at 80% of actual costs) and are asked to reimburse partial costs for a 1:1 aide for students with significant disabilities, if needed.

While KSDE, Infant Toddler Networks, and Local Education Agencies are our primary partners on the instructional side, KSSB school connects with dozens of state agencies and local agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDOs), DCF, Families Together, Inc., etc. KSSB hosts researchers, interns, and graduate students from university programs across the Midwest and serves as a 'laboratory' for innovation, learning, and exploration of best practices.

KSSB also partners with businesses to leverage expertise that comes from the private sector. One example is our partnership with Make48, a premier inventor/maker organization that creates and delivers best-in-class maker events across the USA. Over 60 students from across Kansas and the US who are blind or have low vision have participated in Make48's team competitions on KSSB's campus in the past two years. In April of 2023, KSSB hosted six schools for the blind (WA, CA, NM, TX, IN, and MD) in a maker competition. The Washington School for the Blind team advanced to Make 48's Season Seven Nationals, which will be held at the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) this November 2024 and televised as part of *Roku's This Old House Makerspace Channel*.

KSSB is in our fourth year partnering with the Microsoft TEALS Program to offer an accessible computer science program for students who are blind or have low vision, taught by Microsoft volunteers alongside KSSB's certified staff. These volunteers, some of whom are blind themselves, connect from remote locations with students in Kansas and other states. The program is structured using curriculum from Carnegie Mellon School of Computer Science and utilizes the Python computer language to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. KSSB was the first school for the blind in the country to offer this program. In 2023, KSSB was given the "Founder's Award", *granted to only one school in America each year*, in recognition of our efforts.

Another notable partnership is our work with Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH has grown from a single program site at Cincinnati Children's Hospital to an international program with dozens of sites across North America. Its primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities by first providing structured work experiences at host sites. KSSB operates a

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Project SEARCH site at the North Kansas City YMCA. Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Developmental Disabilities Organizations in Kansas can support our students' search for employment after their experience. According to Project SEARCH, graduates have a much higher success rate at finding employment if they complete this program (80%). KSSB's students were awarded the 2023 "Spirit of Service" award for their management of the community garden and Harvester's food pantry at the North KC YMCA.

KSSB SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services include the departments of Finance, Human Resources, and Facilities Operations (maintenance, security, housekeeping, dietary, and information technology). As mentioned previously, KSSB shares Support Services staff with KSD to reduce redundancies and maximize financial resources. Support Services operate year-round to ensure KSSB is operated in a secure and efficient manner. This allows KSSB to carry out its primary mission which is providing instructional services to students. KSSB is fortunate to have capable staff leading these departments, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the employees whose service is essential to our success.

IMPACTS OF VISION LOSS

Much of what a typical infant learns is through the visual sense, so a child with vision loss learns differently. Early intervention is crucial to making sense of the world, giving meaning to what a child touches or bumps into. What sighted children learn through observation and imitation is called *incidental* learning. A child with significant vision loss (blindness, low vision, or Deaf blindness) must be *intentionally* taught; there is little to no incidental learning because these students lack the abilities of visual observation and imitation. KSSB's vision specialists are skilled at creating "incidental learning" experiences for our students and know when, and how, to share visual experiences so that the student can conceptualize them.

In school, literacy and access to print are important whether through braille, magnification of print, and/or through auditory channels. There is a strong link between braille literacy and the employment of an adult who is blind.¹ In fact, the activities of reading and writing (either in

¹Dehaene, S., Pegado, F., Braga, L. W., Ventura, P., Filho, G. N., Jobert, A., . . . Cohen, L. (2010). How Learning to Read Changes the Cortical Networks for Vision and Language. *Science*, 330(6009), 1359-1364.
doi:10.1126/science.1194140

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magnified print or braille) alter the anatomy of the brain; written symbols in either print or braille help the brain organize information.²

In addition to the regular curriculum, a child who is blind/low vision must also learn vision adaptation skills (Expanded Core Curriculum skills) so she/he will be an independent and successful learner. Without acquisition of these additional skills, a child with vision loss is unlikely to be literate, independent, or employed. This is not broadly understood or accepted, even within the special education community.

In general education, literacy is the basis for all learning; it is the same for children and youth who are blind or have low vision. KSSB has invested over \$15,000.00 in curricula for the 2024-2025 school year, including a reading curriculum that is aligned with the science of reading and Kansas' English Language Arts Standards. However, we must adapt this curriculum for our students' primary learning medium (braille, e-braille, or large print). With strong reading skills, children are more prepared for independence and post-school success. Parents, too, must understand the importance of these skills and how to successfully advocate for specialized instruction.

There is often a lack of awareness regarding the unique educational needs and specialized practices for students who are blind or who have low vision. This is true of general education teachers, parents, and even special education teachers and administrators. Local services are not always sufficient to provide the child with an effective educational program. Students sometimes fail or struggle to keep up with their peers academically, developmentally, and/or socially. This is why KSSB continues to say that inclusion is only effective when it provides students with the *amount and intensity of quality vision instruction and services* sufficient to allow them to become successful, independent adults.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES AND INTERNAL RESPONSES

The Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB) is an agency that constantly reflects on our practices to make sure they are aligned with the vision of the State Board of Education, and the needs of students and families. Our current delivery model provides a wide range of services delivered in support of students who are B/VI and teachers (both regular education and special education)

² Ryles, R. (1996). The Impact of Braille Reading Skills on Employment, Income, Education, and Reading Habits. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, v90 n3 p219-26.

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who educate them. Listed below are social trends and issues which have had significant effects on KSSB's mission and how we have evolved to meet these hurdles.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

In 1975, the adoption of Public Law 94-142 and, eventually, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) changed the way educators saw service delivery for all students with disabilities. A movement toward inclusion increased advocacy efforts from families who wanted their children to live at home and to be educated in the same schools with sighted siblings. In addition, a national trend to distrust the education provided on residential campuses resulted in increased pressure to revisit services for students who are B/VI on both the national and state levels. Public schools were asked to assume the responsibility of educating all children residing within their boundaries. It was no longer presumed that a child who was blind would attend school at a school for the blind and/or reside on campus until he or she graduated. This was a drastic change that Schools for the Blind across the country are still responding to, even today. KSSB has come to view ourselves as a “network of services” for children who are blind that embraces services delivered to a child’s home and local school (when possible and available), while still offering a vibrant school and dormitory on our campus for those students who require greater quantity and intensity of vision services.

2009 and 2017 School Audits

In 2009, the Governor Kathleen Sebelius’ issued an Executive Order 09-01 and established a “Closure Commission” to “*examine all operations to determine if savings can be realized by suspending, merging or streamlining programs*”. The Commission recommended that the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf increase efficiencies by merging departments that had formerly operated independently, specifically the departments of operations and support services.

In August of 2017, following the retirement of Superintendent Madeleine Burkindine, who oversaw both schools, the State Board of Education asked the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) to conduct a full review of both schools (KSSB and KSD). Five goals emerged from the study: increasing efficiencies in administration; expanding outreach services, improving professional development; increasing visibility; and improving transition outcomes for students. KSSB kept those five goals at the forefront of our efforts for five years, and we have now embarked on the pursuit of new goals, as explained in previous sections.

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Inclusion as a Misunderstood Mandate

Federal law emphasizes that special education interventions for students be delivered at the local/district level before placement at KSSB is considered. According to the National Council on Disability IDEA Series: The Segregation of Students with Disabilities (2018), “Kansas has sixty-nine (69) percent of its students with disabilities participating in general education settings for eighty (80) percent of the time or more, and seven (7) percent are educated outside of general education for more than sixty (60) percent of the time. Students with significant disabilities were more likely to be in separate classes, and the most prevalent setting for students with intellectual and multiple disabilities was separate special education classrooms, with little change during a 15-year period.”

For the IEP team to make a request to enroll a student at KSSB, the local school district must agree that services at the local level are inadequate to meet the student’s needs, and parents must provide consent for any substantial change in placement. A shortage of qualified personnel exacerbates the difficulty in providing students who are blind the supports they need to learn commensurate with their peers, but local education agencies typically exhaust every effort to keep students in their home schools. This is why enrollment numbers at KSSB are typically quite low in comparison to other schools. The promise of inclusion for blind or low vision students will only be possible when the intensity and quantity of specialized instruction is available in every community, school, and classroom where these students reside.

KSSB continues to recruit certified instructors who are interested in becoming Teachers of Students with a Visual Impairment (TSVIs) and/or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) through our TSVI Personnel Development Grant. KSSB does not have the funding to hire all of these teachers, so we encourage them to work for local education agencies in Kansas. This grant provides financial support to new teachers to enroll in a university training program. KSSB staff provide mentoring while candidates complete university coursework. TSVIs can begin teaching immediately, under the direction of a mentor, while COMS must typically complete a longer series of courses before they are allowed to provide services to students.

Despite these significant efforts, it is increasingly difficult for local school districts to do what the Kansas Department of Education asks of them: to develop, sustain, and support their own vision programs. High turnover rates for both vision teachers and special education administrators leave large gaps in what blind students need to succeed. While many vision teachers employed by schools are itinerant and travel to multiple districts in an effort to share scarce resources, there is no central coordinating agency which leaves inefficiency, inadequacy, and inequity.

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of services in its wake. KSSB, and perhaps other special education leaders, believes it is best positioned to coordinate statewide vision services for all blind students, but this would require a realignment and reexamination of current paradigms.

Accountability Demands

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (known as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was renewed in December 2015. Kansas' ESSA plan was approved by the US Department of Education January 19th, 2018. The intent of the plan is to ensure student success and a continued commitment to college and career readiness for every student. The State Board of Education has set forth a vision that Kansas will "lead the world in the success of each student". Kansans are demanding employability and citizenship skills and a move away from a "one-size-fits-all" system that relies exclusively on state assessments. Each Kansas student who is blind or has a visual impairment, then, must have the supports and accommodations available to them if this goal is to be realized.

KSSB aligns instruction with state education standards and prepares our students for state assessments (although we continue to voice concerns about its accessibility). KSSB implements a teacher evaluation system, and focuses on postsecondary outcomes. We ensure all staff meet required professional development trainings, and we submit reports to the Department of Education via SPEDPro and KIDS reporting systems. KSSB provides special education "desk review" data to KSDE on a regular basis to provide assurances of compliance with Federal Special Education regulations. The superintendent reports every other month on the school's progress to the State Board of Education and meets with the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Randy Watson, monthly. KSSB was fully accredited by the State Board of Education in the spring of 2023 for five years.

KESA 2.0

In the 2024-2025 school year, the KS State Department of Education will begin instituting its second iteration of the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) accreditation model for schools, including KSSB. Known as "KESA 2.0", each school district will be required to develop a plan that will produce measurable outcomes for student progress aligned with the State Board of Education's own outcomes. KSSB has been grouped with a "special schools" cohort selected by KSDE and will be using IEP metrics in the areas of: Academics, Social Emotional Growth, Behavior, and Post-Secondary Transition to maintain our accreditation. KSSB has a seat on KSDE's Accreditation and Advisory Committee to ensure that the needs of students who are B/VI are reflected in the KESA 2.0 framework.

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Teacher and Paraprofessional Shortages

The education of students with a visual impairment is one of the most highly specialized areas of teaching, yet Kansas does not yet have a university program to train vision teachers. KSSB, however, is working with Wichita State University to develop a vision teacher training program, which is a multi-year process. At present, Kansas teachers attend vision teacher training programs at universities in other states (see below).

KSSB has 39 certified teachers on staff (15 on campus and 24 in outreach). We hire teachers whose skills and credentials allow the agency to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Our outreach staff must be adept as both teachers and consultants, as they work with a wide array of students, teachers, related service providers, medical staff, and parents. Despite the demands, vision teachers report they like working at KSSB because of the support, collegial relationships, and professional autonomy that is provided by our community.

KSSB is promoting teacher development from within. We have paraprofessionals who are pursuing teaching licenses, advanced vision degrees, and/or substitute licenses, including three who are blind or visually impaired. While KSSB has success recruiting and retaining certified teachers, keeping and retaining “Instructional Assistants” (IAs) has been more difficult, undoubtedly due to the pay differential. Some of the most demanding work is performed by IAs, who are typically paid the lowest rate of pay. KSSB has moved everyone on campus above the \$15 an hour mark, however, and many make \$20 or more if they serve as “one to one” IAs, serving our most vulnerable students.

Through a personnel development grant funded through KSDE, our school has established agreements with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), Stephen F. Austin University (SFAU), and Missouri State University (MSU) to prepare existing Kansas teachers to become Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS). We assist Local Education Agencies in identifying licensed teachers within their district who are willing to spend two (2) years or more in a higher education training program.

Though most courses are completed in an online format, there are often summer courses that require teachers in training to spend time on the campuses of their respective universities. Two elective classes are provided at KSSB, along with practicum and internship experiences. In the last five years, approximately 35 teachers funded through this project are practicing in local Kansas districts and fifteen (15) are in various stages of their training at UNL, MSU, and SFAU.

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Urban School Setting

KSSB is located in Kansas City, Kansas. The Unified Government of Wyandotte County and neighborhood groups recognize KSSB as an anchor in an inner-city neighborhood that has struggled with pervasive unemployment, poverty, and poor health indicators. Negative perceptions of downtown KCK cause some to view our campus with a pejorative perspective. Positive changes, however, are emerging: A downtown grocery store has opened (The Merc Coop), the University of Kansas Health System has returned hundreds of workers to the downtown KCK core, and Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC) has broken ground on a new downtown campus. Infrastructure improvements adjacent to our campus are underway, and KSSB is working alongside Groundwork NRG to ensure accessibility of projects related to the Northeast KCK Heritage Trail.

KSSB provides safety assurances in the form of ongoing upgrades to campus-wide access control system combined with a camera surveillance system of all building exteriors, the campus perimeter, and gates to ensure constant monitoring of the campus. Additional funding was approved in FY 24 to add two School Resource Officers (SRO) to meet rising safety and security expectations. KSSB has a Full Time SRO during the daytime hours. KSSB contracts with off-duty KCK police officers who provide armed security in the evening and overnight hours, providing more robust safety and security assurances.

INTERNAL RESPONSES***Commitment to Statewide Services***

KSSB has more certified vision staff dedicated to outreach than ever before (25). This makes sense, given that the vast majority of students who are B/VI in Kansas receive services in their homes and home schools. KSSB has two outreach departments: *Family Infant Toddler Services* (FIT) serving birth-3, and *Field Services* serving ages 3-21. Our outreach and campus staff are tightly integrated and offer schools a wide array of services to promote access and equitability for students who have a vision loss. Our specialists deliver instruction in braille, low vision strategies, and travel/white cane skills when districts do not have qualified staff and/or cannot find other providers. Our Field Services and FIT service maps show how we have positioned our experts to better respond to needs in all areas of the state (see maps in table of contents).

Our new Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program, a partnership with KDHE, launched last August and is already serving **214** children with vision loss, birth to age three, in homes across the state. We have eight certified, licensed vision teachers offering vision assessments, instruction, and referrals as part of the state's Infant Toddler Programs, with one Coordinator overseeing this

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work. This partnership is benefiting children who are B/VI and parents all across Kansas who have not had this level of expertise available prior, and is resulting in more referrals to our campus programs (Low Vision Clinics, Preschool, etc.).

Over the last five years, our TSVIs and COMS training grant has trained thirty-five (35) new vision teachers who work with students who are B/VI across Kansas. Another fifteen (15) are in various stages of preparation. The annual Vision Symposium brings vision teachers, administrators, and related service providers from across Kansas together for rich, meaningful learning related to the field of vision. Attendance has increased from approximately 60 our first year (2018) to over 170 participants in 2023.

KSSB offered, for the first time in 2024, an “ESY on the Road” program that took our vision teachers to Hutchinson and Wichita, over a three-week period. We served approximately 30 students this year and aim to expand the program next year to reach more students in rural areas of our state who cannot easily travel to Kansas City for our three-week campus ESY program. Our “ECC on the Road”, Mobile STEM, and Mobile Blind Sports programs are exposing hundreds of students to blindness and promoting accessibility awareness.

Braille Literacy: A reaffirmation

The ability to use braille and access print is a critical factor in healthy self-esteem and an essential skill required for employment for those who are blind. Sadly, many children with significant vision loss or progressive loss do not have the braille skills that would allow them to enroll and complete degree or certificate programs in post-secondary settings. Many districts are increasingly resorting to “consult” or “itinerant” services which are insufficient. Having a paraprofessional teach a child braille is also not appropriate. For students with significant or progressive vision loss, including those who are totally blind, developing braille reading skills requires substantial time, focus, and guidance from a certified vision teacher.

KSSB hosts two braille celebration events each year (one in Wichita and one in Kansas City) where students from across the state come to compete, build skills with, and encourage their peers. KSSB employs a certified brailist who is certified through the Library of Congress in transcribing and proofreading of braille materials.

Sharing Our Story

KSSB must constantly share the “story” of what we do, and how we help Kansas’ kids with vision loss. Much of this work takes place in online spaces and forums. KSSB’s website (<http://kssb.net/>) provides a foundation for sharing information and content. KSSB’s other online offerings include:

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- Dedicated web pages for families, educators, administrators, and vision professionals that address the unique needs of students who are B/VI
- A Facebook page (2.1k followers) that chronicles our students' success
- Webinars and online communities such as "CVI Think Tank" (vision teachers) and "Discover CVI" (parents)
- Online classes in technology, braille, braille music, and computer science.

Annual Report

Our [2023-2024 Annual Report](#) provides a snapshot of our school's impact and statewide reach this past year. This data-rich report is shared with our stakeholders as a way to demonstrate our commitment to student success, our fiscal responsibility, and the myriad ways in which we are providing leadership and advocacy.

STEM Innovations

KSSB is offering some of the most innovative STEM programming for students who are blind anywhere in the United States. Our goal is to build design-thinking skills and to create learning experiences that lead to higher expectations and career development. In the spring 2024, Microsoft TEALS recognized KSSB with the "Founder's Award" which is given to only one school in the United States annually. The award was in honor of our partnership in developing the first fully-accessible online computer science course for students who are B/VI using the Python computer programming language.

In 2020, we created a campus "Makerspace" that allows students to dream, design, and create products and prototypes that are unique to their interests. "Design thinking" concepts and iterative development processes are used to guide students through problem-solving exercises. Embroidery machines, 3-D printers, sublimation machines, and engravers are adapted to allow students who are blind or have low vision the opportunity to use the equipment safely. This campus space has become a hub for creativity, one of our students' favorite places, and a concept that other schools for the blind are emulating.

KSSB is the only school for the blind in the country providing "maker" competitions for students who are blind in partnership with Make48, an organization that sponsors inventor's competitions across the country. We have taken a nationwide leadership position through this partnership and now hosted three competitions on campus. The latest competition in April was comprised of teams of students from six other Schools for the Blind (CA, WA, NM, IN, TX, and MD). Our students have competed at the highest levels, developed relationships with business and industry leaders, and promoted their work through media interviews and a TV series on ROKU's "This Old

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House, Makers Channel”.

In 2021, KSSB created a Mobile STEM Unit (a Ford Transit Van) that carries accessible drones, robots, STEM kits, 3D pens, circuitry kits, Braille Legos, small engravers, etc. to students across the state. Our Mobile STEM Unit visited 10 schools; 2 community events & served over 922 students (most were sighted) last year. The Mobile STEM Unit combines disability and blindness awareness with hands-on learning for students and staff, whether blind or sighted. The visits also promote understanding, dignity, and high expectations for our population of students.

SPECIAL PROJECTS, CORE PROGRAMS, AND NEW INITIATIVES

KIRC

As mentioned previously, the Kansas Instructional Resource Center (KIRC), located at KSSB, makes available print braille, electronic braille, and technology to the 1025 eligible students who qualify for the APH registry across the state. Kia Boyd is the current Director and there is one Library Assistant on staff. Funding for this project is received through KSDE, typically as part of a five-year grant cycle. Materials are ordered and delivered to vision teachers who serve as the point of contact for students who qualify for services. KIRC maintains a database of teachers and students who qualify for materials through the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) registry. APH produces materials and resources for Instructional Resource Centers in all fifty (50) states.

New Early Childhood Center

KSSB has hosted a Head Start for the past several years in the south end of our Johnson building, but we have chosen to open our own inclusive preschool/daycare in the fall of 2024. We believe we can better serve the community and our own population of children who are B/VI by operating an inclusive, unique, and high-quality Early Childhood Center. We propose a program composed of students primarily ages 3-5, operating on the same schedule as our K-12 school.

Our current preschool classes for students who are B/VI are held daily and overseen by a director overseeing trained assistants who provide experiential learning that builds mobility, literacy (including pre-braille skills), and technology skills for our youngest children. Our plan is to move this program from Irwin Building to Johnson Building in October, when our Early Childhood license is approved and our building remodel (Phase 1) is complete.

Family Infant-Toddler Program (partnership with KDHE)

KSSB is tasked with responding to the educational needs of all children and youth, birth to age twenty-one, who have a visual impairment. Special education directors and Infant Toddler Networks across the state are increasingly asking for services to support students ages birth-3 because of the specialized instructional skills and environments required to promote communication and active learning in these young children. KSSB signed a Memorandum of Agreement with KDHE in May 2023 that sets the state for KSSB's vision teachers to identify, assess, refer, and educate infants who are blind or low vision across the state, in partnership with Family Service Coordinators and teams who work within the 29 Kansas Infant Toddler Networks. In less than one year, we have served 214 infants and toddlers who are B/VI, and anticipate that the numbers will grow significantly, as we expand assessments, observations, and on-site training. Marites Altuna, our FIT Program Coordinator leads the eight vision specialists who comprise our FIT Program.

KESA 2.0 Accreditation

KSSB was accredited for five years by the Kansas State Board of Education in the spring of 2023. A new, five-year strategic plan has been developed and includes yearly goals aligned with our vision of *Right Help, Right Time, Right Location* for every student in Kansas who is blind or has low vision. KSSB's superintendent serves on KSDE's Accreditation Advisory Committee to advocate for the needs of the state's special schools in the accreditation process. KSSB has been grouped by KSDE into a "special schools' cohort" that meets to identify common outcomes that align with the "four fundamentals" of the KESA 2.0 model.

A Voice for Equity, Access, and Parent Information

KSSB is the only organization providing statewide advocacy for the educational rights of children, specifically those who are blind, low vision, and Deafblind. Students and parents need a source for accurate information regarding their rights and the supports that students need to become successful adults. With the support of the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education, KSSB is assuming a larger role in advocating for the provision of quality educational programs serving children who are blind and will continue to educate parents about their rights.

KSSB has a seat (non-voting) on the state's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), participates in the KSDE's Special Education Leadership Conference, and works closely with the Board and KSDE to ensure schools and parents are aware of our school, our programs, and our services. The State Department of Education agreed to include language in their sample "Notice of Meeting"

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form (for IEPs) that parents of children who are visually impaired have a right to invite KSSB to the IEP meetings for their children.

Our school remains concerned about the accessibility of Kansas' state assessments, known as the Kansas Assessment Program (KAP). The Kansas State Department of Education contracts with the Achievement and Assessment Institute at Kansas University to develop the KAP. Students who are blind and low vision deserve a test that is accessible for all. While small improvements have been made, much work remains. KSSB staff are part of review committees and "blueprint" committees that develop the next iteration of the KAP, but KSSB has long sought a larger role in providing input on the accessibility of these assessments and ways to improve the test process for students who are B/VI.

Innovation/Research Partnerships

Lifetime health and wellness for our students is a critical concern. KSSB is partnering with the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) to develop blind soccer among youth who are blind in Kansas. Blind soccer is a US Paralympic sport, and KSSB offers exhibitions and lessons on blind soccer to promote lifelong fitness, health, and opportunities for recreation and healthy competition. We have strong community support for this initiative, and we received funding in the amount of \$33,000.00 from Victory KC, a philanthropy arm of Sporting Kansas City, to fund a regulation blind soccer pitch on the infield of our existing track.

In July, 2023, Dr. Hisae Miyauchi, Assistant Professor at University of Tsukuba, Faculty of Human Sciences, and a visiting scholar at College of Education and Human Ecology at Ohio State University, returned to KSSB to gather data on inclusion and how KSSB has responded to the societal trend to have students remain in their home schools. Dr. Miyauchi has published articles in the Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, including one titled "Keeping Schools for the Blind Vital in an Era of Inclusion: Key Elements for Success". KSSB's Superintendent presented it with Dr. Miyauchi at the 59th Annual Conference of the Japanese Association of Special Education in September of 2021. In 2024, KSSB's Superintendent returned to Japan to present on KSSB's successful programs to 500 vision teachers as part of the "Visual Impairment in Education Study Group" at the Chiba Prefectural School for the Blind.

Multiple Disabilities

How we educate our state's most complex children is a marker for the rest of our educational system. KSSB sponsors an Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) grant to provide services to children who are Deafblind (and their families), ages birth to twenty-one. The Deafblind Project is located on KSSB's campus and serves

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approximately 175 children across the state, primarily in partnership with other agencies. The Deafblind Project is able to leverage KSSB's resources and provide technical assistance to expand its reach.

Professional Development and Mentorship

KSSB provides professional development to vision professionals in all regions of the state, both on-site and remotely. Common requests include training on assistive technology, Cerebral Vision Impairment, mobility techniques, assessment strategies, and braille instruction. Our "Vision Symposium" is the only statewide conference dedicated to address the needs and interests of vision teachers and has grown to over 170 participants. Over 95% of the state's vision teachers attend this conference to learn what cannot be provided by Local Education Agencies.

KSSB requires that all teachers have licensure as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment, a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist or, in cases where they are teaching students with more significant disabilities, a Special Education Teacher. KSSB provides mentorship and coaching to teachers at KSSB who are new as well as most new vision teachers in Kansas, regardless of who their employer is.

Information Security and Confidentiality

KSSB's expanded use of remote instruction to reach students statewide means a demand for more bandwidth and a fast, steady, and secure internet connection. Unlike typical schools, students at KSSB use a myriad of assistive devices throughout the day, requiring our network to accommodate multiple operating systems, embossers, braille notetakers and displays, software platforms, Wi-Fi configurations, and IP addresses.

KSSB has adopted the Legislative Post Audit's recommendation of security practices re: information technology systems maintained or administered by KSSB under the provisions of K.S.A. 46-1114(c). Our actions have tightened account security controls and we have increased training for staff on how to recognize phishing attacks and other scams. We utilize resources from the Kansas Information Security Office, OITS (Office of Information and Technology Service) and other third parties to improve IT security practices and procedures. As a part of this initiative, funding appropriated for IT personnel and consultants is allowing for major upgrades to the network architecture to current industry security standards. The implementation of cutting-edge technology to make information readily available will improve ability to serve as a statewide resource.

FY 2026

Access Technology

For students, KSSB invests resources in acquiring and maintaining the latest technology and devices for students who are blind and/or have a visual impairment. We have assembled portable access technology and STEM devices to provide hands-on demonstrations, assessments, and workshops for teachers, students, and families across the state. This includes the latest braille note-takers, refreshable braille displays, low vision devices, software, and tablets. We work to ensure that productivity software and administrative software is accessible for our staff who are B/VI.

EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION FOR AGENCY**PREVIOUS YEAR ACTUAL FY 2024**

Total actual expenditures from all sources are \$12,619,609. Operating expenditures for FY2024 were \$9,216,083. Approximately 77 percent of the operating budget was spent on Instructional Services, which are direct services to students on campus, as well as students throughout the state who receive contracted services and other instructional services. Administration, Support Services equal 23 percent of operating expenses. Revenue from the State General Fund (SGF) was \$6,926,257 which is 55 percent of operating expenses. The remaining expenditures were funded with federal grant and fee funds.

The Capital Improvement actual expenditures funded from the State Institutional Building Fund (SIBF) were \$2,692,855.

CURRENT BUDGET YEAR FY 2025

The total Revised budget from all sources is \$14,258,975. The revised operating budget is \$10,771,421. Approximately 78 percent of the total operating budget is allocated for Instructional Services, which are direct services to students on campus, as well as students throughout the state who receive contracted services and other instructional services. Administration and Support Services equal approximately 22 percent of the operating budget.

Revenue from the State General Fund (SGF) is \$8,321,434 which is 77 percent of the operating budget. The approved Capital Improvement Budget is \$3,487,554 and is funded from the State Institutional Building Fund (SIBF).

FY 2026

PROPOSED BUDGET YEAR FY 2026

The total proposed budget from all sources is \$13,596,357. The revised operating budget is \$10,998,797. Approximately 78 percent of the total operating budget is allocated for Instructional Services, which are direct services to students on campus, as well as students throughout the state who receive contracted services and other instructional services. Administration and Support Services equal approximately 22 percent of the operating budget.

Revenue from the State General Fund (SGF) is \$7,978,908 which is 77 percent of the operating budget. The Capital Improvement Budget is \$2,597,560 and will be funded from the State Institutional Building Fund (SIBF).

TEACHERS SALARY INCREASE FY 2026

In accordance with K.S.A. 76-11a16, each person employed or to be employed as teacher or licensed personnel by the Kansas State School for the Blind during a school year must be paid at a compensation rate not less than the compensation rate paid to any teacher or licensed personnel with a comparable education background and experience employed by Olathe School District, USD 233, as of September 1 of the preceding school year. Olathe USD 233 in conjunction with the Olathe USD 233 chapter of the Kansas National Education Association (KNEA) updated their 2024-2025 school year teacher salary schedule on or around May 28, 2024. As a result, Kansas School for the Blind updated their 2025-2026 salary schedule for FY26. All teachers and licensed personnel included in the salary schedule are receiving pay increases as indicated by a line item in the position detail module of Ibar.

FY 2025	Salary	Fringe	Total
Teacher Salary Increase	\$172,887	\$37,627	\$210,514

FY 2026

FTE COUNTS FY 2025

PROGRAM	CLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	TOTAL FTE
Administration		1	1
Campus Based Instruction		40	40
Outreach Instruction		23	23
Extended Day Instruction		8	8
Health Services	1.5	1	2.5
Human Resources		1	1
Business Office		3	3
Maintenance Dept.		3	3
Security Dept.		2	2
Food Service	1	3	4
Housekeeping		2	2
Total	2.5	87	89.5

FIVE YEAR CAPITAL BUDGET PLAN—DA 418A

<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Estimated Project Cost</i>	<i>Prior Year</i>	<i>Current Year FY2025</i>	<i>Requested FY 2026</i>	<i>FY 2027</i>	<i>FY 2027</i>	<i>FY 2029</i>	<i>FY 2030</i>	<i>Subsequent Years</i>
1. Safety & Security Systems (8130)									
a. Safety & Security Systems & Infrastructure	--	\$241,277	\$277,469	\$306,342	\$321,660	\$337,743	\$354,630	\$372,361	\$390,979
2. HVAC Systems & Upgrades (8145)									
a. HVAC Efficiency Upgrades & Maintenance	--	\$1,043,319	\$1,155,054	\$1,418,500	\$1,318,175	\$354,678	\$372,411	\$391,032	\$410,584
3. General Rehabilitation & Repair (8108)									
a. Maintenance & Repairs	--	\$1,443,367	\$988,242	\$872,718	\$1,056,540	\$608,430	\$637,521	\$667,942	
4. Major Upgrade Projects (New1)									
a. Major Capital Projects	--	--	\$1,066,789	\$920,000	\$575,000	\$987,584	\$1,133,614	\$1,634,753	--
Total	\$ -	\$2,727,963	\$3,487,554	\$3,517,561	\$3,271,375	\$2,288,434	\$2,498,175	\$3,066,088	

PROJECT REQUEST EXPLANATION – DA 418B

1. **Project Title:** Safety and Security Systems (8130)
2. **Project Priority:** 1
3. **Project Description and Justification:** These on-going funds are necessary to keep campus safety and security systems in optimal condition performance. Ongoing maintenance of facility infrastructure and critical safety and security systems, procedures and protocols to provide a complete educational experience for all students in a safe and secure environment ensures Life/Safety equipment meet safety code compliance and standards. No reappropriation from FY24 to FY25 is required.

Highlights of Expenditures in the next five fiscal years:

In FY 2026, recurring service & upgrading of safety systems, including 5% inflation guard.

In FY 2027, continue upgrading Life/Safety systems & equipment to evolving standards, and inflation guard.

In FY 2028, continue upgrading Life/Safety systems & equipment to evolving standards, and inflation guard.

In FY 2029, continue upgrading Life/Safety systems & equipment to evolving standards, and inflation guard.

In FY 2030, continue upgrading Life/Safety systems & equipment to evolving standards, and inflation guard.

4. Estimated Project Cost:

1. Construction (including fixed equipment and site work)	\$	1,431,353
2. Architect or engineer fees	\$	494,468
3. Moveable equipment	\$	--
4. Project contingency	\$	--
5. Miscellaneous costs (Server/Client Licensing & Maintenance Costs)	\$	676,640
Total	\$	2,602,461

5. Project Phasing:

FY 2026

1. Preliminary plans*	\$	--
2. Final plans*	\$	494,468
3. Construction*	\$	1,431,353
*Including miscellaneous and other costs	\$	676,640
Total	\$	2,602,461

6. Amount by Source of Financing:

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	<i>1. SGF</i>	<i>2. SIBF</i>	<i>3.Fund</i>	<i>4.</i>	<i>5.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Prior Years		\$ 241,277				\$ 241,277
FY 2025 (Current Year)		\$ 277,469				\$ 277,469
FY 2026		\$ 306,342				\$ 306,342
FY 2027		\$ 321,660				\$ 321,660
FY 2028		\$ 337,743				\$ 337,743
FY 2029		\$ 354,630				\$ 354,630
FY 2030		\$ 372,361				\$ 372,361
Subsequent Years		\$ 390,979				\$ 390,979
Total	\$ 0	\$ 2,602,461	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 2,602,461

FY 2026

PROJECT REQUEST EXPLANATION – DA 418B

1. **Project Title:** HVAC Systems and Upgrades (8145)
2. **Project Priority:** 2
3. **Project Description and Justification:** The upgrading of old HVAC & boiler systems over a planned period of time will allow energy savings and a proactive approach to address issues in a cost-effective manner with minimal disruption to students. Significant utility infrastructure upgrades to multiple buildings over many years will allow for the eventual decommissioning of the central boiler infrastructure. Funding maintains past investments.

No reappropriation from FY24 to FY25 required.

Highlights of Expenditures in next five fiscal years:

In FY 2026, recurring service & upgrading of HVAC systems, and phasing out central steam heating boiler.

In FY 2027, recurring service & upgrading of HVAC systems, and decommissioning of the central steam heating boiler.

In FY 2028, recurring service & upgrading of HVAC systems.

In FY 2029, recurring service & upgrading of HVAC systems.

In FY 2030, recurring service & upgrading of HVAC systems.

4. Estimated Project Cost:

1. Construction (including fixed equipment and sitework)	\$ 4,201,439
2. Architect or engineer fees	\$ 1,228,113
3. Moveable equipment	\$ --
4. Project contingency	\$ 646,375
5. Miscellaneous costs	\$ 387,825
Total	\$ 6,463,752

FY 2026

5. Project Phasing:

1. Preliminary plans*	\$ --
2. Final plans*	\$ 1,228,113
3. Construction*	\$ 4,847,814
*Including miscellaneous and other costs	\$ 387,825
Total	\$ 6,463,752

Amount by Source of Financing:

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	<i>1. SGF</i>	<i>2. SIBF</i>	<i>3. Fund</i>	<i>4.</i>	<i>5.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Prior Years		\$ 1,043,319				\$ 1,043,319
FY 2025 (Current Year)		\$ 1,155,054				\$ 1,155,054
FY 2026		\$ 1,418,500				\$ 1,418,500
FY 2027		\$ 1,318,175				\$ 1,318,175
FY 2028		\$ 354,678				\$ 354,678
FY 2029		\$ 372,411				\$ 372,411
FY 2030		\$ 391,032				\$ 391,032
Subsequent Years		\$ 410,584				\$ 410,584
Total	\$ --	\$ 6,463,752	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 6,463,752

FY 2026

PROJECT REQUEST EXPLANATION – DA 418B**1. Project Title:** General Rehabilitation and Repair (8108)**2. Project Priority:** 3**3. Project Description and Justification:**

These funds are necessary to keep the campus facilities in functional and safe condition for the students, staff and general public. Examples of these include but are not limited to: pumps, masonry and metal repair, electrical motors, sheetrock repairs, maintenance and preventative services, reconditioning and replacement of equipment, and ensure the facility is safe and comfortable.

No reappropriation from FY24 to FY25 required.

Highlights of Expenditures in next five fiscal years:

In FY 2026, on-going general & nominal emergency repairs, including 5% inflation guard (\$49,412).

In FY 2027, on-going general and nominal emergency repairs, and inflation guard.

In FY 2028, on-going general and nominal emergency repairs, and inflation guard.

In FY 2029, on-going general and nominal emergency repairs, and inflation guard.

In FY 2030, on-going general and nominal emergency repairs, and inflation guard.

4. Estimated Project Cost:

1. Construction (including fixed equipment and sitework)	\$ --
2. Architect or engineer fees over the span of five years	\$ --
3. Moveable equipment	\$ --
4. Project contingency	\$ --
5. Miscellaneous costs	\$ --
Total	\$ --

FY 2026

5. Project Phasing:

1. Preliminary plans*	\$ --
2. Final plans*	\$ --
3. Construction*	\$ --
*Including miscellaneous and other costs	\$ --
Total	\$ --

6. Amount by Source of Financing:

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	<i>1. SGF</i>	<i>2. SIBF</i>	<i>3. Fund</i>	<i>4.</i>	<i>5.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Prior Years		\$ 1,443,367				\$ 1,443,367
FY 2025 (Current Year)		\$ 988,242				\$ 988,242
FY 2026		\$ 872,718				\$ 872,718
FY 2027		\$ 1,056,540				\$ 1,056,540
FY 2028		\$ 608,430				\$ 608,430
FY 2029		\$ 637,521				\$ 637,521
FY 2030		\$ 667,942				\$ 667,942
Subsequent Years		\$ --				\$ --
Total	\$ --	\$ 6,274,760	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 6,274,760

FY 2026

PROJECT REQUEST EXPLANATION – DA 418B

- 1. Project Title:** Major Capital Projects
- 2. Project Priority:** 4
- 3. Project Description and Justification:**
Major remodeling of main campus buildings, or new construction.

Highlights of Expenditures in next five fiscal years:

Projects listed by fiscal year in order of importance of program support and/or facility operations:

FY 2026 - continued hazardous material abatement to remove asbestos pipe wrapping, flaking lead paint and other hazardous environments. New gas service to campus and abandon existing line going under occupied breezeway. Finalize renovation of PreK/Infant Toddler Daycare program in Johnson building.

FY 2027 - roof replacements.

FY 2028 - beginning phased installation of campus backup generator, and roof replacements.

FY 2029 - phased installation of camps backup generator, major dormitory remodeling, and roof replacements.

FY 2030 - finish phased installation of campus backup generator, and roof replacements.

4. Estimated Project Cost:

1. Construction (including fixed equipment and sitework)	\$ 4,106,530
2. Architect or engineer fees	\$ 1,200,370
3. Moveable equipment	\$ --
4. Project contingency	\$ 631,774
5. Miscellaneous costs	\$ 379,064
Total	\$ 6,317,739

FY 2026

5. Project Phasing:

1. Preliminary plans*	\$	--
2. Final plans*	\$	1,200,370
3. Construction*	\$	4,106,530
*Including miscellaneous and other costs	\$	379,064
Total	\$	5,685,965

6. Amount by Source of Financing:

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	<i>1. SGF</i>	<i>2. SIBF</i>	<i>3. fund</i>	<i>4.</i>	<i>5.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Prior Years		\$ --				\$ --
FY 2025 (Current Year)		\$ 1,066,789				\$ 1,066,789
FY 2026		\$ 920,000				\$ 920,000
FY 2027		\$ 575,000				\$ 575,000
FY 2028		\$ 987,584				\$ 987,584
FY 2029		\$ 1,133,614				\$ 1,133,614
FY 2030		\$ 1,634,753				\$ 1,634,753
Subsequent Years		\$ --				\$ --
Total	\$ --	\$ 6,317,739	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 6,317,739

FY 2026

CHANGE PACKAGES - Capital Improvements

1. Enhancement FY 2026, 8100 - 8108 Base Rehab & Repair-5% Inflation	\$ 49,412
2. Enhancement FY 2026, 8100 - 8175 Hazard Materials Abatement	\$180,000
3. Enhancement FY 2026, 8100 - NEW Campus Gas Service Upgrade	\$270,000
4. Enhancement FY 2026, 8100 - NEW Renovate PreK/Infant Area Project	\$470,000

EXPLANATION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SUPPLEMENTALS AND ENHANCEMENTS:

1. **Enhancement** request for FY2026 allocation of \$49,412 to reflect the increase in expenditures for normal maintenance rehabilitation and repair due to inflation and long deliverable timelines on various materials and products. This amount is a 5% increase to the current base of \$482,986, equaling a new base of \$532,398.
2. **Enhancement** request for FY2026 allocation of \$180,000 to safely abate and remove asbestos from steam pipe wrapping in tunnels and other hazardous materials associated with lead paint removal.
3. **Enhancement** request for FY2026 allocation of \$270,000 to replace the existing gas lines that run under the Johnson/Vogel breezeway from the west with a new main service that enters campus from the north and not under buildings, a major concern expressed by the local utility provider. This project will include a new service to Irwin building, to allow a small boiler to be installed as part of the last phase of abandoning the steam boiler and related lines.
4. **Enhancement** request for FY2026 allocation of \$470,000 to remodel the portion of Johnson building that houses the PreK/Infant Toddler program. To date, the area has received new/upgraded HVAC services and minimal site modifications necessary to meet required code and licensing authorizations to house this program.

FY 2026

FUND 2088 – LOCAL SERVICES REIMBURSEMENT FUND

Services provided to local school districts by the KSSB Field Services Program are charged at a rate equal to twenty (20) percent of total cost in accordance with legislative provision.

The revenue generated from this fund is used to pay for expenses incurred by Field Services staff traveling to school districts throughout the state providing vision services to children ages 3-21. Travel expenses consist of vehicle rentals and gasoline. The fund also pays for maintaining technology for Field Services staff, office supplies, and low vision devices and materials needed in the course of the performance of their duties.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Field Services to Schools	\$182,315	\$221,816	\$230,000	\$230,000

FUND 2093 – GENERAL FEES

The following is based on several sources of revenue:

Medicaid is reimbursed based on direct services provided to students who meet the program guidelines. Another source of revenue is the School District Administrative Claims (SDAC) program. The reimbursement is based on instructional staff providing services to students.

Out of State Tuition is based on the tuition received for students outside the state which is set by the State Board of Education at \$40,000.00 for day services and an additional \$20,000.00 for dormitory services.

KSSB offers Extended School Year (ESY) programs during the summer, with a special emphasis on reaching rural areas - where students with a visual impairment may never have the opportunity to come to one of our campus programs. LEAs pay per week and can choose to have their students attend one, two or three weeks.

Five programs are provided across Kansas. Preschool students attend free, and one specialty program for college bound participants is \$900.00 per week for two weeks. The remaining three programs are 600.00 per week.

FY 2026

Reimbursement from respective school districts to cover salaries of instructional assistants who provide individual (1:1) support services to students whose IEPs require special needs are also included in the general fees.

Miscellaneous revenue includes indirect costs from the federal programs such as \$1,012,500 from the Infant Toddler Services, \$19,750 from KIRC and TASAN. Transition student fees of \$500 per semester per student, the sale of salvage materials, adult lunch sales and UMB credit card rebate are also included in the Miscellaneous fees.

The General Fees fund also includes \$1,012,500 from KDHE to provide early intervention services to children from birth to age three with visual impairments and their families (FIT program).

The funds generated will be used to pay for instructional program contracted services and replacement of instructional and staff technology.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Medicaid	\$82,449	\$56,844	\$56,000	\$56,000
Sp. Ed. Instructional Assistants	\$144,807	\$327,850	\$250,000	\$250,000
Out-of-State Tuition	\$160,000	\$174,742	\$175,000	\$175,000
Extended School Year	\$135,643	\$188,400	\$189,000	\$189,000
AA Maintenance Costs	\$13,680	\$13,680	\$13,680	\$13,680
Space Rental	\$46,956	-	-	-
Food Service Fee	\$1,555	-	-	-
Early Childhood Center Revenue	-	-	\$30,000	\$50,000
Miscellaneous	\$20,540	\$303,612	\$299,750	\$299,750
Infant Toddler Services (FIT Program)	-	\$1,350,000	\$1,012,500	\$1,012,500
TOTAL	\$605,630	\$2,415,128	\$2,025,930	\$2,045,930

ESTIMATED RECEIPTS INTO GENERAL FEES FUND

<i>Revenue Source</i>	<i>Actuals, FY 2023</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Actuals, FY 2024</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Est. FY 2025</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Est. FY 2026</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Medicaid	\$82,499	20%	\$56,844	2%	\$56,000	3%	\$56,000	3%
SPED Instructional Assistants	\$61,516	15%	\$327,850	14%	\$250,000	12%	\$250,000	12%
Out of State Tuition	\$120,000	30%	\$174,742	7%	\$175,000	9%	\$175,000	9%
Extended School Year	\$59,586	15%	\$188,400	8%	\$189,000	9%	\$189,000	9%
Early Childhood Center Revenue	-	-	-	-	\$30,000	1%	\$50,000	2%
FIT Program	-	-	\$1,350,000	56%	\$1,012,500	50%	\$1,012,500	49%
Miscellaneous	\$81,574	20%	\$317,292	13%	\$313,430	15%	\$313,430	15%
Total	\$405,175	100%	\$2,415,128	100%	\$2,025,930	100%	\$2,045,930	100%

FY 2026

FUND 2146 – STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES FUND

Each student attending KSSB is assessed a \$35 Activity Fee as established by the Kansas State Board of Education.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Student Activity Fees	\$560	\$570	\$905	\$750

FUND 3234

THIS FUND CONTAINS FOUR DIFFERENT GRANTS.

Title VI-B Pass Thru (Budget Unit # 3235)

This grant is approximately 30,000 each year, and is used to provide a brailist, as well as instructional staff development.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$29,940	\$29,506	\$32,480	\$32,480

Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) (Budget Unit # 3236)

This Title VI-B IDEA funding pays for teacher training in the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC—blindness adaptation skills). This grant is approximately \$5,000 each year.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$5,300	\$6,300	\$4,300	\$4,300

FY 2026

KIRC (Budget Unit # 3238)

This is a federal grant that “flows through” KSDE and funds a statewide instructional resource center that provides books and curricula in accessible formats for students who are blind, have a visual impairment, or are Deafblind (and their teachers and/or parents). Kansas has over 1,025 students who have been registered for the 2024-2025 school year, and many of these students require adaptive equipment, assistive technology, low vision aids, and a wide variety of specially designed braille educational materials.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$191,258	\$248,840	\$250,000	\$250,000

TSVI/COMS Teacher Training Contract (Budget Unit #3239)

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), via the United States Department of Education, distributes federal funds that are awarded to the Kansas Department of Education each year. These specially-assigned monies help fund the TASN (Technical Assistance Systems Network) Personnel Prep Contract (in five-year cycles) for vision professionals. Local Education Agencies can recruit from their own ranks to develop a Teacher of Students with a Visual Impairment (TSVI) and//or a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). This contract has been available in Kansas for over **14 years**. KSSB manages this contract and works collaboratively with KSDE to distribute funds where TSVIs and/or COMS are needed the most. There have been **83 TSVIs, COMS or dual-certified TSVI/COMS** who have benefited from funding provided to KSSB from KSDE and are currently working or have fulfilled their obligation to work in Kansas.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$117,831	\$126,423	\$145,000	\$145,000

FY 2026

FUND 3529 – FEDERAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST

Receipts in this fund are based on the number of meals served to students at a designated reimbursement rate per meal; a standard set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Revenue projections are based on historical averages of the number of student breakfasts served.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$4,816	\$5,314	-	-

FUND 3530 – FEDERAL SCHOOL LUNCH

Receipts in this fund are based on the number of meals served to students at a designated reimbursement rate per meal, which is a standard set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Revenue projections are based on historical averages of the number of student lunches served.

The program is broken into two components. Budget unit # 3528 is the reimbursements for student lunches. Budget unit # 3530 is the Cash in Lieu of Commodities.

Budget Unit #3528

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Reimbursements	\$25,559	-	-	-

Budget Unit #3530

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Reimbursements	\$25,559	\$16,560	\$16,000	\$16,000

FUND 3583 – KANSAS DEAFBLIND PROJECT

This is a federally-funded grant designed to provide technical assistance to educational teams and families who serve and live with students who have dual sensory loss (vision and hearing) in Kansas.

Some of the services provided are: free technical assistance for parents, educators, and early intervention personnel; assistance in locating children and young adults who have both vision and hearing loss; ongoing collection of Kansas Deafblind census; federal census monitoring; and collaboration with various agencies to expand services for children who are Deafblind.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$109,713	\$95,525	\$121,500	\$121,500

FUND 3583 – COVID-19 FEDERAL RELIEF FUND

Funds received from KDHE are used for health center supplies, PPE and nurses’ salaries for COVID responses in FY 24.

<u>Estimated Receipts</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
Revenue Source	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY2025	FY 2026
Federal Grant	\$234,957	\$40,721	\$21,010	-

FY 2026

AGENCY DEPARTMENTS

ADMINISTRATION

KSSB’s Superintendent makes decisions in consultation with the Operations, Budget, Instructional, and Human Resources Departments. The Administration’s purpose is to ensure that the agency’s resources, both human and capital, are aligned with its vision and goals. The following performance-based budget measures, for administration, align with the goals established by KSSB for its 5-year strategic plan.

Administration Goals and Performance-Based Measures

Performance Measure	Program Goal	Outcome								
Percentage of overall budget allocated to instructional services equals or exceeds 75% annually.	Improve operational efficiencies and maximize resources allocated to student services	Instructional Services to students receive priority for budget expenditures. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>FY 2024 Actual</td> <td>FY 2025 Est.</td> <td>FY 2026 Est.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75%</td> <td>78%</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> </table>			FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.	75%	78%	80%
FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.								
75%	78%	80%								
Year-to-year retention rate for teachers and staff is at least 90%.	Maintain a positive working climate and ensure capacity of agency to meet program goals.	Consistency and quality of services to students is maintained or improved via staff retention. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>FY 2024 Actual</td> <td>FY 2025 Est.</td> <td>FY 2026 Est.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>93%</td> <td>95%</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> </table>			FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.	93%	95%	95%
FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.								
93%	95%	95%								

FY 2026

Percent of staff who perceive campus as safe and secure is at least 90%	Provide a safe and secure campus working environment.	A safe working environment ensures optimal working conditions for educators and staff to fulfill the agency's vision.		
		FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.
		(new)	90%	90%

Expenditure Justification - Administration

Object Code 100: Salaries and Wages

Summary: This section includes one position, superintendent.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$176,521
Current Year FY 2025	\$186,443
Budget Year FY 2026	\$188,193

Object Codes 200 – 290: Contractual Services

This expenditure category pays for contracted, agency-wide communication expenses, including local, long distance, and cellular telephone services, cyber security, and legal fees. It also pays for rental of a copier that is shared by Administrative Services, Business Offices, and Human Resources; other professional fees, some inter-agency programming fees, and travel expenses.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$11,759
Current Year FY 2025	\$19,920
Budget Year FY 2026	\$19,920

Narrative Information – DA 400

Division of the Budget

State of Kansas

Agency: Kansas State School for the Blind – 604

Program: Administration

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Object Codes 300 – 390: Commodities

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$60
Current Year FY 2025	\$100
Budget Year FY 2026	\$110

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INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

KSSB’s instructional services include campus teachers, outreach teachers, related service providers, instructional assistants, braillists, and special projects staff (KIRC and DB Project. They are responsible for delivering vision services to students and technical assistance to teachers, administrators, and parents. The *instructional* performance measures below align with the goals of our strategic plan.

Key Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Program Goal	Outcome						
Number of students who are Blind/VI aged 0-3 in Kansas receiving vision services, statewide.	Increase services to infants and young children who are Blind/VI in Kansas by 10% annually in the next 2 years.	Students in Kansas who are B/VI, ages 0-3, will be prepared to succeed in pre-k and kindergarten settings. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY 2024 Actual</th> <th>FY 2025 Est.</th> <th>FY 2026 Est.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>194</td> <td>220</td> <td>242</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.	194	220	242
FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.						
194	220	242						
Total number of Blind/VI students ages 3-21 in Kansas who receive services from KSSB vision teachers in a year.	Increase the number of students, ages 3-21, who are Blind/VI across Kansas who receive services from a KSSB vision teacher.	Students who are B/VI will receive intensive, high-quality instruction and services. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY 2024 Actual</th> <th>FY 2025 Est.</th> <th>FY 2026 Est.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>650</td> <td>665</td> <td>670</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.	650	665	670
FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.						
650	665	670						
Number of Low Vision Examinations provided to students ages 3-21 who are blind in Kansas, yearly.	Increase number of students and families receiving Low Vision Examinations via Optometrists and Ophthalmologists at KSSB’s Low Vision Clinics.	Students who are VI across Kansas will receive Low Vision Exams from eye doctors. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY 2024 Actual</th> <th>FY 2025 Est.</th> <th>FY 2026 Est.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>92</td> <td>95</td> <td>98</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.	92	95	98
FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.						
92	95	98						

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Data Points

There are 286 total school districts in the state of Kansas. KSSB provides services to over 100 school districts in a single year, meaning 35% of the school districts in KS have benefited from KSSB services in some way.

Field Services (Students ages 3-21)

The Field Services Department saw a resounding increase across the board this year. From service requests, to direct services minutes, to miles traveled, all numbers were up in 2023-2024.

This year, for the first time, KSSB provided remote instruction to districts with no providers. Directors from these districts provided positive feedback by visiting and sharing with the State Board of Education on their positive experience with this service.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| a. <u>Number of hours</u> of direct services to students = | 2177 |
| (an increase of 48% from previous year) | |
| b. <u>Number of students</u> served via direct instruction = | 336 |
| c. <u>Number of new students</u> attending a KSSB event for first time = | 52 |
| d. Number of pages transcribed to braille = | 7906 |

2023-2024 Service Requests =	257
(an increase of 176% from previous year)	

Reasons for Requests

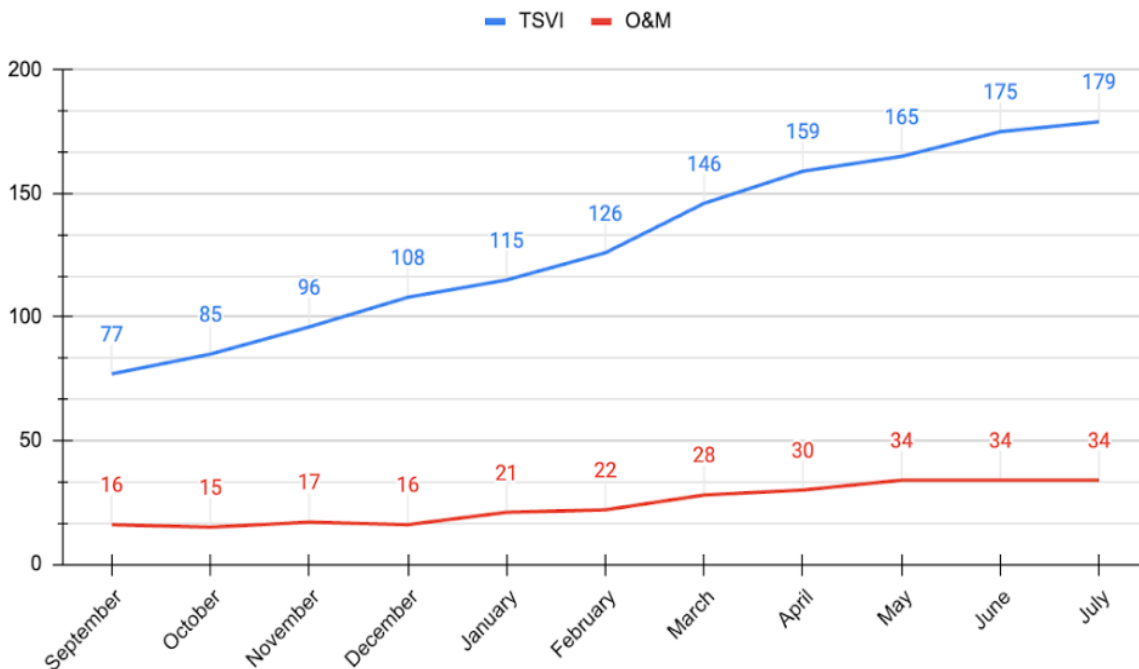
- | | |
|---|-----|
| a. FIT Program (0-3) = | 60% |
| b. New Assessment Services (3-21) = | 19% |
| c. New Direct and or Consultation services (3-21) = | 14% |
| d. Placement at KSSB = | 4% |
| e. Other = | 3% |

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Family Infant Toddler Data (Students ages 0-3)

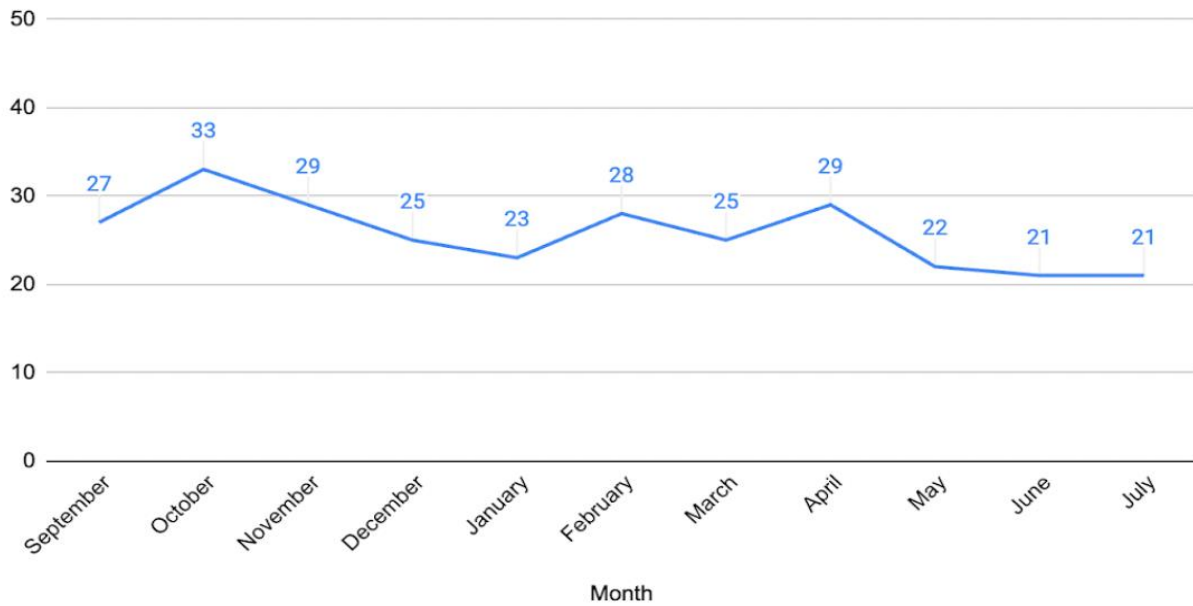
Our Family Infant Toddler team provided assistance to 214 infants and toddlers across the state who are B/VI in its first year of operation. A partnership with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), our eight vision specialists and one coordinator support our youngest children with vision loss in Kansas by providing assessments, instruction, information, and technical assistance. These children attend one of the twenty-nine (29) Infant Toddler Networks across our state. These networks offer a variety of services to eligible children and their families, including transportation costs, to meet their special needs. Services are identified through a multi-disciplinary assessment process and provided through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The networks are community partnerships that blend resources from various entities, including federal, state, and local dollars.

Total Child Count at the Beginning of the Month



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Counties Served



Students (Blind/Low Vision) Served Per Program by Fiscal Year

KSSB Program	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Est.	FY 2026 Est.
Campus: K-12	44	46	50
Campus: 3-5	6	11	20
Outreach: 3-21	215	220	355
Outreach: 0-3	194	220	242
Extended School Year-Campus + Road	125	110	110
Low Vision Clinics	100	110	115
Celebrate Access +Braille	40	42	55

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Trailblazer Weekends	48	50	50
Mobile STEM	23	30	35
Space Camp	5	5	5
White Cane/Capitol	14	18	22
Online Classes	18	12	23
<u>Total</u>	<u>832</u>	<u>874</u>	<u>1082</u>

<u>KSSB Federal Projects</u>	<u>FY 2024 Actual</u>	<u>FY 2025 Est.</u>	<u>FY 2026 Est.</u>
KIRC	1025	1050	1050
Deafblind Project	172	175	175

State Assessments

KSSB is advising KSDE and KITE @ Kansas University regarding the Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) to ensure the state assessment is accessible for students who are blind and low vision. At present, issues with accessibility remain unresolved. While all students are administered the state assessment at select grade levels each year, until the state assessments are fully accessible, we must rely on other achievement measures (aimsWebPlus, teacher data etc.) to inform our instructional practices.

AIMSweb Plus Reading and Math Assessments

KSSB students are assessed quarterly in reading and mathematics, using AIMSweb instruments that have been adapted for accessibility (braille and/or large print). The chart below shows the percentage of students who improved their scores in reading and math in winter 2023 and spring 2024.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Fall (Baseline)</i>	<i>Winter 23</i>	<i>Spring 24</i>
<i>Math</i>	–	85%	93%
<i>Reading (Lexile)</i>	–	45%	50%

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Expanded Core Curriculum Skills

KSSB focuses on building students’ functional skills as defined by the Expanded Core Curriculum. Students are assessed in the ECC domains, using select indicators. Student growth in the ECC domains was aggregated for all students in the 2023-2024 school year, as shown:

<i>ECC Domain</i>	<i>% Independent (August)</i>	<i>% Independent (May)</i>	<i>% Growth</i>
Social Skills	58%	73%	15%
Orientation and Mobility	42%	65%	23%
Self Determination	51%	60%	9%
Technology	40%	55%	15%
Independent Living	32%	53%	21%

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES***A “Network of Services”***

The Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB) has transformed our service delivery to promote equal access for all children who are blind, low vision, or Deafblind in Kansas’ schools. Our efforts align with the State Board of Education’s “Kansas Can” vision which states “Kansas will lead the world in the success of each student”. KSSB recognizes and supports the notion that students with visual impairments are best served in their home communities and schools, as long as proper supports and services are made available. Because of the shortages of vision teachers, this is increasingly difficult. This is why KSSB provides local districts with support and expertise beyond what they have at their own disposal.

Most Kansas students who are blind or low vision will not become a residential student at KSSB. However, KSSB will be a partner in the success they enjoy in their public schools. A student may receive adapted materials and braille books from our Instructional Resource Center (KIRC), acquire low vision aids from an optometrist at a low-vision clinic, or attend school in their home district taught by a KSSB vision professional.

The residential campus is an essential component in the continuum of services that is, by law, to be made available for all students. Campus programs include the following components: preschool, elementary, middle, secondary, and a transition program (18-21). Some of the

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programming available to students while on the residential campus include: literary braille instruction, Nemeth Code (math braille), music braille, access technology for blind and low vision, life skills (cottage and apartment options), cane travel skills, community job experiences, remediation and credit recovery, CTE courses, low vision exams, and dual credit at the local community college. Every student who is blind in Kansas, regardless of where they live or attend school, deserves access to specialized supports and services that will allow him or her to thrive. KSSB believes students with a visual impairment must also receive specific instruction in functional skills. The field of blindness recognizes these skills as the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC).

Ensuring a Continuum of Services

KSSB is part of the continuum of educational services guaranteed for students with disabilities by federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). It takes a team of highly-trained educators to teach a child who is blind or low vision and to adequately prepare him/her for independent living in the 21st century. With increased performance demands placed on special education teachers, it is literally impossible to address every need the student who is blind will have in the course of his/her educational career. KSSB helps fill gaps in instruction for students in their local schools and/or on the KSSB campus, whether via intensive instruction (campus immersion) or individualized experiences (preschool, summer school, online courses, transition). This flexibility makes it easier to ensure that all students have the experiences they need to be prepared for the next step of their journey.

KSSB's vision is that every Kansas student who is blind or has a visual impairment will be served in the right setting with the appropriate instruction and materials taught or supported by a highly qualified teacher of students with a visual impairment (TSVI) and a certified orientation mobility specialist (COMS). This will only come true when we work together with school districts statewide. Some years a district will be the right setting; other years a student may need more intensive support on the KSSB campus. Some skills can be learned in a district setting and others require a more intensive, even one-on-one, immersive environment only available on KSSB's campus. We provide a seamless way of moving students back and forth through the continuum of specialized education. This vision allows, depending upon the needs of the child, the least restrictive environment (an IDEA requirement) to be maintained in any setting—KSSB's campus and/or local district.

Providing Early Intervention and addressing Cortical Vision Impairment

As mentioned earlier, KSSB has a new Family Infant Toddler program with eight vision teachers to assist Infant Toddler Networks across the state in serving our youngest children who are blind

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or have low vision. Research shows that the earlier instruction is provided to children with sensory deficits, the more they are likely to achieve throughout their lives.³ KSSB helped update a new vision screening tool for Infant Toddler Networks to identify birth-three children who need follow-up evaluations by eye doctors. There is growing awareness and identification of young children who have Cerebral Visual Impairments (CVI), which is a decreased visual response due to a neurological problem affecting the visual part of the brain. A child with CVI will often pass a normal eye exam or have an eye condition that cannot account for the abnormal visual behavior. It is one of the most frequent causes of visual impairment in children from developed countries.⁴

Supporting Students With Multiple Disabilities + Vision Loss

Students with vision loss and additional disabilities require teachers with exceptional skills and experience to provide instruction that promotes communication, literacy, and the ability to exercise control and autonomy in their own lives. Each student's program on our campus is individualized and promotes the development of skills and concepts within functional, meaningful activities. Swimming, music, movement, and therapies are provided to each child. Our nursing and related services assist our teaching staff to ensure that students' medical needs are met while maintaining an emphasis on instruction.

Students who have multiple disabilities make up almost 25% of our campus population. Teachers build Individual Plans of Study (IPS) for each student that identify personal interests and necessary competencies necessary for employment, independent living, and healthy relationships. KSSB's outreach staff provide on-site consultation, assessments, and support to IEP and IFSP teams who often do not have experience providing meaningful instruction to these children with complexity.

Outreach, Trends, and Challenges

KSSB started an outreach program in 2003. It has grown from a small, direct service model that served only a small number of students (90-120) within a two-hour radius from Kansas City into an expansive model that can reach the furthest corners of our state. KSSB works with local districts to build their own vision services, but it has become increasingly harder for Local

³ Simeonsson, R. J. (1985). Efficacy of early intervention: Issues and evidence. *Analysis and Intervention in Developmental Disabilities*, 5(1-2), 203-209. doi: 10.1016/s0270-4684(85)80013-6

⁴ Kong, L., Fry, M., Al-Samarraie, M., Gilbert, C., & Steinkuller, P.G. (2012). An update on progress and the changing epidemiology of causes of childhood blindness worldwide. *Journal of American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus*, 16(6), 501-507. doi: 10.1016/j.jaapos.2012.09.004

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Education Agencies to recruit and retain their own vision staff. KSSB has assumed a greater role in teaching students, especially in more rural parts of the state.

Per federal law (IDEA), Local Education Agencies must attempt to serve all of their children, regardless of disability, within their own district. Providing services to blind students across Kansas, who are dispersed across wide geographic regions, however, requires coordination and sharing of vision personnel. KSSB is able to serve students regionally, across boundaries, to maximize resources and personnel. Our school is the only agency that analyzes trends and staffing from a statewide perspective and acts to alleviate underserved areas. We have more vision professionals (TSVIs, COMS and braillists) under our employ than any other agency or district in Kansas, and we would prefer to employ and direct even more teachers, believing an “economy of scale” could be realized to mitigate service gaps for students who are blind and to reduced costs for local school districts.

KSSB also oversees a vision teacher training contract funded by the Kansas State Department of Education. This grant prepares licensed general and special education teachers to become vision professionals. KSSB partners with universities in other states (University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Missouri State University) to offer both online and on-site coursework. KSSB provides instruction for elective courses and provides mentoring for these new professionals throughout their coursework, practicum, and first two years of professional practice. We are working with Wichita State University to develop an in-state training program for TSVIs.

KSSB connects new teachers with our network of experienced professionals in the belief that these beginning vision teachers can succeed in their new positions. We host web conferences and provide face-to-face professional development with continuing education units (CEUs) for recertification. KSSB offers support for school teams who work with students who are B/VI, multiply disabled, and Deafblind via videoconferencing or on-site visits.

One way to help local administrators use their vision staff most efficiently and effectively is to gather and review data about a local district with the special education director. A caseload analysis, conducted by KSSB, can identify service gaps for students who are blind. As gaps are identified, we inform administrators of KSSB services that can assist and/or ways they can better use existing staff and resources.

KSSB is a part of the full continuum of services for every child with a visual impairment in Kansas. However, some challenges remain:

- Students must have certified vision teachers providing both the amount and intensity of services needed for students to develop academic and functional skills required to be successful in post-secondary settings. We know that many students who are B/VI receive

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what is termed “consult” or “indirect” services that are often insufficient to develop the skills necessary to become successful students and adults.

- Districts do not always acknowledge that KSSB’s residential campus may be a viable option for a struggling student. To place a student on the campus does not indicate failure on the district's part. Rather, it means that a district is acknowledging their limits in meeting the unique and intensive needs of the student at a particular moment in time.
- It can be difficult to maintain consistent communication with a school district while a student is on KSSB’s campus, but it is imperative in order to coordinate for the student's return to the district. We ask local districts to continue to hold the Individual Education Program when they send students to KSSB, as the district maintains ultimate responsibility for the child’s educational program.
- Parents are often unaware that they can ask KSSB to attend their child’s IEP meeting to share information about best practices, conduct assessments, provide vision expertise, and share what low-cost or no-cost services we can provide. Our goal is to always inform them of this right, and to ensure the student’s entire team has accurate information.

DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

KSSB Campus Program

KSSB’s campus program is designed to deliver both academic and vision-specific services required by blind and low vision students through individualized instruction, intensive therapies, and adaptive technologies, all on our beautiful, ten-acre campus. All KSSB services are driven by a student’s Individual Education Program (IEP) as required by federal law (IDEA).

Day Program

Our eight-period schedule offers academic classes along with physical education, music, and other elective classes taught by licensed instructors, most who hold additional certifications to teach children who are blind. Classes for students who have additional disabilities focus on communication, adapted or functional academics, and the skills of daily living. Travel skills are taught by Certified O&M Specialists (COMS) to all students, as appropriate. Related services such as music therapy, speech therapy, counseling, physical and occupational therapies, often required by a student’s IEP, are scheduled throughout the day. Extra-curricular activities such as athletics, forensics, tech club, art, and podcasting are also offered throughout the year.

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Extended Day Program (Dormitory)

Organized, formal instruction that teaches students independent living skills is provided through the evening hours in the Edlund student residence building and the Brighton Makerspace and Rec Center. A program focused on daily living skills is taught by instructional assistants under the supervision of the Dorm Director. Ample time is provided for monitored homework, socialization, and recreational activities. The Extended Day Program is conducted in a home-like atmosphere and is highly-regarded by schools and families who have sent their students to reside at KSSB during the week. Dorm students are generally not accepted until they are at least 10 years of age.

Extended School Year Program (ESY)

The Extended School Year program at KSSB allows many students who are B/VI access to the Expanded Core Curriculum for the Blind (ECC) to fully meet the requirements of his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP). Enrollment in our three-week program has grown to 125 students annually and includes instruction in braille, orientation and mobility (cane skills), independent living, assistive technology, and career education. In the summer of 2024, our agency offered “ESY on the Road” visits to students in the Wichita and Hutchinson areas to accommodate more students from rural areas of our state.

Access Technology and STEM

KSSB provides a wide array of specialized access technologies (AT) to provide students who are B/VI access to the general curriculum and to ensure that curriculum delivery is efficient for each student. Access technology includes refreshable braille displays, braille notetakers, screen readers, embossers, CCTVs, and screen magnifier software to name a few. KSSB has assembled portable technology ‘kits’ that are used by our field specialists to provide hands-on training to students, families, and professionals in conjunction with Low Vision Clinics and professional development meetings. Our STEM Makerspace has grown rapidly with laser engravers, 3-D printers, sublimation machines, embroidery machines, poster printers, vinyl cutters, direct-to-garment printers, drones, robotics, laptops, and desktop computers. Through a partnership with our KC Blind All-Stars non-profit and Make48, we host team inventor competitions on our campus each year. Local businesses sponsor the event and students who are blind participate as part of these teams with a “team lead” from local businesses. Winners advance to national competitions, which are aired on ROKU’s “This Old House Makerspace Channel”.

KSSB Outreach

KSSB has two outreach teams: the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program, which serves infants and children birth-3 and the Field Services Program, which serves children ages 3-21. These vision

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teachers provide both direct and consultative services, teacher training (professional development), family support, and educational material distribution throughout the state. Through these services, KSSB serves as the central resource for all educators and service providers working with students who are blind or have low vision in the state of Kansas.

Kansas Instructional Resource Center (KIRC)

KIRC at KSSB provides free instructional materials such as braille, large print textbooks, and other specialized equipment and educational aids to Kansas students who are blind or have low vision. Students must first be registered to qualify for the program by their vision teacher. KIRC provides training to vision professionals in the state and assists them in the location of hard-to-find information and resources, provided primarily through the American Printing House for the Blind, headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. KIRC maintains a listserv and directory of certified vision professionals across Kansas and manages an extensive library of blind and Deafblind resources (in print, large print, and braille). KIRC is one of two KSSB projects that are part of the Technical Assistance Systems Network (TASN) sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education. Kia Boyd is the current Project Director for KIRC.

Kansas Deafblind Project

The Deafblind Project serves approximately 170 children in Kansas who have a combined vision and hearing loss significant enough to impact their ability to learn. The purpose of this program is to promote academic achievement and improve results for children with disabilities by providing technical assistance, supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research. The Project Director conducts an annual census and provides workshops, and information to schools, teachers, and parents across Kansas. Students who meet Deafblind census guidelines are eligible for assistance from the Deafblind Fund, administered by the Kansas State Department of Education. Katie Kirchhoff is the new Kansas Deafblind Project Director.

Accessible Arts, Inc.

Accessible Arts, Inc., funded in part through the State General Fund and reflected in the KSSB budget, is housed on KSSB's campus and provides art outreach to students in the community and art classes to KSSB students once a week on our campus. Accessible Arts has developed a unique and highly successful model of using art activities to promote learning across all curricular areas that promotes the inclusion of children with disabilities with non-disabled children. The State General Fund provides approximately one-third of the funding needed for their total budget. Diana Bryant is the Executive Director of Accessible Arts, Inc.

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Expenditure Justification - Instructional ServicesObject Code 100: Salaries and Wages

The Instructional Program provides student services on campus and throughout the state.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$5,716,810
Current Year FY 2025	\$7,053,327
Budget Year FY 2026	\$7,356,191

Object Codes 200 – 290: Contractual Services

Instructional Services provides direct student services to on-campus students, as well as to students who are B/VI or Deafblind enrolled in their local school districts, and to infant-toddlers through the purchase of contract services, commodities, and capital outlay. Contract services include the approximately \$134,000 contract with Accessible Arts. It also includes the services of a speech therapist, dental services, ophthalmologist, and other professional services provided directly to students as well as copier rental, repairs, and travel expenses.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$804,031
Current Year FY 2025	\$913,327
Budget Year FY 2026	\$826,537

Object Codes 300 – 390: Commodities

Major commodity expenditures consist of textbooks, curriculum supplies, computers, assistive technology equipment, classroom furniture.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$177,551
Current Year FY 2025	\$196,247
Budget Year FY 2026	\$192,247

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Object Code 400: Capital Outlay

Capital outlay includes STEM van, adaptive equipment for visually impaired, replacements of gym equipment and academic software.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$134,854
Current Year FY 2025	\$108,670
Budget Year FY 2026	\$91,270

Object Code 500: Other Assistance

Other assistance represents scholarship payments to employees and non-employees for tuition, fees, books, housing, and other student related expenses from the State Personnel Development Grant (federal funding) for student tuition reimbursement.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$78,561
Current Year FY 2025	\$100,000
Budget Year FY 2026	\$100,000

Object Code 773: Transfers

This is the indirect cost expenditure that will be charged to applicable federal grants to cover a pro rata share of overhead costs such as administration, utilities, custodial services, maintenance, etc.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$167,584
Current Year FY 2025	\$132,250
Budget Year FY 2026	\$132,250

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FY 2026 KSSB ENHANCEMENT REQUESTS

KSSB ENHANCEMENT REQUEST (1)

Expand Outreach to serve Kansas students who are B/VI, ages 3-21.

Requests for KSSB to provide vision services to students across Kansas continue to grow dramatically. As stated previously, we have seen a marked increase from the previous year in requests to provide direct instruction to students who are blind or have low vision across Kansas. Teacher shortages are preventing students from receiving the quality and intensity of vision services they need to keep pace with their peers, both academically and functionally.

Given the reluctance to fund additional FTEs at state agencies, KSSB requests \$250,000.00 annually to contract with certified vision teachers (TSVIs) who can provide vision services remotely or in-person to students who are B/VI. Providers might be retirees, vision teachers who are independent contractors, or teachers-in-training at university programs who would work under experienced KSSB staff. In this way, KSSB could effectively address the needs of Kansas students without a qualified vision teacher in their home school by coordinating services and providing support for their vision and mobility, without hiring more FTE positions.

One statistic alone highlights an ominous trend: In 2022-2023, KSSB was asked by school districts to provide direct vision instruction to 81 students (ages 0-21) as part of their Individual Education Program (IEP). At the start of this year alone, KSSB has been asked by school districts to provide vision direct instruction to 285 students who are blind or have low vision, a 250% increase in requests.

Historically, smaller and rural districts have had challenges hiring their own vision teachers to serve students who are blind/low vision in their boundaries. Today, some of the largest districts in our state (both suburban and urban) are unable to deliver basic vision services, as required by law, for their students who are blind or have low vision. KSSB can ensure that more students receive quality services by using enhancement funding to recruit more teachers.

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Expected Outcomes:

With additional contract resources, KSSB could expand our outreach services to students across the state. We would expect the following outcomes in a one-year period:

Increase the number of students receiving vision services by 20% within one year.

Increase the percentage of students with visual impairments who meet or exceed their academic and functional goals by 10% within one year.

Achieve a cost savings of 15% on vision services within one year compared to the cost of hiring full-time staff.

UPDATE: FY 2024 Expanded Summer School On the Road (ESY) Program

The agency requested (and received) **\$300,000** to expand our Summer School/Extended School Year (ESY) On the Road program by focusing on building skills of children who are blind or low vision in rural parts of Kansas who are unable to travel to Kansas City for our campus-based ESY Program.

Outcomes:

- Expanded students' Expanded Core skills (compensatory, tech, independent living, social skills, orientation and mobility, etc.) to **30 students, at no cost**, in rural areas, (ages 8-21) who are blind and unable to attend our summer program at KSSB due to geographic constraints. Skill growth was measured by teacher checklists and reports.
- Provided "design thinking" experiences to **30 students, at no cost**, using STEM materials (robotics, drones, magnetic tiles, cubelets, etc.) made accessible through braille, tactile features, and/or audio features.
- Provided networking and learning opportunities for **20 parents, at no cost**, to implement student ECC skill acquisition at home and in the local community.
- Provided TSVIs and COMS, **at no cost**, with lesson plans for pre-teaching and follow-up lessons to prepare students for the ESY experience and to generalize the skills learned into the following school year.

FY 2026

SUPPORT SERVICES

The focus of Support Services is to make sure students at both schools have safe and secure facilities to enable the delivery of high-quality educational services. Support Services includes the Finance/Business Office, the Human Resources Department, and Facility Operation Services, which oversees capital budgets, and the service areas of maintenance, groundskeeping, housekeeping, food service, information technology, security, and central receiving/distribution on both the KSSB and KSSD campuses. The Human Resources Department focuses on payroll, benefits, and all other employment matters, including the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel for the highly specialized work forces of both agencies. The finance director ensures sound fiscal management practices as well as collaborating to align the business offices of both agencies within the SMART system in order to attain possible efficiencies.

Facilities Operations

- Develop and manage five-year Capital Budget
- Manage all facets of Capital Improvement projects, including contract compliance and resolution
- Troubleshoot problems with physical plant systems and components and determine appropriate corrective action
- Operation, maintenance, safety checks and repair of boilers
- Regular inspections and repair of roofs
- Install and repair electrical equipment, refrigeration, and plumbing
- Maintenance of vehicles
- Preventative maintenance on all equipment
- Delivery of specialty trades: carpentry, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing
- Maintain campus buildings and grounds, and infrastructure system
- Ensure safety and security of students, staff, visitors, and school property
- Train students and staff in safety and security related matters
- Monitor and provide daily shift reports and conduct and document regular safety drills
- Prepare menus using federal school lunch regulations, including special dietary needs of students
- Prepare and serve breakfast, lunch and dinner meals that meet the State Wellness Policy and Child Nutrition guidelines
- Provide nutritional information to students on menu planning and their dietary needs for healthier diets

Finance and Business Office

- Prepare and manage Operating Budget and manage day to day business functions
- Procurement and inventory of supplies, equipment, and capital outlay consistent with GAAP accounting and reporting and state regulations
- Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable, budgets, and all business transactions, coding and tracking via SMART System

Human Resources

- Manage payroll, benefits, recruitment, labor relations, and legal and regulatory compliance
- Service workforce development and employment needs of both campuses

FY 2026

Support Services Goal

Facilities Operation Services ensures facilities, equipment and services efficiently and effectively provide a comprehensive research-based 21st century educational experience for students in a clean, safe and secure environment.

This single goal reflects the collective mission and driving focus of all activities performed by all the professional disciplines that constitute support services.

Maintenance and Repair Services

Ensure campus buildings, equipment and services are functional and in safe condition for the staff, students, and the general public.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcome Measures	Output Measures
1. Maintain a fully functional campus to ensure critical infrastructure is operable and available for the specialized education needs of our students and the professionals that provide these services.	1. Work with engineers, architects, trade professionals and government officials on pursuing best practices.	1. Percentage of the campus facilities that are in good safe condition and meet building code? 97% The 3% that is not used is the Carriage House which was built circa 1900 and is used only for storage due to the condition of building services (HVAC and plumbing)	1a. Number of work order tickets resolved by maintenance support staff or outsourced contractors? 276 1b. Percentage of work order tickets left unresolved for more than ten (10) business days? 10%, usually due to supply chain delays 1c. Number of core facility systems maintained (Boilers, HVAC, Electrical, Pumps, etc.)? 28 1d. Number of maintenance support staff for the entire facility? 1.5 1e. Number of hours of professional development training received regarding operations and safety? 12 per employee

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<p>2. Maintain a safe fleet of vehicles in order to safely transport students and instructional staff to cultural activities, medical appointments, off-campus academic classes, and extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>2. Work with all agency departments to maintain a calendar of events from which to estimate vehicular needs, track fuel consumption, and schedule preventative maintenance.</p>	<p>2. Percentage of time fleet vehicles are available and operable? 96% (96 percent) – The 4 percent that the fleet is not available is for repairs and maintenance.</p>	<p>2a. Number of fleet vehicles maintained and are in good safe condition? 11</p> <p>2b. Total number of miles logged for the entire fleet in a year? 49,112</p> <p>2c. Number of days vehicles out of service for repairs? 10 days</p> <p>2d. Number of vehicles that qualify for replacement due to condition and/or repair costs? See chart below</p>
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Fleet Mileage

	<i>FY 2024</i>	<i>Est. FY 2025</i>	<i>Est. FY 2026</i>	<i>Est. FY 2027</i>
Average mileage per vehicle in fleet	33,529	37,994	38,000	39,000
Average mileage per vehicle over 100,000	0	0	0	0
Vehicles with 100,000 to 130,000 miles	0	0	0	0
Vehicles with over 130,000 miles	0	0	0	0

Current threshold used to consider replacement of a vehicle is an odometer reading of 130,000 miles or more for a passenger car/van or 150,000 miles or more for a truck; or require repairs are estimated to cost more than the amount equal to 30.0 percent of the replacement value of a new passenger car/van or truck of the same class, as the case may be, including parts and labor, in order to be safely driven.

This agency will attempt to replace any vehicle reaching or exceeding the 130,000-mile odometer reading that has depreciated more than 30.0 percent, or is considered unsafe to drive.

FY 2026

Housekeeping Services

Ensure campus facilities are clean, sanitary and in safe condition for the staff, students and the general public.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcome Measures	Output Measures
<p>1. Maintain cleaning standards as outlined by Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) for the educational environment to meet the specialized education needs of our students and the professionals that provide these services.</p>	<p>1. Apply the APPA levels of cleaning standards and frequency of cleaning to determine adequate staffing levels.</p>	<p>1a. Percentage of facilities that are cleaned to a normal standard - level 4 (general offices, infrequently used rooms, etc.)? 45% *</p> <p>1b. Percentage of facilities that are cleaned to a higher school classroom standard - level 3 (general classrooms, conference rooms, etc.)? 33%</p> <p>1c. Percentage of facilities that are cleaned to uppermost school standard - level 2 (restrooms, kindergarten, food prep and serving areas, etc.)? 21%</p> <p>1d. Percentage of facilities that are cleaned to the highest standard - level 1 (hospital, medical setting, etc.)? 1%</p>	<p>1a. Percentage of work order tickets resolved by custodial support staff? 99%</p> <p>1b. Percentage of work order tickets left unresolved for more than ten (10) business days? 1%</p> <p>1c. Number of custodial support staff for the entire facility? 1 plus outsourced custodial services contractor</p> <p>1d. Number of hours of professional development training received regarding operations and safety? 12 per employee</p>

* Note: The maintenance industrial area is not included.

FY 2026

Dietary Services

Ensure compliance with all nutritional regulations and guidelines, and that food preparation and delivery meets all the local, state and federal sanitary requirements.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcome Measures	Output Measures
<p>1. Meet all the nutritional regulations established by KSDE Nutrition Services, comply with health and safety requirements, and meet the dietary needs of our students.</p>	<p>1. Work with staff, other departments, inspectors, and state officials on pursuing best practices.</p>	<p>1. Percentage of dietary services that adhere to nutrition and health standards? 100%</p>	<p>1a. Number of dietary support staff for the entire facility? 5</p> <p>1b. Number of special dietary meals prepared and served (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and special events)? 1,134</p> <p>1c. Total number of meals prepared and served (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and special events)? 56,186</p> <p>1d. Number of health and safety inspections conducted? 2</p> <p>1e. Number of health and safety inspections passed? 100%</p> <p>1f. Number of hours of professional development training received regarding operations and safety? 12 hours per employee</p> <p>1g. Average price per meal? \$3.80</p>

FY 2026

Safety and Security Services

Ensures campus is safe and secure, utilizing a number of safety and security upgrades, for the staff, students and the visiting general public. The past appropriation specifically provided to enhance security has allowed for the contracting of an SRO and off-duty police officers.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcomes	Outputs
<p>1. Provide a safe and secure campus environment for the specialized education needs of our students and the professionals that provide these services.</p>	<p>1. Provide training to security staff and others on the School Safety Plan requirements and best practices.</p>	<p>1. Percentage of security services that adhere to industry standards concerning safety and security practices? 90%</p> <p>2. Percentage of staff completing annual safety and security awareness training? 100% with drills</p>	<p>1a. Number of safety and security staff for the entire facility? 2 plus SRO and outsourced security contractors</p> <p>1b. Number of security incident reports concerning criminal activity on campus? 1</p> <p>1c. Number of fire drills performed? 4</p> <p>1d. Number of tornado drills performed? 2</p> <p>1e. number of intruder drills performed? 3</p> <p>1f. Number of unscheduled alert events initiated (false alarm and/or actual security event)? 2</p> <p>2a. Number of times the Emergency Procedures and related safety information reviewed and updated? 2</p> <p>2b. Number of hours of professional training provided to school employees regarding</p>

FY 2026

			<p>emergency procedures? None outside of drills</p> <p>2c. Number of hours of professional development training received by security personnel regarding safety and security? None outside of drills</p>
<p>2. Continue upgrading and standardizing safety and security systems to allow collaborative support between the two campuses.</p>	<p>2. Work with contractors that provide camera, secure building access, and integrated fire and emergency notification systems.</p>	<p>2. Percentage of fire and safety inspections certified that safety and security services meet safety standards? 100%</p>	<p>2a. Number of safety inspections conducted (fire marshal, OSHA, EPA, etc.)? 4</p> <p>2b. Number of safety inspections passed (with or without the need of corrective action)? 4</p>

FY 2026

Information Technology Applications and Direct Support

Ensures the management and support of user-space technology, devices, applications and account access, that is used directly in support of instruction and other user experiences.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcomes	Outputs
<p>1. Provide and support technology in a campus environment for the specialized education needs of our students and the professionals that provide these services.</p>	<p>1. Work with staff, contractors, consultants and government officials on pursuing best practices.</p>	<p>1. Percentage of Information Technology resources committed to <u>direct</u> classroom technology support. Approximately 70% - remaining is network infrastructure and life safety systems</p>	<p>1a. Number of Help Desk tickets resolved by application support staff? 1970</p> <p>1b. Number of Help Desk tickets left unresolved for more than ten (10) business days? 1037</p> <p>1c. Number of core applications and platforms supported (G Suite, Adobe, Microsoft 360, Windows OS, Mac OS, iOS, etc.)? 20+</p> <p>1d. Number of end-user devices deployed? 54</p> <p>1e. Number of hours of professional development training <u>provided</u> to staff regarding information technology and applications? IT has been offering one-on-one training sessions, as most staff members prefer. The approximately total of hours of training we provided was 80-120 per school year.</p>

FY 2026

		2. Percentage of time public-facing applications are available and operational? 98%	2a. Number of public-facing applications maintained and updated? 1, kssb.net 2b. Number of visitors on public website? Unknown, hosted by outsourced vendor
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FY 2026

Information Technology Infrastructure and Indirect Support

Ensures the management and support of fixed network technology, server applications and devices integral to the operation of facilities, such as security cameras, life safety systems, and environmental controls. These secure services indirectly support the user-space use of technology.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcomes	Outputs
<p>1. Provide and support technology infrastructure in a campus environment for the specialized education needs of our students and the professionals that provide these services.</p>	<p>1. Work with staff, contractors, consultants and government officials on pursuing best practices.</p>	<p>1. Percentage of Information Technology resources committed to <u>indirect</u> classroom technology support? 30%</p>	<p>1a. Number of Help Desk tickets resolved by infrastructure support staff? 93</p> <p>1b. Number of Help Desk tickets left unresolved for more than ten (10) business days? 47</p> <p>1c. Number of enterprise network hardware, equipment, and devices deployed (servers, switches, WI-FI controller, access points, UPS, generators, etc.)? Entire network undergoing major upgrade and redesign lasted several months, so specific baseline unavailable at this time.</p> <p>1d. Number of enterprise network applications, data systems, and services supported (Authentication Services, Name Resolution, DHCP, etc.)? 25+</p> <p>1e. Number of support contracts with third-party vendors requiring network services? 10</p>

FY 2026

Digital Information Security

Ensures digital data is secure and managed in compliance with education requirements and industry standards.

Objectives	Strategies	Outcomes	Outputs
<p>1. Maintain digital information as required under various laws and regulation, governmental policies and industry standards. Ensure digital privacy protections are maintained in compliance with federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other mandates.</p>	<p>1. Work with staff, consultants and government officials on pursuing best practices.</p>	<p>1. Percentage of digital information and systems protected in compliance with education and industry standards (e.g., FERPA)? 100%</p>	<p>1a. Number of times the Three-Year Master Technology Plan and related information strategy documentation is reviewed and updated? 1</p> <p>1b. Number of infrastructure & application system changes due to federal or state laws and regulations, industry standards, or organizational needs: Entire network undergoing major upgrade and redesign last several months, so specific baseline unavailable at this time.</p> <p>1c. Number of gigabytes of data archived or backed up for retention, availability, and disaster recovery purposes: Approx. 70GB data for backups/archives - Nightly Data Dumps are kept for 30 Days - Weekly Data Dumps are kept for 180 Days - EOY Data Dumps are kept for 1 Year Minimum</p>

FY 2026

			<p>1d. Number of devices disposed of in compliance with information security policies? 0</p> <p>1e. Number of attempted information security breaches detected and/or prevented? No breaches detected, KSSB prevented 32,192</p> <p>1f. Number of information security policy violations documented? No violations detected, but KSSB blocked 2,921,089</p>
		<p>2. Percentage of staff completing annual digital information security awareness and data privacy training? 99%</p>	<p>2a. Number of hours of professional development training <u>provided</u> to school employees regarding information security? 8</p> <p>2b. Number of hours of professional development training <u>received</u> by technology personnel regarding information security? 8</p>

FY 2026

EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION - SUPPORT SERVICES***Object Code 100: Salaries and Wages***

The Support Services Division was reorganized at the beginning of FY 2013 to create consistency between KSSD and KSSB. In FY 2022 there is one director of finance, and one procurement officer. Support Services consist of maintenance, housekeeping, safety and security, food service, human resources, and business services.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$991,532
Current Year FY 2025	\$1,157,687
Budget Year FY 2026	\$1,180,106

Object Codes 200-290: Contractual Services

The major expenditures in contractual services consist of repairs and utilities.

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$745,779
Current Year FY 2025	\$767,418
Budget Year FY 2026	\$766,918

Object Codes 300-390: Commodities

The majority of the agency's commodities are for school operations but purchased by Support Services. These commodities include food for school breakfast, lunch and dinner, repair parts for buildings, equipment, and vehicles; custodial supplies and food service supplies; chemicals for the boiler and swimming pool; and office supplies for the respective departments. These commodities are anticipated to increase due to increases in materials and labor costs.

Previous Year FY 2024- Actual	\$111,533
Current Year FY 2024	\$138,175
Budget Year FY 2025	\$148,225

Narrative Information – DA 400

Division of the Budget

State of Kansas

Agency: Kansas State School for the Blind – 604

Program: Support Services

FY 2026

Object Codes 400-490: Capital Outlay

Previous Year FY 2024 - Actual	\$99,397
Current Year FY 2025	\$86,100
Budget Year FY 2026	\$86,100