

**Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School
DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT
October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004**

The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School continues to offer equal employment opportunities regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, physical, or mental disabilities to all qualified applicants. The school practices affirmative action in its programs, procurement and employment practices. The Iowa Braille School also continues to be in compliance with Section 504. See Appendix A.

Recognizing the need for employees to be well trained and informed, the Iowa Braille School provides organized training and in-service programs for all employees in many diverse areas. Annually the school sponsors training for all staff in bloodborne pathogen safety. Mandatory reporter training is offered in compliance with child abuse reporting policy and procedure. Systems of Intervention training is provided for all staff to ensure student and staff safety. School Assistants continue to be encouraged to complete a 32 semester hour course in disability services offered through Kirkwood Community College. School Assistants are also encouraged to complete the new state certification for paraprofessionals. Para-educators must bring certification of completion of a 32 semester disabilities program or its equivalent as a minimum entry qualification. The Para-educators also completed a course designed by Kirkwood Community College in a collaborative effort with the Iowa Braille School to certify the Para-educators with the new state certification for paraprofessionals. A professional classification continues to be in place allowing the school to employ professionals to work directly with students in the dormitory setting. Faculty members have been encouraged to seek additional certifications in orientation and mobility, multi-disabilities, vision, and consulting. The school is also providing leadership in presenting Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired (QPVI), a program designed to improve the teaching that students receive. QPVI is offered in the AEAs and on-campus. The faculty on campus are in the third year of the QPVI process. The AEA's vary from being in the first year to being in the third year of the process. The QPVI program has been so successful that currently the designer of the program is working with the School for the Deaf to design a similar process for their use.

As of September 30, 2004, there were 109 permanent employees. Of these, there are 95 full-time and 14 part-time employees. This report does not include people employed on a temporary basis or as substitutes. During this time period, of the 109 employees, 81 are female, 108 are Caucasian, and one female is Hispanic. We have not asked our staff to disclose any physical disabilities. Of 17 Teachers of the Visually Impaired, three are blind or visually impaired. Two are female and one is male. Retention of female staff is not a problem for the school.

Growth in faculty numbers continues as Area Education Agencies (AEAs) contract with the Iowa Braille School to expand services to children who are blind or visually impaired. The majority of the AEAs contract with the Iowa Braille School for the provision of itinerant vision services and Orientation and Mobility services.

A goal was set for the 03/04 year of hiring two minority staff. In setting the goal, we anticipated a faculty vacancy and a vacancy in the Para-educator classification. Efforts to recruit minority candidates include the use of the Internet and listing positions both in national publications and with Iowa Workforce Development. Positions are also posted in Cedar Rapids at the Jane Boyd Community House and the Catherine McAuley Center and in Waterloo at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.

Although we have used the resources available to us to recruit minorities, we have been unable to attract a pool of minority applicants. The school's application continues to include an optional page where

candidates may choose to self-identify race, sex and/or disability. Many applicants choose not to complete this information. The economics of commuting appear to affect the application pool for on-campus positions. The lack of a support base in the community of Vinton itself for living arrangements is also a problem in recruiting both professional and paraprofessional applicants. Nationally, there is not a pool of minority candidates graduating in higher education from the vision and orientation and mobility programs. In spite of the problems, efforts continue to be directed at establishing a pool of minority applicants. The school is a strong proponent of diversity and we desire to have a diverse staff. We will continue to try to create a more diverse workforce. We are particularly hopeful about our recruitment relationship with Kirkwood Community College as a source for finding qualified paraprofessional candidates, both minorities and males as well as female candidates.

Through collaborative efforts with the Board of Regents, the Iowa Braille School and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), the university began a master's level teacher preparation program in vision in January of 2004. This has created the opportunity to recruit minorities from Iowa to the teacher training program. This may have a long-range impact in the ability to produce and employ Teachers of the Visually Impaired of a diverse background.

The following chart, notes the Diversity Goals of the Iowa Braille School projected for the period of October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005.

**Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School
DIVERSITY ACTION GOAL
October 1, 2004 - September 30, 2005**

IBSSS	Number of Projected <u>Vacancies</u>	Numerical Goals:	
		<u>Women</u>	<u>Minorities</u>
01 Exec/Admin/Mgr	1	1	0
02 Faculty	1	0	0
04 Professional	1	0	1
05 Secretarial/clerical	0	0	0
06 Technical/Paraprofessionals	0	0	0
07 Skilled Crafts	not applicable (not using)		
<u>08 Service/Maintenance</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	4	2	2

APPENDIX A: Section 504 Compliance

**EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS
AT THE IOWA BRAILLE SCHOOL**

The Iowa Braille School will not discriminate in its educational activities on the basis of: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or marital status.

The Iowa Braille School requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity.

The Iowa Braille School is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person will be excluded from educational activities on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, age, national origin, or disability. Further, Iowa Braille School affirms the right of all students and staff to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and harassment.

Harassment or discriminatory behavior that denies civil rights or access to equal educational opportunities includes comments, name-calling, physical conduct or other expressive behavior directed at an individual or group that intentionally demeans the race, color, religion, national origin, sex or disability of the individual or individuals or creates an intimidating, hostile or demeaning environment for education.

Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. §§ 1221 et seq. (1988).
20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq. (1988).
20 U.S.C. §§ 1701 et seq. (1988).
42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq. (Supp. 1990).
34 C.F.R. Pt. 100 (1993).
Iowa Code §§ 216.9; 256.11, .11A; 280.3 (1995).
281 I.A.C. 12.

SECTION 504 NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Students, parents, employees and others doing business with or performing services for the Iowa Braille School are hereby notified that this school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status or disability in admission or access to, or treatment in, its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the school's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), § 504 or Iowa Code § 280.3 is directed to contact:

Director of Education
Iowa Braille School
Old Main, Room 130
1002 G Avenue
Vinton, IA 52349
319/472-5221,ext. 1130

OR

Director of Human Resources
Iowa Braille School
Old Main, Room 104
1002 G Avenue
Vinton, IA 52349
319/472-5221, ext. 1104

who have been designated by the school to coordinate the school's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the IDEA, the ADA, § 504 and Iowa Code 280.3.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Grievances based upon claims of discrimination based upon disability pursuant to §504 shall follow the procedures set forth in §3.30 of the Iowa Braille School Employee Handbook, with the §504 Coordinator taking the place of the Affirmative Action Officer.

(See Attachment A; §3.30 Grievance Procedure Under Affirmative Action: Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Sex, Age, Handicap, Title IX, Sexual Harassment)

In addition to or instead of the grievance procedures, students and their parents may also have a right to pursue an impartial hearing.

**GRIEVANCE FORM FOR COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION
OR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL OR STATE REGULATIONS
REQUIRING NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Date(s) of incident: _____

Person(s) involved:

Describe the incident or occurrence as accurately as possible:
(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

State the law, policy, or regulation violated, if known:

Specify the relief being sought:

Signature _____ Today's date _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

If Student, Name _____ Grade Level _____

GRIEVANCE DOCUMENTATION: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Name of Individual Alleging Discrimination or Non-Compliance

Name _____

Date formal grievance was filed _____

Attach a copy of the grievance.

Hearing Committee Findings and Recommendations:

- 1) State the validity of the grievance or complaint;
- 2) whether the grievant was indeed wronged and if so, to what degree;
- 3) statement as to the appropriateness of the relief sought by the grievant

Signature of Affirmative Action Officer
or of §504 Coordinator _____ / _____

(date)

Disposition of the Grievance: The Affirmative Action Officer or §504 Coordinator shall submit committee findings and recommendations to the Superintendent for final action within five days of the close of the hearing. In the event the Superintendent is indicated in the Committee's proceedings, the Committee's findings, without recommendations, shall be forwarded to the President of the Board of Regents.

The Superintendent shall render a written decision within twenty-five (25) days of receipt of the Hearing Committee recommendations. The decision shall be mailed by ordinary mail or delivered to the Hearing Committee members, and to both parties to the grievance and their advisors.

SECTION 504 STUDENT AND PARENTAL RIGHTS

The Iowa Braille School does not discriminate in its educational programs and activities on the basis of a student's disability. It has been determined that your child has a qualifying disability for which accommodations may need to be made to meet his or her individual needs as adequately as the needs of other students. As a parent, you have the right to the following:

- participation of your child in school programs and activities, including extracurricular programs and activities, to the maximum extent appropriate, free of discrimination based upon the student's disability and at the same level as students without disabilities;
- receipt of free educational services to the extent they are provided students without disabilities;
- receipt of information about your child and your child's educational programs and activities in your native language;
- notice of identification of your child as having a qualifying disability for which accommodations may need to be made and notice prior to evaluation and placement of your child and right to periodically request a re-evaluation of your child;
- inspect and review your child's educational records including a right to copy those records for a reasonable fee; you also have a right to ask the school to amend your child's educational records if you feel the information in the records is misleading or inaccurate; should the school refuse to amend the records, you have a right to a hearing and to place an explanatory letter in your child's file explaining why you feel the records are misleading or inaccurate;
- hearing before an impartial hearing officer if you disagree with your child's evaluation or placement; you have a right to counsel at the hearing and have the decision of the impartial hearing officer reviewed.

Inquiries concerning the school's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, the IDEA, the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA), § 504 or Iowa Code §280.3 should be directed to:

Director of Education
Iowa Braille School
1002 G Avenue
Vinton, IA 52349
319/472-5221,ext. 1102

OR

Director of Human Resources
Iowa Braille School
1002 G Avenue
Vinton, IA 52349
319/472-5221,ext. 1104

who have been designated by the school to coordinate the school's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, the ADA, § 504 and Iowa Code 280.3.

IMPARTIAL HEARING PROCEDURE

Hearings under this procedure are available with respect to actions regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of persons who, because of handicap need, or are believed to need, special instruction or related services.

1. A hearing is requested by filing a written request with either of the §504 Coordinators.
2. The §504 Coordinator will arrange for a hearing officer.
3. Either the §504 Coordinator or the hearing officer shall give notice of the time and place of the hearing at least 10 calendar days in advance of the hearing.
4. The student's parent or guardian shall have the right to participate in the hearing and all parties shall have the right to be represented by counsel, at their own expense.
5. A request for continuance may be made by either party to the hearing officer.
6. At least seven calendar days before the hearing, the hearing officer shall hold a telephone conference with the parties, and their counsel or representatives, to clarify issues, discuss procedure and address any other matters relevant to the hearing.
7. At least five calendar days before the hearing, each party shall provide to the other party a copy of the exhibits they intend to use at the hearing and a list of witnesses they intend to call.
8. The hearing shall be closed to the public unless a written waiver is signed by the parent or guardian of the student involved.
9. The hearing shall be an informal rather than formal judicial procedure. The party requesting the hearing shall proceed first. Both parties shall have the right to present evidence and argument on all issues involved and to challenge and cross-examine any statement made by others and to present evidence in rebuttal.
10. The hearing shall be recorded by either mechanized means or by certified court reporter.
11. The hearing officer's decision shall be based upon substantial evidence which is such evidence a reasonable mind would find adequate to reach the decision made.
12. The parties or their representatives shall not communicate directly or indirectly in connection with any issue of fact or law with the hearing officer except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate.
13. The decision of the hearing officer shall be in writing and shall be mailed to all parties, or their counsel or representative within 15 calendar days following the close of the record.
14. Either party who is aggrieved by the decision of the hearing officer shall have a right to seek review of that decision to the Board of Regents by giving written notice to the Executive Director of the Board within seven calendar days of the date of the hearing officer decision is issued.
15. The Executive Director shall docket the request for review for consideration by the Board as soon as practicable. The Board may, in its discretion, grant or deny the request for review. If the Board grants the request for review on the merits, it shall then determine in its sole discretion whether or not to hold a further hearing and otherwise specify the procedure to be followed. The Executive Director shall promptly notify the person requesting review and the school in writing of the Board's decision.
16. The decision of the Board is final and judicial review as permitted by law may then follow.