

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

IBSSS MONTHLY REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the IBSSS monthly report.

Executive Summary: IBSSS continues to address the implementation of the Task Force recommendations especially in light of the three key areas that are guiding the work of the School in 2007-08:

- ◆ Finalize cooperative agreements among the Board of Regents, Department of Education, area education agencies, and the Department for the Blind to develop a statewide service delivery system for students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.
- ◆ Continue to improve efficiency and effectiveness of services supported by the Vinton site faculty and staff, including continued development of flexible and innovative services delivered in regional locations as needed and continue work with Iowa State University to finalize recommendations for efficient use of physical facilities in concert with the feasibility study.
- ◆ Develop and implement a comprehensive professional development plan that will provide all Iowa service providers, including the IBSSS faculty and staff, with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute effectively to the continuous improvement of services to children who are blind or visually impaired and their families.

The following describe the School's activities during November – December 2007:

- ◆ Sara Larkin, Math Specialist with the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, began teaching abacus classes to teachers throughout Iowa. The classes are taught over the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) and are offered for college credit through Drake University and Morningside College and for teacher recertification credit through Grant Wood Area Education Agency. The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School provides books and abaci to participants at no cost to them. Thirty-one teachers and paraprofessionals are participating in these classes. Due to a high demand, a second set of classes will be offered starting in the spring. Current classes were held November 30, 2007 and December 14, 2007. Two classes are scheduled in January 2008.
- ◆ IBSSS provided support to the University of Northern Iowa's advertising efforts to recruit an assistant professor for their graduate program to train Teachers of the Visually Impaired. The School listed the position opening in November 2007 and December 2007 in the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Job Exchange, a national publication.

- ◇ Due to the generosity of the Cedar Rapids Corvette Club, the School was able to purchase fitness equipment for students attending programs on campus. The equipment includes a treadmill, elliptical machine, recumbent bicycle, and bosu trainer exercise ball.
- ◇ A math, science, and technology day was held in Council Bluffs in November 2007 in partnership with the University of Northern Iowa. Three students, two parents, and two teachers attended and participated in activities which helped them learn about bones, measurement, graphing, and using technology including a Braille Note. Photographs are provided on page 3.
- ◇ Continued discussions in November – December 2007 with the AEA Directors of Special Education regarding the recommendation that all teachers of the visually impaired and certified orientation and mobility specialists be employed by a central administrative agency. Interim Superintendent Jeananne Schild scheduled discussions with area education agencies.
- ◇ Low Vision Clinics were held in Cedar Rapids and Bettendorf in November 2007. Thirteen students were evaluated at the Cedar Rapids clinic and nine at the Bettendorf clinic. The purpose of low vision services is to help children with low vision see the best that they can. Services are provided at no cost to parents or schools and include:
 - ☑ Clinical vision examinations;
 - ☑ Functional vision examinations;
 - ☑ Analyses of an appropriate reading medium;
 - ☑ Follow-up in the home and school;
 - ☑ Referrals for further diagnostic exams;
 - ☑ Consultations for classroom adaptations;
 - ☑ Vision screening of children who are difficult to test;
 - ☑ Low vision device loaner program;
 - ☑ Assistance with low vision device purchases; and
 - ☑ Referrals for orientation and mobility assessment.
- ◇ On November 17, 2007, an event day was held for children and families in Cedar Rapids, for those living in the Grant Wood AEA area. Five children and their families attended, for a total of 16 people. The theme was technology. Presentations included Window Eyes and organizational skills. In addition, one student presented her portfolio with a Power Point presentation. This new program meets monthly on the third Saturday of each month and creates a format for disseminating information to parents, children and siblings. It was provided by the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School Early Childhood Specialist in collaboration with Grant Wood AEA staff.
- ◇ A planning meeting was held with Camp Sunnyside staff to plan future collaborative services for students who are blind or visually impaired.

- ❖ On December 19, 2007, the Vinton Lions Club sponsored an annual Christmas party for the students enrolled at the Vinton campus. Students and staff joined the Lions Club at the Vinton Country Club. In addition to the meal, students received presents and visited with Santa. Photos are available on the School's website at www.iowa-braille.k12.ia.us
- ❖ An ICN session was held in December 2007 on Transition Planning with the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School and the Iowa Department for the Blind. This ICN workshop was designed to assist in the referral process to Iowa Department for the Blind services for students who are blind or visually impaired.

**Math, Science and Technology Activity Day in Council Bluffs, Iowa
November 17, 2007**



James uses the tactile tape measure to measure the tibia bone.



Sara Larkin assists James to find the temperature of the water in the cup.



Dr. Greg Stefanich helps James, Tyler and Cassie explore and learn about the human skeleton.



Rosa Mauer works with Cassie & Tyler on the SARA (Scanning and Reading Appliance)



Rosa Mauer instructs Cassie, Tyler & James to use a recipe and measuring cups to make a snack.

This monthly report will be submitted to the Government Oversight Committee to meet the requirements of SF 588.