



DUPAGE/WEST COOK GOVERNING BOARD BOARD BRIEFS

November 15, 2018 Quarterly Meeting

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Orientation & Mobility (O & M)

Kirstin Peahl, Orientation & Mobility Specialist, Vision Program gave an in-depth presentation on O&M services, which include the concepts, skills & techniques that individuals with visual impairments use to travel through the environment. **Orientation** is the awareness of one's position in space. **Mobility** is how one moves through that space. O&M specialists are knowledgeable & skilled professionals who teach individuals with visual impairments to travel as independently as possible in both familiar & unfamiliar settings.

O&M skills give individuals the freedom to participate in all facets of society. O&M is designated as a related service in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) & a service under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. O&M instruction promotes movement, & facilitates the development of concepts, skills & knowledge required for individuals to achieve their present & future employment & life goals. O&M instruction occurs in natural environments, the real-world settings in which individuals live, learn, work, play, interact & travel. Instructional settings include indoor & outdoor school, home & community environments.

O&M specialists serve the diverse population of individuals with visual impairments, including:

- individuals who are totally blind & those who have low vision
- people of all ages, from birth to old age
- people with adventitious (acquired) or congenital visual impairments
- individuals who have electronic retinal prostheses
- individuals with any disabilities in addition to visual impairment
- individuals with cerebral/cortical visual impairment
- individuals from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds
- individuals across the continuum of functional, developmental & intellectual ability

O&M specialists are responsible for, which includes some problem identification:

- **Assessment:** conducting initial & ongoing comprehensive assessments (including functional low vision & environmental assessments) of travel skills & needs; must be conducted by a qualified O&M specialist & updated with changes in vision, transitions in environment, and as dictated by individual needs. O&M lacks standardized testing because levels of vision vary, similar environments are not the same & technology advances are giving false positives.
- **Planning & Instruction:** designing & adapting lessons, selecting training environments, providing one-on-one instruction based on individuals' current & future needs, & integrating content from other areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum. Vision students are successful in academics, which is why there is a high graduation rate in the Vision world.
- **Collaboration:** referral to other education, healthcare & rehabilitation professionals, & collaborating with various individuals during screening, assessment, referral, program planning, consultation & service provision. There is a lack of emphasis on functional skills as in daily living skills (ADL) & vocational needs.
- **Advocacy & Community Education:** advocating with & on behalf of individuals with visual impairments for accessible travel environments & equal access to information & provision of in-service (staff) training or public education. Vision students are not gaining employment, which is why there is an 80% unemployment rate in the Vision world.



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- **Service to the Profession:** engaging in intern supervision, mentorship, leadership & research.

Some solutions to the identified problems:

- Improve O&M, ADL & the Transition program
- Stay involved with current field assessments & research (birth – 6)
- Stay current in the field of O&M

CASE Itinerant Services Overview

Mindy Long, Itinerant Services Administrator for CASE gave a thorough overview of the hearing, vision & O&M services provided by CASE. They provide Vision & O&M services throughout 72 districts & 143 schools, & Hearing services throughout 64 districts & 240 schools.

There are critical shortages in certified Hearing, Vision & O&M itinerant teachers, & recruitment has become difficult. Illinois State University (ISU) offers a shortened TVI certification program of 24 credits with no master's program. Federal grants are minimal with no grants available for O&M. There is no shortened programming available for DHH certification.

CASE has a fully staffed collaborative team of itinerant teachers. They mentor each other; have productive learning teams; conduct area-wide Itinerant meetings; & continue to pursue professional development.

Notification of services from Illinois School for the Deaf & Illinois School for the Visually Impaired – Public Act 093-0282 amended the School Code by changing Section 14-8-02 to read:

“If the child is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired & he/she ***might*** be eligible to receive services from the Illinois School for the Deaf or the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired, the school district shall notify the parents/guardian, in writing, of the existence of these schools & the services they provide. This notification shall include ***without limitation*** information on school services, school admissions criteria & school contact information.”

The Illinois Department of Human Services has developed a **one-page fact sheet which includes all the mandated information** regarding each of these schools. Districts are encouraged to provide this fact sheet to the parents/guardians of each student with a primary disability label of hearing impairment or visual impairment **at the IEP meeting**.

Visual Impairment means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight & blindness. Districts are currently utilizing criteria for VI eligibility. – Criteria Considerations

The student exhibits at least one of the following:

- Central visual acuity loss of 20/70 or less in the better eye after routine &/or conventional correction.
- Reduced visual field to 50 degrees or less in the better eye.
- Medically diagnosed cortical visual impairment.
- Other ocular pathologies that are permanent and irremediable.
- Neurological visual impairment.
- Degenerative ocular condition, which is likely to result in significant visual loss & warrants early educational intervention from a licensed teacher of the visually impaired.
- A temporary condition, such as post-operative retinal detachment, occlusion treatment during the school year, etc. that requires temporary intervention from a licensed teacher of the visually impaired.
- Visual impairment such that the child cannot develop his/her educational potential without special services &/or materials.



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- Restricted field vision.
- Serious progressive eye difficulties as noted by an eye specialist on the ocular report.
- Marked education difficulties, which may be attributed to poor use of vision.
- Eye disorders, which appear to be interfering with the student’s academic achievement including:
 - Nystagmus (jerky eye movements)
 - Strabismus (turning of one or both eyes)
 - Other

Enrollment for Low-Incidence Programs

	<u>11/2018</u>	<u>9/2018</u>
SASED DHH PK-8	54	55
LADSE DHH HS	41.5	41
Visually Impaired	77	80
SASED Transition (Blended)	21	21
LADSE DHH Transition	<u>18.5</u>	<u>20</u>
	212	217

This will be the last time we will be reporting enrollment for the SASED Blended Transition, as the last DWC Lo Incident student is graduating.

Summary of Budgets for Fiscal Agent and Operating Entities

SASED is the fiscal agent for DuPage/West Cook Funds (DWC). This responsibility includes preparing annual budgets for DWC funds, accounting for expenditures (if any) & administering assessments (if any).

In addition to serving as the fiscal agent for DWC, SASED serves as the operating entity for the elementary Deaf/Hard of Hearing program, Vision Program, ESY program & Audiology services program. The budgets for DWC programs operated by SASED are integrated into SASED's budget.

The responsibility as an operating entity for DWC programs is shared with LADSE. The budgets for programs operated by LADSE are integrated into LADSE's budget. LADSE operates the Hinsdale High School Deaf/Hard of Hearing self-contained program & the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Transition program.

Some of the responsibilities assumed by SASED & LADSE as operating entities are:

- Human Resource – hiring, evaluating & supervising program staff; managing worker’s compensation, health insurance & other employee benefits; negotiating contracts with bargaining units.
- Fiscal – program billing, cash collection, payroll & accounts payable; carrying the IMRF reserve for employees hired by the operating entity, but who work in DWC programs; obtaining & maintaining classroom space for programs; budget development & management.
- Programmatic – developing & maintaining the best educational practices for students with disabilities.

The DWC budget is integrated into the LADSE/Hinsdale District #86 & SASED budgets.

SASED budgeted tuition targeted rate of increase is 2.5% due to financial commitments in labor agreements. Projected program tuition rate changes FY19 are:

- DHH 13.7%
- ESY 2.4%
- Vision 2.3%



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Deaf/Hard of Hearing Elementary Classroom Program

The enrollment in the DHH elementary program continues to decline. Next year's enrollment is expected to decline by 9 students for a total enrollment of 49 students. Enrollment in this program peaked at over 150 students & has steadily declined. This decline in enrollment is the result of districts choosing less restrictive environments for their students by including these students in district operated programs, competition from private facilities & the need for alternate placements made by districts due to the long student travel times to SASSED programs. Tuition rate increases reflect the difficulty of minimizing cost due to maintaining veteran staff salaries.

Visually Impaired Classroom Program

This program has had stable enrollments & consistent needs for several years.

SASSED budgeted services targeted rate of increase is 2.5%. Projected service rate changes FY19 are:

- One to One Staff 3.0%
- One to One Interpreters 1.0%
- Audiological Tests N/A

One to One Staff

One to one staff are included in a bargaining unit that was awarded a 3% increase in hourly rates this year. As a result of this wage increase the billing rates will increase.

Diagnostic Testing

The diagnostic testing service has needed to add an audiologist for three days per week. The responsibilities of performing audiology exams, managing equipment needs & providing classroom support could not be met with one full time audiologist. The billing structure was also modified to invoice for follow-up evaluations completed during the year. In the past it was our practice to not account for or invoice follow-up evaluations. The follow-up evaluations will be invoiced at one half of the rate for initial evaluations.

LADSE collaborates with the DHH Program Coordinator at Hinsdale South High School who reviews current & projected staffing needs & brings forward recommendations to LADSE administration. Incoming freshman are also considered for staffing changes to meet student IEP needs.

LADSE projected tuition rate changes FY19 are:

- DHH/Transition 6.8%
- ESY 0.0%

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Secondary Classroom & Transition Program

The increase in overall budget stems from an increase in salary & benefits to all staff, but especially the interpreters, which was an average of 15% hourly rate increase for DHH interpreters. The DHH program has continuously experienced a high turnover rate among interpreters, largely due to the low hourly rate of pay when compared to other districts or cooperatives. To minimize financial liabilities associated with a higher hourly rate, LADSE will offer all new interpreters a fixed health insurance contribution equal to single coverage. Also, additional supplies, equipment & a change in budgeting/billing procedures between LADSE & District 86. A decrease in tuition is anticipated in FY20 due to additional procedures in budgeting/billing between LADSE & District 86.

Summer School Tuition -LADSE

Depending on the staff that works ESY & their individual rate, total costs/rates will vary year-to-year.

Staffing – A reduction of 1.0 FTE is from a change in billing. A 1.0 teacher has always been included in the DHH program but was solely used for District 86 sign language classes.



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Articles of Agreement

The Board agreed to table this discussion, & to create a sub-committee to work out the details of the tentative changes to the DWC Articles of Agreement, which when completed, will be given to the attorney for review and counsel. The committee met for 3 ½ hours on November 27th & are meeting again on December 20th. The expectation is for legal counsel to facilitate the Articles of Agreement changes/updates at the February meeting.

Lease Agreement Update

The proposed lease agreement was shared with both attorneys & all parties are hopeful this should be done for the February meeting.

Other Discussion

Dr. Volpe introduced Dr. Mindy McGuffin as his successor upon his retirement as SASSED's new Executive Director.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Nan Diamond, 630-955-8102, ndiamond@sased.org or Dr. James Gunnell, 708-496-3330, jgunnell@aerosped.org. The next DuPage West Cook Board meeting will be February 14, 2019 at the SASSED Administrative Center, 2900 Ogden Avenue, Lisle, IL 60532.