

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**SPECIAL SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Action Requested:** Receive the reports.

**Executive Summary:** The Regent special schools submitted annual progress reports on their institutional strategic plans for Board review. Institutional leaders will provide brief oral updates. The institutions' progress reports are attached to this memo.

**Background:** Board Policy (§6.05) directs the Regent institutions to present annual progress reports on their institutional strategic plans. Board Policy indicates that "the Board shall help establish institutional direction, and monitor and evaluate progress toward achieving strategic goals." Annual progress reports are an opportunity for the Regent institutions to address the degree to which they have advanced the Board's strategic objectives.

The Board's 2004-2009 strategic plan established the following priorities for the Board and its institutions:

- 1.0 Ensure high quality educational opportunities for students.
- 2.0 Discover new knowledge through research, scholarship, and creative activities.
- 3.0 Provide needed service and promote economic growth.
- 4.0 Demonstrate public accountability and effective stewardship of resources.

Iowa School for the Deaf. There are four priorities in the Iowa School for the Deaf Strategic Plan:

- ◆ Ensure high quality educational opportunities for students.
- ◆ Ensure high quality transition services for students.
- ◆ Ensure high quality outreach services statewide.
- ◆ Demonstrate effective stewardship of resources.

Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. The goals of the Statewide System for Vision Services provide the framework for the implementation of the strategic initiative of the Statewide System:

- ◆ Provide equitable access to a continuum of high quality services for all students in Iowa who are blind and visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities.
- ◆ Assure an adequate supply of highly trained teachers and orientation and mobility specialists.
- ◆ Assure adequate and professional supervision, ongoing professional development and equitable job assignments for professionals working with blind and visually impaired students.
- ◆ Eliminate duplication in service delivery by creating a seamless coordinated system of services to blind and visually impaired students across multiple funding sources and agencies responsible for this population.
- ◆ Maintain a center of excellence in Iowa for discipline specific expertise at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School.



BOARD OF REGENTS, STATE OF IOWA

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**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2006 – 2011**

***UPDATED JUNE 2009***

M I S S I O N

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WHAT WE DO TODAY

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THE IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (ISD) SERVES STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE OF IOWA WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING, INCLUDING THOSE WITH MULTIPLE disabilities, preschool through age 21, in compliance with state and federal regulations and laws. The Iowa School for the Deaf:

- ◆ Promotes personal, individual excellence in this population by providing comprehensive educational programs and services, delivered by highly qualified personnel with in-depth training for understanding the unique needs of these students.
- ◆ Prepares students for community participation as successful and productive adult citizens, with skills comparable to their hearing peers.

V I S I O N

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WHAT WE ASPIRE TO DO

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THE IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF WILL PROVIDE OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING, AND will become a nationally renowned program, and a resource for Iowa's school districts, incorporating:

- ◆ Specialized programming and services with intensive, individualized instruction and innovative use of technology.
- ◆ High expectations and standards for each student, focused on language and literacy skill development commensurate with that of hearing peers.
- ◆ Decision-making for individual student program development based on comprehensive, integrated data collection and analysis of student achievement.

V A L U E S

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

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THE IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF IS COMMITTED TO:

- OPTIMAL PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT
- PROGRAM QUALITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS
- CIVILITY, HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND FAIRNESS
- ETHICAL BEHAVIOR
- COLLABORATION WITH COLLEAGUES AND CONSTITUENT GROUPS
- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
- DIVERSITY AMONG FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS
- OPEN, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, STEWARDSHIP, AND SERVICE

C U L T U R E

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HOW WE DO THINGS

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THE IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF NURTURES A CULTURE CONSISTENT WITH ITS VALUES, CHARACTERIZED BY THE FOLLOWING:

LEARNING IS A PROCESS THAT OCCURS IN EVERY ACTIVITY OF LIFE.

- Iowa School for the Deaf continually and systematically fosters student learning.

ALL CHILDREN CAN AND DO LEARN.

- Iowa School for the Deaf provides a comprehensive learning environment for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING NEED AND DESERVE THE MOST APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

- Iowa School for the Deaf provides focused, unique, optimal individualized education programs and services for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

S T R A T E G I C P L A N

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P R I O R I T I E S , O B J E C T I V E S , S T R A T E G I E S , A N D I N D I C A T O R S

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THE IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AFFIRMS THESE PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND INDICATORS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING:

P R I O R I T I E S

- 1.0 Ensure high quality educational opportunities for students.**
  
- 2.0 Ensure high quality transition services for students.**
  
- 3.0 Ensure high quality outreach services statewide.**
  
- 4.0 Demonstrate effective stewardship of resources.**

S T R A T E G I C   P L A N

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P R I O R I T I E S ,   O B J E C T I V E S ,   S T R A T E G I E S ,   A N D   I N D I C A T O R S

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Priorities are numbered “X.,” Objectives are numbered “X.1.,” For this update, the main framework of the Strategic Plan is included with accomplishments (measures of success).

*Updated accomplishments for 2008-09 are shown in blue italics at the end of each Objective section. NOTE: accomplishments may fulfill more than one Objective, but are listed only once.*

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**1. ENSURE HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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**1.1. ENSURE OPTIMAL LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF EVERY STUDENT ATTENDING THE ON-CAMPUS SCHOOL PROGRAM.**

***1.1 Accomplishments***

*All ISD students are evaluated on multiple standardized measures noted above annually and now scores are recorded electronically in “Power School,” which is ISD’s new student information management system. Students are familiar with their own scores and the gains they have made annually (this is the second year they have received their own scores so they now have a comparison baseline). All ISD high school students know how their scores compare to their own prior achievement (gain, stable or loss of skills) and how they compare to hearing students of the same age.*

*Thirty-three percent of ISD high school students (1/3 demonstrated gains of 24.3 points on the Iowa Test of Educational Development Reading Comprehension section. Although they are still not equal to their hearing peers in Reading Comprehension, their gains are significantly great than those of hearing peers (who average 8 points annually), and are making proportionately greater gains than they did before the implementation of the new components of the reading and writing instructional programs in the ISD high school.*

*ISD teachers keep portfolios of students’ work for every ISD student now. The pieces of work that can be maintained electronically (for example, student work samples in the Word program) are maintained on one secure drive on the ISD server. Other work samples that must be maintained in concrete form rather than electronic are kept by teachers, also.*

*Parents are updated on their students’ literacy and learning levels at least three times annually.*

*ISD has implemented a new reading achievement measure for daily work and annual gains that result from direct instruction, in addition to the standardized achievement scoring noted earlier. "Lexile" scores give a more accurate comparison than standardized testing, and are easy for students and parents to understand, especially related to reading gains. ISD's high school students averaged a mid Fourth-grade reading level Lexile score in the fall of 2008. Spring scores are anticipated to show gains. This measure includes all students except approximately five for whom any such measure is inappropriate due to their complex multiple needs. While mid Fourth-grade on average for all ISD high school students is low compared to hearing peers, it is higher than many special education students, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The number includes ISD's students who may have mild learning disabilities or other learning needs that are mild beyond hearing impairment.*

*NOTE: Student scores were below anticipated with some classes demonstrating "losses" in skills, although the admission of new students during the school year at 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> grades, who were transferred to ISD due to reading needs influenced the averages and that figured into a "loss" at any given grade level. With small class sizes, even a single struggling reader can dramatically affect the averages. The ISD high school faculty and staff have identified the need to establish an in-house task force of students and faculty for fall to examine ways to address the students' reading needs and testing issues.*

Lexile Scores: Scholastic Reading Inventory

Elementary/Middle School: The highest individual score was a 1290 for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. Nine (9) students made significant gains of more than 50 points (gains of 50 or more points are considered significant). A significant decrease was shown by the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Students in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades maintained their levels. Scores vary by class, also, due to the low numbers of students and participation of students with multiple learning needs.

Ninth, 10th and 11th graders demonstrated no significant losses or gains for 2008-2009. Reading averages were steady. The 12th grade made a significant gain of 55 points between September 2008 and May 2009. Thirty-two percent of the ISD high school students demonstrated significant gains (more than 50 points) on the SRI. Six high school students scored in the HS range (more than 1000 Lexile points). The highest score for an ISD high school student during 2008-09 was 1304.

	Sept. 2008	<u>Lexile Score</u> May 2009	Grade Level
5th grade	80.8	87.4	Below range
6th grade	380.3	365.8	2nd grade average
7th grade	346.8	130.0	1st grade average
8th grade	480.8	494.0	2nd grade average
9th grade	591.0	573.0	3rd grade average
10th grade	544.0	514.0	3rd grade average
11th grade	687.0	652.0	4th grade level
12th grade	800.0	855.0	6th grade level
Overall HS	629.0	601.0	4th grade

\*4th grade range is 600-699, compared to hearing students

\*Average HS scores would be 1000-1700 for hearing students

## 1.2. ENSURE OPTIMAL CONCEPT AND CONTENT AREA SKILL DEVELOPMENT

### 1.2 Accomplishments

*ISD high school students have increased an average of three points on National Standard Scores in Reading Comprehension, Total Science, and Total Mathematics. While still below hearing peers, 66% of the students increased performance in Reading Comprehension, 69% showed gains in Language, and 57% increased performance in Math on the Northwest Educational Assessment since the fall semester 2008.*

*All ISD students demonstrated progress on their Individualized Education Program goals, and a new reporting system using Iowa IEP Graphs is being shared with parents to demonstrate progress.*

*Also see 1.1 accomplishments, as there is overlap.*

## 1.3. ENSURE CONSISTENCY IN PROVISION OF ISD HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS THROUGH ONGOING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

### 1.3 Accomplishments

*ISD principals assumed responsibility this year for all curriculum and evaluation leadership. They led all professional development, provided training opportunities, and established a School Improvement Plan team with faculty, assisted by technical assistance providers from AEA 13.*

*ISD teachers and principals have served on AEA 13 Cadres for development of the Iowa Core Curriculum standards and content in Reading and Math. The standards and content that are being developed are also being implemented in ISD classrooms and adopted school wide, to ensure that ISD's content and standards are consistent at each level with those afforded to hearing students at the same levels.*

**1.4. ISD TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING BOTH HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE, WILL SUPPORT HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.**

***1.4 Accomplishments***

*ISD's new student information system, Power School, is fully operational. It is compatible with the Lewis Central system (also Power School), allowing for easy exchange of grades with cross-enrolled students. The system is highly flexible and accessible to students, faculty and parents. Multiple training sessions have been held for students, faculty and administration to use the technology effectively.*

*Fifteen SMART boards are in use at ISD, primarily for classrooms. Another eight will be installed by fall 2009. Faculty members who have them in the classrooms currently use them daily for instruction; this technology is ideal for use with deaf students whose educational needs require much modification of presentation in many cases.*

*All students have access to computers, video telephone equipment, and training to use the equipment. Students are encouraged to communicate with the families daily by videophone if possible, and ISD assists families in making the applications for the free in-home equipment.*

**1.5. ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING BY RECRUITING AND RETAINING A HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND DIVERSE FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATION.**

***1.5 Accomplishments***

*ISD faculty and educational administrators all are fully licensed for the assignments they hold, under both BOEE and NCLB/IDEA mandates. All continue to take training on an annual basis (ongoing training is required by the BOEE for license renewal).*

*All ISD interpreters hold full certification for their assignments, take required CEU training annually, and renew licensure annually.*

*All ISD staff members have met the sign language performance requirements for their positions, as well as other position requirements (e.g., all teacher assistants are fully qualified by BOEE/NCLB mandates).*

**1.6. IDENTIFY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ISSUES AND FUTURE NEEDS FOR ISD AND IOWA'S DISTRICTS.**

***1.6 Accomplishments***

*The Task Force has not met during this school year. There is no single entity in Iowa responsible for training of highly qualified faculty to serve students who are deaf or hard of hearing. ISD and Iowa districts currently recruit from out-of-state IHEs.*

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**2. ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRANSITION SERVICES.**

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**2.1. ENSURE THAT EACH STUDENT WHO GRADUATES FROM ISD'S ON-CAMPUS SCHOOL PROGRAM HAS A VIABLE TRANSITION STRATEGY FOR POST-GRADUATION OPPORTUNITIES.**

***2.1 Accomplishments***

*All ISD high school students have appropriate IEP goals for transition at the beginning of high school studies. Every matriculating student has an "exit IEP" in which the post-graduate plan is finalized.*

*The members of the class of 2009 have indicated the following post-graduate plans: two will go directly to college/university; two will enter competitive employment; one will enter supported employment in a specialized work development center; and three will stay in the ISD 4PLUS program. Of the three staying for the 4PLUS program, two will go to competitive employment with assistance and ongoing language/work skill development at ISD, and one will co-enroll in a postsecondary program with support and content/language development for that program at ISD.*

**2.2. ENSURE THAT EACH STUDENT HAS HIGH QUALITY CAREER AND LIFE SKILLS PREPARATION (VOCATIONAL AND INDEPENDENT ADULT LIVING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE).**

***2.2 Accomplishments***

*Every ISD high school student has curriculum-based community study trips written into his or her IEP. The experiences are structured to enhance language development and appropriate social skills as well as interactional strategies for adult living in the community.*

*Every graduate now leaves ISD with a medical portfolio that includes basic personal health information vital for completing an insurance form or application for health insurance, plus training in how to make the application. Part of that training includes information on the student's own hearing loss.*

**2.3. IDENTIFY LONGITUDINAL POST-GRADUATION TRENDS OF ISD STUDENTS.**

***2.3 Accomplishments***

*ISD high school counselor and transition team collect this information annually (the information that graduates out one or more years are willing to share) and use it to help students currently in ISD plan for their future. See 2.1 Accomplishments for information regarding the current Senior Class and their plans for the coming year.*

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**3. ENSURE HIGH QUALITY OUTREACH SERVICES STATEWIDE.**

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**3.1. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STATEWIDE OUTREACH SERVICES FOR MULTIPLE CONSTITUENTS, INCLUDING FAMILIES, DISTRICTS, AND AREA EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS (AEA).**

***3.1 Accomplishments***

*Sign language classes were again held via the ICN. Classes ran from October through April. Those registering for beginning I class totaled 217 at 46 sites. Those registering for beginning II class totaled 81 at 26 sites. There were 20 hours of beginning I instruction and 20 hours of beginning II instruction.*

*Four family/professional ICN workshops were provided in the winter/spring of 2009. Sessions were coordinated with sign language ICN training, resulting in a substantial attendance increase. About 60 attended each workshop (240 total), including families, professionals working with deaf/hard-of-hearing students (24) and members of the public.*

*ISD had an exhibit at the annual conference of the School Administrators of Iowa in August 2008 that generated excellent exposure and publicity among principals, superintendents, and directors of special education statewide due to the high attendance at this conference. School administrators, AEAs and other referral sources continue to receive information and reminders about ISD sign language class, family workshops, summer school (when appropriate) and other opportunities ISD provides.*

**3.2. ENHANCE EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ISD'S MAJOR CONSTITUENTS, AND WITH NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SERVING STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING.**

### **3.2 Accomplishments**

*ISD continued efforts with the Iowa Deafblind Project including technical assistance and participation on the statewide Deafblind Technical Assistance Team. Specific assistance to approximately three families was provided (ISD's participation is limited to several days a month on this project from three providers on campus, however, the needs of the students and their families are significant).*

*The Superintendent and several ISD educational staff members participated in meetings of the Coordinating Council for Services to Students with Hearing Impairments.*

*Regular communication has occurred at least once a quarter, with personnel from either the Nebraska Department of Education or NE Regional Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. These are the two entities responsible for student placement at ISD.*

*ISD personnel implemented initial activities in April and May 2009 to host the annual meeting of the Conference of Educational Administrators for Schools and Programs Serving the Deaf (CEASD) in May 2010 in Council Bluffs. The meeting is expected to draw approximately 150 people, most of whom are the executives of special schools for deaf students from the United States and Canada.*

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## **4. DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES.**

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### **4.1. ENSURE APPROPRIATE STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT BUSINESS OFFICE AND ISD FOUNDATION OPERATIONS.**

#### **4.1 Accomplishments**

*Iowa School for the Deaf has identified a new Science Center as its most important priority. Site preparation has already been completed. The ISD Foundation has begun a \$1.2 million capital campaign to fund the final phase of this project. By July 2009, \$690,080 (58%) had been committed, and three additional grant/gift applications submitted with all three award notifications anticipated by the beginning of September 2009. Six grant/gift applications are currently being prepared for submission.*

*Additional commitments to pledge have been made by approximately 13 individuals/families, with specific amounts for gifts not yet determined. The campaign is entering the public phase at the beginning of summer 2009.*

*ISD has installed SMART board technology in 15 of its classes (eight more will be installed in Summer 2009), and teachers have received extensive training on use. The teachers with SMART boards use them daily in some or all instruction.*

*The Power School Student Information System is fully operational with teacher, staff, student and parent access via the web. It is monitored by the IT Coordinator daily. The ISD IT Coordinator also has trained students and various staff groups in its use and*

*future possibilities for data collection. The system is fully compatible with the Lewis Central Community Schools information system, making student grades easy to exchange for students who mainstream or reverse mainstream from ISD to LC or vice versa.*

- 4.2. ENSURE STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY THROUGH REVIEW, MODIFICATION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND/OR MAINTENANCE OF EFFECTIVE STUDENT LIFE OPERATIONS (CAFETERIA, HEALTH CENTER, DORMITORY AND TRANSPORTATION).

#### ***4.2 Accomplishments***

*All of ISD's nurses have met their required levels for sign language proficiency through continued training and re-evaluation.*

*One dormitory staff member is in process of receiving CEASD certification. Dormitory staff members have regular inservice training, both required for all school personnel (e.g., Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying) and appropriate for childcare workers.*

*ISD bus drivers have received weekly training in American Sign Language as a part of job requirements, and all drivers have met the minimum required level of sign language proficiency.*

*Transportation routes are now reviewed weekly and revised as needed for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.*

*Significant changes have been implemented in the ISD Food Service, including limitations on portion sizes, meeting federal standards for items offered to each student, and more accountability for monitoring student item selections. The line itself has been modified to facilitate monitoring of each student who passes out of the line with a tray. A federal audit revealed areas that needed improvement, including the accounting practices for the Federal Lunch program, all of which have been addressed and corrected for compliance during the 2008-09 school year.*

*Enhancements for student health records have been implemented and students have portfolios that they can take with them when they leave school to have permanent health records in their possession. In addition, students are learning about their hearing losses and health needs to become proactive adult consumers of health-related services.*

- 4.3. ISD'S FACILITIES AND GROUNDS WILL ENSURE STUDENT AND STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND WILL SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

#### ***4.3 Accomplishments***

*ISD has implemented all safety repairs that are urgent, and continues to have a small log of deferred maintenance items due to budget constraints.*

*See 4.1 for update on status of Science Center (formerly referred to as Science Wing).*

*ISD has adopted "Green initiatives," and the Director of Facilities is working toward LEED certification, which will give him more expertise in building sustainability. The following are now being implemented at ISD:*

*Introduction of Green Cleaning procedures and techniques (Green Seal Rated). All buildings are now cleaned uniformly under the program guidelines.*

*Storm water management program to retain water on campus for onsite filtration. Approximately 60% of the storm water from the Administration building is reclaimed for utilization in the Greenhouse program, rain garden or the school's nature center.*

*Replacement of HVAC equipment and appliances with all Energy Star rated equipment. This program has addressed 18 replacement units.*

*Replacement of HVAC control systems with DDC (Direct Digital Control) with controls to reduce usage in times of reduced area occupancy. This program has been incorporated into four buildings currently: Administration, Girls Dorm, Recreation Center, and Careers Building.*

*Ongoing and comprehensive program to install new energy efficient lighting and associated controls. Approximately 255 fixtures have been replaced for energy efficient T-8 fixtures (update of fixtures).*

*Installation of High SRI (Solar Reflective Index) roofing for the kitchen (replacement roofing) project.*

*Ongoing review of student and staff transportation to maximize fuel cost-effectiveness and efficiency.*

**Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School  
A Statewide System for Vision Services in Iowa**

**Strategic Plan Progress Report  
July 2008 – June 2009**

The Coordinating Council for Vision Services developed a plan in the spring of 2006, entitled "Preferred Future for Vision Services in Iowa"(Attachment B1). This plan was approved by the State Board of Education and the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. The Preferred Future Plan became the blueprint for developing a statewide system of excellence to provide educational services to Iowa students who are blind or visually impaired. The statewide system that was developed as a result of this blueprint is now in the second year of implementation and is known as the Statewide System for Vision Services in Iowa. Goals were established for the Statewide System for Vision Services by the Board of Regents and are aligned to the 'Preferred Future for Vision Services in Iowa'.

The Goals of the Statewide System for Vision Services are:

- a. Provide equitable access to a continuum of high quality services for all students in Iowa who are blind and visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities;
- b. Assure an adequate supply of highly trained teachers and orientation and mobility specialists;
- c. Assure adequate and professional supervision, ongoing professional development and equitable job assignments for professionals working with blind and visually impaired students;
- d. Eliminate duplication in service delivery by creating a seamless coordinated system of services to blind and visually impaired students across multiple funding sources and agencies responsible for this population;
- e. Maintain a center of excellence in Iowa for discipline specific expertise at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS).

This strategic plan progress report provides a summary of progress that has been made during the period July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009, toward achieving the goals established by the Coordinating Council. Regent Rose Vasquez served as co-chair with Sr. Jude Fitzpatrick, State Board of Education.

Major accomplishments in the implementation of the new Statewide System for Vision Services in Iowa during this time frame include:

- The full initial implementation of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education.
- The full initial implementation of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Board of Regents, State Board of Education, Department for the Blind and Association of Area Education Agencies.

- The employment of a Superintendent/Administrator of the Statewide System for Vision Services to lead the implementation of the statewide initiative.
- The development and implementation of Operating Procedures for the Management Team of the Statewide System for Vision Services.
- The Completion of a North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA) review with the Statewide System for Vision Services and the educational program on the campus of Iowa Braille School accredited for five years.
- An analysis of the information gathered through a review of the educational files of every child receiving services, related to blindness and visual impairment, through local area schools, area education agencies and the Iowa Braille School; the information gathered in this review is being used to guide the direction of future services needed for children who are blind or visually impaired in Iowa and is leading to a more equitable distribution of services.
- Using the Information Management System and Iowa Testing Programs, personnel developed a structure for the reporting of outcome data for students served by the Statewide System for Vision Services. The system will be in place for the 2009-2010 school year and will allow for improved gathering, analyzing and reporting of educational information.
- Through reorganization of services, the creation of critical teacher and consultant positions available statewide in the areas of orientation and mobility, math, literacy and additional disabilities, we expanded the opportunities available to students in academic areas directly linked to future success.
- The filling of a critical leadership position with the employment of a Regional Director to support the implementation of the Statewide system for Vision Services on the west side of the state.
- The employment of 17 teachers transferring from the Area Education Agencies to the Statewide System for Vision Services over the last two years.

Attachment B2 the Strategic Plan Summary of Progress Report, details the programs and services developed and implemented or awaiting summer implementation to continue progress in achieving the goals developed by the Coordinating Council and approved by the Board of Regents.

**Attachment B1**

**A Summary of Progress  
July 2008 – June 2009**

**Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School**

**A Statewide System for Vision Services in Iowa**

1. Provide equitable access to a continuum of high quality services for all students in Iowa who are blind and visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities:
  - 1.1 More than 400 children and students birth to age twenty-one who are blind or visually impaired received services ranging from direct instruction on a daily basis in Braille and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) to periodic consultations as needed. Service areas have been blended with the creation of the Statewide System for Vision Services to accomplish this goal.
  - 1.2 Newly created faculty positions and or a change in roles and responsibilities include the positions of Literacy Consultant, two regional Low Vision Specialists, a Transition Specialist and a Consultant for Additional Disabilities. Dedicating people to these roles has allowed for the creation of training and support for those working directly with students in the areas of literacy, low vision, transition and students with additional disabilities.
  - 1.3 The early childhood consultant position continues to be devoted to providing assistance in the identification and provision of services to newly identified children who are blind or visually impaired. This position collaborates with a family services specialist and with related positions in the Area Education Agencies and Department of Education to provide networking opportunities and trainings for parents.
  - 1.4 Consultation and technical assistance is available to school districts and area education agencies to develop and improve successful strategies for students who are blind or visually impaired with severe multiple disabilities, including those who are deafblind, so that these students can be integrated into their local district special education programs.
  - 1.5 In collaboration with the AEA's, Easter Seals Camp Sunnyside, Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) and Iowa School for the Deaf, fourteen (14) regional programs are being held in the summer of 2009 for students who are blind or visually impaired. The programs include:
    - 1.5.1 Camp Explore is for any school age students, June 14-19, at Camp Sunnyside.

- 1.5.2 Game of life is for high school eligible students, June 8-10, at Iowa Department for the Blind.
  - 1.5.3 Camp Sunnyside O&M Week is for students entering grades 6-12<sup>th</sup>, June 14-19, at Camp Sunnyside.
  - 1.5.4 Summer Break is for students 15-18 years old, June 15-17, at the Iowa Department for the Blind.
  - 1.5.5 Exporing Our World is for students entering grades 1-5<sup>th</sup>, June 22-26, at an area school in Des Moines.
  - 1.5.6 Be Creative is for students ages 6-14 who are in the general curriculum, June 21-July 2, on the campus of the Iowa Braille School.
  - 1.5.7 Keys Career is for high school age students, June 22-24, on the campus at the Iowa Department for the Blind.
  - 1.5.8 Mission Impossible is for high school age students, June 29-July 1, at the Iowa Department for the Blind.
  - 1.5.9 Showbiz Camp is for students twelve and older age students, July 5-17, on the campus at Iowa Braille School.
  - 1.5.10 Early Childhood Program is for children 4 and 5 years old transitioning to kindergarten, July 13-31, in an area school in Cedar Rapids.
  - 1.5.11 Blast Off is for students in grades 3-8, July 19-24, designed around NASA Lunar Nautics program and offered at the Iowa School for the Deaf.
  - 1.5.12 Summer Blitz is for high school students, July 20-22, on the campus of the Iowa Department for the Blind.
  - 1.5.13 Camp Abilities of Iowa is for students ages 8-15, July 26-31, on the campus of the Iowa Braille School.
  - 1.5.14 Girls' Night Out is for students of any age, August 7-8, in the Waterloo area.
- 1.6 The Statewide System for Vision Services has offered expanded learning opportunities for children and students across the state to meet the needs of the core curriculum and the Expanded Core Curriculum. Opportunities have included:
- 1.6.1 The 2009 Iowa Braille Challenge was held on January 24 in Des Moines. The Braille Challenge competition is part of a national program from the Braille Institute of America, Inc. This event was co-hosted by IBS and the Library of the Iowa Department for the Blind.
  - 1.6.2 The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Goalball Conference Tournament was held in St. Louis, Missouri on November 14-16 with a team from Iowa participating.
  - 1.6.3 Christmas Gift Ideas for parents was offered in Council Bluffs on adaptive equipment, technology equipment and independent living tools.
  - 1.6.4 Iowa teams participated and competed with other state schools for blind or visually impaired in track and field, swimming and forensics.

- 1.6.5 A three weekend student training program in Magnetism and Electricity was held on the campus of Iowa Braille School in February-April for students from across the state.
  - 1.6.6 The Iowa Braille School hosted Prom Weekend 2009 on the campus in Vinton in May. Students with visual impairments, 14-21 years old, are invited to participate in the banquet, dance, after prom activities, goalball, cookout, and the Joe Beringer Annual Corvette Car Rally.
2. Assure an adequate supply of highly trained teachers and orientation and mobility specialists;
    - 2.1 For the 2009-2010 school year 14 additional teachers of the visually impaired will have completed the transfer of employment from the Area Education Agencies to the Statewide System for Vision Services per the agreement with the AEAs for the employment of teachers with the Statewide System for Vision Services.
    - 2.2 The Teacher of the Visually Impaired teacher training program was reinstated at the University of Northern Iowa with the Statewide System for Vision Services partnering in the development and implementation of the program.
    - 2.3 To meet the need for high quality and equitable access to services, the Statewide System for Vision Services employed three additional Orientation and Mobility Specialists to serve in rural areas of the state.
  3. Assure adequate and professional supervision, ongoing professional development and equitable job assignments for professionals working with blind and visually impaired students:
    - 3.1 Two regional summer institutes for professional development were conducted focusing on accommodations for the student with visual impairment in the areas of technology, independent living skills, and performance monitoring of individual education plan goals. The model of regional training continues to allow access to professionals across Iowa. Plans are complete for the summer of 2009.
    - 3.2 A Fall Vision Conference was held in West Des Moines on October 5-7 for parents, professionals and paraprofessionals of children and students who are blind or visually impaired. A primary focus was on literacy development and instruction.
    - 3.3 A Spring Vision Conference titled "Imagine the Possibilities" was held in Des Moines April 17-19, 2009, with a primary focus on parent and family information. The conference reached more families than any prior year conference event.
    - 3.4 A statewide ICN training series session: Abacus Lessons for TVIs and Paraprofessionals was held from January through April.
    - 3.5 The content and methods for common standards-based evaluation in compliance with Iowa teaching standards specified in Iowa Code 284.3 continues to be used as the evaluation method for all teachers of the visually impaired and certified orientation and mobility specialists.

4. Eliminate duplication in service delivery by creating a seamless coordinated system of services to blind and visually impaired students across multiple funding sources and agencies responsible for this population;
  - 4.1 A Management Team for the Statewide System for Vision Services in Iowa for children who are blind and visually impaired has been created to provide leadership in the coordination of services, leverage funding, and create expertise and opportunities from all available resources.

The members are: Patrick Clancy, IBSSS Superintendent/Administrator; Lana Michelson, Iowa Department of Education Director of Student and Family Support Services; Laurabelle Sherman-Proehl, Iowa Department of Education Director of Early Childhood Services; Glenn Grove, Loess Hills Area Education Agency Chief Administrator; Karen Keninger, Director of the Iowa Department for the Blind; and Randy Allison, Heartland AEA 11 Director of Special Education. The Management Team meets monthly at the Iowa Department for the Blind in Des Moines and provides leadership to the implementation of the Statewide System for Vision Services.
  - 4.2 In cooperation with the Department of Education professional learning opportunities, for improving academic and functional outcomes for students who are multiply impaired, including students who are blind or visually impaired or deafblind, were offered including Routines and Calendars; Communication Strategies; and Every Move Counts.
  - 4.3 The Statewide System for Vision Services and Iowa Department for the Blind staff continue to work together toward a collaborative referral process that will ensure joint transition planning when students who are blind or visually impaired reach age fourteen. Teachers have received training on the referral process and have implemented the model
  - 4.4 The Iowa Department for the Blind and Iowa Braille School personnel continue to work to join library collections into one accessible program in order to streamline the process used by people that require an alternate format to access the collections.
5. Maintain a center of excellence in Iowa for discipline specific expertise at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS).
  - 5.1 An agreement has been reached with the Vinton-Shellsburg school district for the placement of two classrooms on their campus with instructional and support personnel from Iowa Braille School. The agreement will lead to improved integration opportunities for students and the development of demonstration classrooms.
  - 5.2 Received accreditation from the North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA) following a self study, interview and site visit observation review process.
  - 5.3 The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) has been aligned with the Vinton-Shellsburg School District curriculum and the Iowa Core Curriculum.
  - 5.4 The Old Main facility has been redesigned to serve as a center for the state for consultation services, library services in partnership with the Department for the Blind and assistive technology services.

- 5.5 Regarding the campus buildings in Vinton, beginning on July 8, 2008, AmeriCorps NCCC moved a residential site operation to the campus of the Iowa Braille School. There have been 150 Corps members and Corps member leaders, along with 14 administrative staff sharing the campus, occupying Palmer Hall, Rice Hall, the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor north of Old Main and utilizing, as needed, the recreation building, auditorium and cafeteria. The first year of shared campus resulted in an excellent addition to the campus and plans are underway for the likely expansion of AmeriCorps NCCC into the Cottage and Hospital buildings.

Attachment B2

PREFERRED FUTURE FOR VISION SERVICES IN IOWA

Developed by the Coordinating Council for Vision Services in 2005-2006

A Preferred Future for Vision Services in Iowa will be characterized by:

- A. Providing appropriate training and support for general education classroom and special education teachers, administrators and AEA staff who work with students who are blind or visually impaired.

We would know this is occurring if:

1. Qualitative assessments, such as repeating the survey of parents and providers conducted as part of the needs assessment data for the Coordinating Council, are completed periodically and showed greater satisfaction.
  2. General education and special education teachers demonstrated greater confidence and competence while working with blind and visually impaired students.
  3. All paraprofessionals were provided training using state of the art technology.
  4. Students who are blind or visually impaired are identified and receive appropriate identification services as early as possible and focused training is provided for LEA teams for newly identified BVI1 children.
  5. Teachers held appropriate expectations for achievement and student achievement increases.
  6. Performance evaluation of TVIs<sup>2</sup> and COMs<sup>3</sup> is tied to professional development.
- B. Using regional centers to provide access to the expanded core curriculum (life skills) and to eliminate geographical differences in the distribution of resources.

We would know this is occurring if:

1. Each BVI student had access to intensive training in the expanded core curriculum (ECC) within a one-hour drive of his or her home.
2. Students resided within their home communities while accessing services from regional centers, including weekend and evening support and transportation.
3. There was evidence of participation in regional centers by parents, families, teachers and administrators.

4. BVI students received intensive, age appropriate training in expanded core curriculum on an ongoing basis throughout K-12 as documented on their individual education plans (IEPs).
  5. TVIs and COMs spend less of their time in travel, and more in planning, consulting and teaching.
- C. Maximizing skill development in activities for daily living, literacy, social skills, and travel skills.

We would know this is occurring if:

1. Objective assessments of BVI students indicate that students have achieved age appropriate levels of skill development in each of the nine areas of ECC and are able to compete with their similar sighted peers in classroom and extracurricular activities.
  2. One year after graduation from high school, BVI students are as successfully employed or in higher education, live as independently, participate in the community and are as personally satisfied as similar sighted peers.
  3. Students are taught and use the most effective array of visual and non visual skills.
  4. Objective assessments of these skills are based on statewide standardized benchmarks of achievement jointly developed and endorsed by the education system, adult services and blindness communities.
  5. All TVIs are fully competent in reading, writing and teaching Braille.
- D. Centralizing administration and coordination of service providers, assistive technology, and regional centers to allow for the allocation of available resources to achieve maximum effectiveness.

We would know this is occurring if:

1. There was a structure in place that facilitates the coordination of services and leverages funding, expertise and opportunities from all available resources, including the Iowa Department for the Blind.
2. Evidence of coordination of services can be seen on the IEPs with the roles of the various partners clearly defined and nonduplicative.
3. TVIs and COMs throughout the state are hired, trained, equipped, supported, allocated, supervised, and evaluated by a central administrative agency.
4. A full continuum of services, including residential options that are flexible and targeted is supported by the coordination of services.

5. A document or tool is in place that will navigate the system for use by parents, the medical profession, educators, Department of Human Services personnel, and others who would find it useful.
  6. System redesign leads to student outcomes that rival the performance of similar students without BVI. The system operates more economically and without geographic bias.
- E. Coordinating comprehensive transition to adulthood services with the Iowa Department for the Blind.

We would know this is occurring if:

1. The Iowa Department for the Blind and IBSSS developed a plan to create a unified philosophy of blindness, their respective programs were complementary, and personnel in all systems valued the expertise and contributions of their counterparts.
  2. Parents viewed the education system and the Iowa Department for the Blind as partners, working together to achieve a unified goal of success and independence for students.
  3. IEPs reflect goals related to transition.
- F. Expanded early intervention services for birth through age 3 which focuses on families, communication and social skill development.

We would know this is occurring if:

1. Parents of infants and young children had early experiences with regional centers and reported satisfaction with the assistance and support found there. This assistance and support is characterized by recognition that parents and family are the first, best and most influential teacher for any child, that critical foundational socialization, personality, and skill development occurs during this time, and that most families have little or no experience of blindness or visual impairment.
2. Early screening, evaluation and diagnosis would be available through the medical community with results reported to appropriate service providers. Follow-up was provided in all cases through the redesigned system of coordinated services.
3. Professional development regarding BVI is provided to Early Access teachers.