Moving Ahead

DELAWARE STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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Contents

- Introduction 2
- 3 Context
- Strategic 5 **Planning Process**
- Summit Work 6 Groups
- **Focus Groups** 7
- **Strategic Plan** 8 Highlights

Improvement Areas:

- l: Curriculum, 9 Instruction, & Literacy
- 12 II: Assistive Technology
- 15 III: Pre-Service & Inservice Training
- 17 IV: Transition
- 19 V: Family Engagement & Systems Improvement
- 21 Moving Forward
- 21 Glossary



In February 2015, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2 created a task force to study and provide recommendations regarding the overall education of Delaware students who are blind and visually impaired. This legislative task force was chaired by Senator Bethany Hall-Long. The task force concluded in June 2015 with a report to the 148th General Assembly. The overall findings of the task force identified serious challenges in the provision of optimal educational services to students who are blind and visually impaired in Delaware. Recommendations from the task force included regulatory changes as well as improvements to agency structures and services. As the Department of Education Exceptional Children Resources Work Group (DOE) and the Department of Health and Social Services Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) pursued action on regulatory changes, it became apparent that further deliberation about action steps was needed. In October 2015, DOE and DVI engaged the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies and facilitator Dr. Jerry Petroff to conduct a comprehensive community assessment leading to the development of a statewide strategic plan. The project commenced with a statewide summit which gathered approximately 40 stakeholders in Dover on November 15, 2015. This summit was designed to further articulate the results and recommendations of the task force and initiate the improvement planning process. The planning process identified topical areas to which workgroups were assigned, and a strategic plan emerged over the course of eight months.

The strategic plan outlined in this document summarizes the core outcomes and activities that were developed and validated by the collective members of the planning workgroups and provides a framework to move the state forward in addressing the challenges impacting the education of children who are blind and visually impaired.

ON THE COVERS

Four-year-olds Mila and Mikaila Reto are from Millsboro, Delaware. They attend Pre-Kindergarten at East Millsboro School and participate in Delaware Technical Community College's Early Childhood Assistance Program. Mila and Mikaila love singing, dancing, swimming and having books read to them by their big brother, Peyton. Photos by Ben Szmidt.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

Infants and students who are blind or visually impaired are considered to have a low-incidence disability, and require a very unique set of educational services and supports that must be provided by specially trained professionals. School facilities and curricula are primarily designed for sighted children; thus, children who are blind and visually impaired require significant accommodations that provide equitable access to the general educational opportunities that their sighted peers are receiving. Delaware's challenges in this regard mirror those predominant nationwide: there is a shortage of trained teachers

and specialists (Cross, 2016); access to assistive technology as a means of accommodation is limited (Kelly, 2011); and transition supports are inadequate for equipping students with the skills they need for employment and independent living. Delaware is experiencing similar circumstances for its approximately 300 infants and children who are blind and visually impaired. In addition, an accurate census of students who are blind and visually impaired is elusive because many infants/ students who are blind and visually impaired and have additional disabilities are reported as having multiple disabilities or in another disability category by virtue of their other characteristics

(Cogswell Macy Act HR 3535, 2015).

The 2015 task force identified substantial challenges in the provision of educational services to infants and students who are blind and visually impaired in Delaware: the lack of available teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) and orientation and mobility specialists; the inconsistent involvement of vocational rehabilitation counselors in the transition of students from school to adult life; difficulties in acquiring needed assistive technology, including the absence of technical assistance for implementation; and inconsistent frequency and quality of specialized instruction in Braille and other domains. The task force urged changes to the educational services offered by the Division for



the Visually Impaired (DVI), increased engagement 3) Assistive Technology and 4) Professional of the Delaware Department of Education (and Development and Pre/In-Service Training. This local education agencies), and the creation of other plan specifies desired outcomes and associated mechanisms to improve services to infants and activities designed to assure that all Delaware infants children who are blind and visually impaired. and students who are blind and visually impaired are provided with an appropriate education that leads to successful adult lives reflecting the skills outcomes of a year-long process in which teachers, and knowledge necessary to live independent/ parents, state agency personnel and advocates interdependent lives within the community.

In response, this strategic plan represents the contributed to work groups focused on: 1) Curriculum, Instruction & Literacy, 2) Transition,

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Grounded by the 2015 task force report, stakeholders contributing to the strategic planning process engaged in a series of activities designed to elaborate the issues revealed in the report and identify activities to resolve those issues.





SUMMIT - WORK GROUPS

Summit

substantial amount of qualitative data was On November 10, 2015, stakeholders involved in the generated by the 40+ participants, and a content education of students who are blind and visually analysis suggested that improvements were needed impaired in Delaware gathered at a statewide in four primary areas: summit and participated in group assessment and planning using a process based on the Osborn-Identified Improvement Areas Parnes Approach to Creative Problem Solving¹. A World Café² approach allowed participants to reach a consensus regarding shared values and a commo language to guide the strategic planning process. Participants were asked to describe opportunities and dilemmas regarding the education of infants **Workgroups** and students, assumptions needed to challenge The improvement areas noted above drove the their thinking about the education of students deliberations of four workgroups, which were each who are visually impaired, and themes from these composed of six to eight people representing a variety of roles and perspectives. During the course conversations and new insights.

The summit used the task force findings and recommendations as a basis to initiate the improvement planning process. A series of activities were implemented that afforded opportunities to express individual concerns or positions within a group structure. Fact-finding and impressions/ ideas sessions generated information regarding the current status of services and supports and offered insight into improvement planning efforts. Additional mechanisms gave participants the opportunity to provide individual perspectives relative to identified challenges and solutions outside of the group process.

The activities of the summit were designed to identify prominent themes regarding system challenges, family needs and areas that require better coordination and overall improvement. A

	Area I:	Curriculum, Literacy and Instruction
h	Area II:	Assistive Technology
on	Area III:	Pre-Service & In-Service Training
	Area IV:	Transition

of the project, several outcomes arose that were common across all improvement areas. In addition, outcomes related to family engagement also emerged in all four workgroups as well as through focus groups with families. A fifth improvement area, Family Engagement & Systems Improvement, was added to capture these important ideas.

The workgroups generated a collection of envisioned outcomes related to the improvement areas. These converged in a conceptual pathway toward the stated outcomes. Next, the workgroups identified activities that were likely to lead to the accomplishment of the stated outcomes. These activities were reviewed and reorganized within the context of several combined workgroup meetings and reviewed by a Representative Committee of stakeholders to forge a unified improvement plan.

¹Isaksen, S.G. & Treffinger, D. (2004). Celebrating 50 years of reflective practice: versions of creative problem solving, Journal of Creative Behavior, 38 (2), 75-101.

FOCUS GROUPS

The Center for Disabilities Studies conducted two focus groups with parents of infants, children and youth who are blind and visually impaired in June 2016; sessions were held in Milford and Newark. The focus group interviews utilized a semi-structured interview protocol. Questions addressed the following topics:

- Positive and negative experiences with classroom teachers and TVIs
- Positive and negative experiences with educational curricula, as well as life skills and independent living skills education and training
- Positive and negative experiences with assistive technology
- Positive and negative experiences with vocational rehabilitation and employment
- Thoughts on the interaction among service systems in Delaware, including how they could improve the way they work together to provide comprehensive, high-quality services

Each focus group was facilitated by two individuals: one professional staff member from the Center for Disabilities Studies and one professional facilitator. Prior to engaging in the focus group interviews, participants signed an informed consent document that had been approved by a research oversight body at the University of Delaware. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, they did not have to answer any questions they did not want to, they could choose not to participate, and they could withdraw at any time. Participants were also informed that the focus groups would be audio recorded as a way of ensuring that accurate

information was obtained for analysis. Participants received a \$50 gift card for participating in a focus group.

Primary themes were consistent across both focus groups. Participants shared the following positive experiences:

- Teachers and TVIs are willing and open to learning and listening to parents
- DVI provides an array of services (e.g., eye doctor, TVIs, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists)
- Starting with DVI early helped parents get services they need

Participants articulated the following as primary concerns:

- Inadeguate training and experience of classroom teachers to support students who are blind and visually impaired
- Difficulty understanding the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and roles of agencies
- Need for better coordination/communication among systems that support students who are blind and visually impaired
- General need for better communication between parents, TVIs, and other DVI professionals
- Desire for more information about services and mechanisms for families to connect with one other
- Services and supports vary from district to district and school to school.

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The workgroups collectively endorsed several systemic activities as means to accomplish many of the activities of the plan. These include:

- to accomplish activities.
- Systemic improvements and enhancement of current efforts that include:
 - Development of a Parent Academy to provide families of students who are blind and visually impaired with an introduction to blindness as well as the on-going resources, training and support necessary to nurture their child;
 - Development of a comprehensive system of professional development;
 - Enhancement of current transition efforts that will improve access to post-secondary and employment opportunities;
 - Refinement of the system to evaluate services and professionals.

• Establishment of a new committee of state decision makers that represent key stakeholders and parents. This committee will be critical to the implementation of recommendations within the strategic plan and will be charged with developing timelines, measures and identifying responsible agencies/organizations

IMPROVEMENT AREA I:

Curriculum, Instruction, & Literacy

Outcome A

All Delaware students who are blind and visually impaired regardless of educational classification will be provided Braille literacy instruction unless otherwise indicated as per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations; and students who are receiving their Braille instruction consistent with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) that has been determined by a Learning Media Assessment.

- 1. Provide guidance to LEAs regarding determination of eligibility for Braille instruction and implementation of such instruction. When an IEP team determines that Braille instruction will not be provided, the rationale for that decision must be addressed within the IEP form under Data Considerations.
- 2. Include in the DOE monitoring protocol a mechanism to verify that Braille instruction is provided if that need is indicated under Data Considerations.
- 3. DVI will conduct a Learning Media Assessment (LMA) at least triennially using a uniform protocol that includes a functional vision assessment.



All Delaware students who are blind and visually impaired will receive literacy and numeracy instruction consistent with the Common Core State Standards.

- regarding the following:
 - teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs) for coaching and planning.
 - accommodations.
 - produced and will be communicated to the teacher by the TVI.
- requirements, protocols for collaboration, support and accommodations.

appropriate Expanded Core Curriculum instruction, as appropriate.

- will happen in the home and community.
- DVI will develop and/or adopt a consistent approach to the provision of instruction of the ECC during the school day and at home.

Outcome B

1. Expand the Adapting Curriculum & Classroom Environments for Student Success (ACCESS) Project to include professional development for teachers who serve students who are blind and visually impaired (e.g., tactile symbols, object cues, approaches to handwriting, emergent literacy). 2. The Department of Education (DOE) will provide guidance to local education agencies (LEAs)

• The need to provide the primary general and special education teachers and related service personnel of students who are blind and visually impaired unassigned time to meet with

The need for classroom teachers and other staff to meet with the TVIs prior to the beginning of the school year to review requirements, protocols for collaboration, support and

All print materials, technology and other instructional materials must be provided to the entire class of students at the same time regardless of required alternate format. Required notice for the production of alternate materials reflects the nature of the material being

The need for student access to specialists within school/district (e.g., reading/literacy specialists) and are held to the same standards as their sighted peers.

3. TVIs will meet with the next year's teacher(s) prior to the beginning of the school year to review

Outcome C

All Delaware infants and students who are blind and visually impaired will be provided age

1. DVI will develop and implement, at least triennially, a uniform approach to assessing student need relative to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), unless otherwise indicated.

2. A Parent Academy Training Program will provide parent/guardian instruction in the ECC, training

3. Develop and implement a variety of after-school and summer transition programming to address the ECC needs of students. Content of programming should reflect the varied needs of youth

who are blind and visually impaired and include the expertise of vision related professionals.

IMPROVEMENT AREA I:

Curriculum, Instruction, & Literacy Continued from page 10



Outcome D

All general and special education teachers who teach students who are blind and visually impaired will have access to strategies for teaching the core curriculum content and blindness skills to their students who are blind and visually impaired.

- 1. DVI administration will develop and establish a system to provide professional development to LEAs and Child Development Watch (CDW) staff, involving the DVI staff as trainers.
- 2. Provide professional development on access to school supports to the specialist cadre (literacy, counseling, librarians, art, etc.).
- 3. Establish caseload and schedule criteria for TVIs that reflects time to provide coaching and training for school personnel.

Outcome E

With parental consent, all infants and students who are blind and visually impaired are assessed and provided appropriate Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instruction.

- 1. DOE and DVI will develop a joint memorandum specifying procedures related to securing parental consent for an O&M evaluation.
- 2. Develop informational materials for a wide audience regarding the importance of and approaches to encouraging independent travel using appropriate O&M.
- 3. Increase the number O&M instructors dedicated to education within DVI by securing additional positions.
- 4. Include modules in the Parent Academy promoting appropriate O&M strategies and protocols.

All personnel supporting students who are blind and visually impaired have access to built-in accessibility features and specialized software (e.g., screen readers; braille translation; scanning OCR; electronic book applications, etc.) within State and LEA networks, content delivery systems, databases and devices.

- 1. DOE will develop a policy that would allow for access to the built-in accessibility features of computer hardware and specialized software for all students.
- 2. DOE will add an assurance to each districts' consolidated application for IDEA funds requiring that access is provided for all networks/hardware and/or software required by district students within a timeframe that will not negatively affect students' education.
- 3. Develop and implement a statewide protocol for consideration and assessment of AT needs (e.g. SETT) for students who are blind or visually impaired.
- 4. All IEPs shall be include documentation indicating the actions to ensure ongoing access to the students' assistive technology and the designation of who is responsible for acquisition, implementation and training.
- electronic media.
- and electronic media.
- scope of their responsibilities.

LEAs must be accessible to students who are blind and visually impaired.

- and content that are universally accessible.
- are accessible in all media.

IMPROVEMENT AREA II:

Assistive Technology

Outcome A

5. Develop and disseminate a process map (decision tree) specifying those responsible for the acquisition, implementation and training relative to assistive technology hardware, software and

6. Establish mechanisms for the provision of training and technical assistance to IEP team members (including families, TVIs, and other classroom staff) in the operation and use of devices, software

7. Develop and maintain a database of DVI and LEA assistive technology personnel specifying the

Outcome B

Any materials and/or technology deployed (developed or purchased) by the state and/or

1. Develop policy that requires all LEAs to purchase software, textbooks and other curricula materials

2. Develop and disseminate an inventory of instructional materials currently available in digital format (specifying the formats) as well as an inventory of access software supporting students who are blind and visually impaired (specifying minimum operating system requirements).

3. Develop a video series, which will complement on-site instructional opportunities, for teachers and other professionals that addresses universal accessibility and methods of formatting materials that

IMPROVEMENT AREA II:

Assistive Technology Continued from page 12

Outcome C

All school personnel, including TVIs, who are supporting students who are blind and visually impaired will be able to conduct their administrative and educational responsibilities free of technology barriers.

- 1. Develop and maintain a current list of those in each LEA responsible for access to various aspects of the technology infrastructure (e.g., wireless, schoology).
- 2. TVIs and other appropriate professionals will be provided secured access (e.g. email address) and the ability to utilize their state-issued devices within each of the LEAs in which they provide services.

Outcome D

The roles and responsibilities of DVI and the LEAs are clear relative to the assessment, identification, coordination, implementation and oversight of AT devices and services for infants and students that are blind and visually impaired.

- 1. Develop guidelines that specify the roles and responsibilities of DVI and LEA personnel relative to the assessment, identification, coordination, implementation and oversight of AT devices and services for infants and students that are blind or visually impaired.
- 2. Increase the number of personnel within DVI with sufficient expertise in assistive technology to meet the needs of students who are blind and vision impaired reflected in their IEP.

Outcome E

All assistive technology, software and electronic media needed by students who are blind and visually impaired will be acquired and deployed in a timely manner without unnecessary barriers.

- 1. Explore the viability of developing a statewide Buying Cooperative with the purpose of procurement of software and electronic media.
- 2. Ensure representation by stakeholders from the community that supports students who are blind and visually impaired on statewide assistive technology work groups and committees.



All students who are blind and visually impaired have the devices, services and skills necessary to utilize technology that aligns with their post-secondary goals.

- programming process.
- secondary pursuits.
- considered during the transition IEP process.
- focus on transition from school to adult life.

Outcome F

1. Develop and disseminate guidance to address AT within the transition planning and

2. Conduct a strand within the Statewide Transition Conference that highlights the range of assistive technology available to students who are blind and visually impaired that could be useful in post-

3. DVI transition counselors will ensure that the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is

4. Embed assistive technology assessment and use into all summer and after school programs that

IMPROVEMENT AREA III:

Pre-Service & In-Service Training

Outcome A

Current VI professionals, general and special education teachers, related service personnel and early intervention specialists have access to continuing education that is current, relevant and reflective of evidence-based practice for the education and related services to all students who are blind and visually impaired.

- 1. Develop and implement an annual comprehensive professional development program that meets the needs of TVIs, general and special educators and early intervention specialists related to the education of students who are blind and visually impaired.
- 2. Create and disseminate a course book and/or webpage of professional development opportunities that includes recommendations for general and special education teachers, related services personnel and early intervention specialists.
- 3. Provide professional development opportunities related to the education of students who are blind and visually impaired within existing statewide conferences; provide CEUs when available.
- 4. Develop a dissemination plan to ensure that all families and community professionals are aware of and can access the professional development activities.
- 5. Coordinate with statewide trainers (DHSS, DOE) to advertise professional development opportunities.
- 6. Mandate that TVIs and other DVI professionals participate in statewide professional development on topics deemed appropriate by the DVI principal and employee.



- through the DVI website.
- visually impaired.
- between DOE, DVI and CDW.
- Ed Directors, 619 coordinators).

The State of Delaware has an avenue for individuals to participate in a teacher of the blind and visually impaired (TVI) training program and receive certification consistent with Delaware standards.

- TVIs and include a mechanism for mentoring.
- recognized criteria (e.g., CEC Standards)
- 3. Pursue options for sustainable funding to support scholarships for training and certification of TVIs.



Outcome B

Education professionals, medical professionals and early intervention specialists have knowledge of resources and services for infants and students who are blind and visually

1. Develop a repository of national and state resources and information that can be accessed

2. Create and/or identify materials that can be printed or accessed on the DVI website that reflects resources and information regarding the education of infants and students who are blind and

3. Identify resources and information to be disseminated by other agencies and programs (e.g., Family SHADE, PIC, Disabilities HUB) to their constituencies via websites and other means. 4. Disseminate print and electronic materials regarding early intervention with and education of children who are blind and visually impaired to medical providers through a collaborative effort

5. DVI will provide an annual workshop at staff meetings of both CDW North and CDW South. 6. DVI administration and/or staff will provide information regarding resources and services for the education for students who are blind and visually impaired at state level meetings (e.g., EDs, Spec

Outcome C

1. Develop a teaching certification program that meets the DOE Certification code, offering both online coursework and internships, for existing special education teachers to become certified

2. Review Delaware TVI certification standards every three years to assure they meet nationally

IMPROVEMENT AREA IV:

Transition

Outcome A

All students who are blind and visually impaired will transition from school to adult life with independent and daily living skills related to the Expanded Core Curriculum. Note: the following activities are based on the assumption that students who are blind and visually impaired will have access to 12 month programming.

- 1. Develop or adopt a transition rubric tool that will enable Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to measure student progress.
- 2. A functional vision assessment, a learning media assessment, an assistive technology (AT) assessment and an Expanded Core Curriculum assessment will be led by appropriate professionals before the student's 15th birthday and repeated at age 17 or prior to his/her senior year of school to inform the transition planning process and IEP documentation.
- 3. During years of transition, (14-21), every IEP team will utilize the battery of assessments and transition rubric to determine eligibility for Extended School Year (ESY) services and to determine skills and services to be addressed.
- 4. Develop and implement after-school and summer programming that address the transition needs of students. Content of programming should reflect the varied needs of youth who are blind and visually impaired and include the expertise of vision related professionals.
- 5. Develop a policy mandating that TVIs within the DVI Education Unit make a formal referral to Vocational Rehabilitation when the student reaches 14 years of age; subsequently VR will make referral for outside assessment as appropriate (e.g. Orientation & Mobility, Independent Living, AT) within the first year of transition.
- 6. Enhance the capabilities and resources of DVI's Independent Living (IL) training to address the needs of students and provide the IL Trainers opportunity for skills to be instructed within community-based settings.

Outcome B

All Delaware students who are blind and visually impaired will transition with vocational skills and experience in career exploration and employment.

- 1. Develop a College and Career Ready manual for local education agencies that addresses ways in which students who are blind and visually impaired can participate in the college and career activities afforded to their sighted peers. (e.g., Career Cruising, Career Pathways, College Days, Career Days, Delaware Goes to College). This information will be disseminated through a variety of mechanisms to include statewide transition initiatives, special education directors' meetings, and direct contact with school-based staff.
- 2. Develop and implement or access after-school and/or summer experiences that allow students who are blind and visually impaired- regardless of the extent of their additional disabilities- to

engage in community-based vocational experiences within a customized employment protocol or other supported employment training models.

- 3. DVI will develop and/or facilitate paid internships that students (16-21) can access through an admissions process by forming formal partnerships with businesses and government offices. Protocols to engage students with more complex disabilities should be developed and implemented within the internship program.
- DVIVR will develop and disseminate (to students, parents and school staff) a resource guide on the importance current government benefits.

All Delaware students who are blind and visually impaired have access to college preparatory courses and post-secondary educational experiences (e.g., college, vocational training).

- at the same time as their sighted peers.

All families are aware of, and have sufficient support to access, resources and services needed to effectively transition their child from school to adult life.

- provision of formal invitations to teachers, counselors and parents.
- information) to transition-aged students who are blind and visually impaired.



of paid employment prior to graduation and avenues to secure paid work for students who are blind and visually impaired. This will include information regarding paid employment and

Outcome C

1. TVIs will ensure that students who take the SAT (11th Grade Mandatory State Assessment) are provided individual accommodations and SAT prep and tutoring materials in accessible formats

2. DVI will provide, directly or in collaboration with other entities, a college preparatory program that will include a mentoring component, campus tours, explanation of disability service functions, and developing relationships with professionals within a formal mentoring program.

Outcome D

1. Develop a policy for the annual Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) process that includes

2. Develop opportunities within the schools' open house/orientation in middle and high school to meet with parents to share resources available (e.g., eligibility for services, employment

IMPROVEMENT AREA V:

Family Engagement & Systems Improvement

Outcome A

State systems are coordinated for the purposes of planning and program development in regard to students who are blind and visually impaired.

- 1. Establish a Joint Accountability Committee for the Blind and Visually Impaired to provide oversight to the educational services provided by DVI and DOE to students who are blind and/or visually impaired.
- 2. Annually, a report will be submitted to the Joint Accountability Committee regarding the aggregate educational outcomes of infants and students who are blind and visually impaired.
- 3. Annually, a report will be submitted to the Joint Accountability Committee relative to the progress of the 2016 Strategic State Plan.
- 4. Convene a work to identify strategies for maximizing the coordination of DOE, DVI and DVR Data Systems.
- 5. Develop a system/protocols for TVIs and Division for the Visually Impaired Vocational Rehabilitation (DVIVR) Counselors to access and enter data into the DOE IEP-Plus for students for whom they are responsible.
- 6. The DE Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and DVIVR will identify strategies for maximizing their combined resources.

Outcome B

All administrators, teachers of the visually impaired, orientation and mobility specialists and related service providers (when applicable) who provide educational services to students who are blind and/or visually impaired are routinely evaluated using performance, quality and accountability measures established within the Delaware Department of Education and the Division for the Visually Impaired.

- 1. Research accountability and performance standards used in other states in the evaluation of specialized teachers and other professionals providing services to students who are blind and/or visually impaired.
- 2. Develop and implement a new accountability and performance standards instrument/protocol with the input of those who would be evaluated and those performing the evaluation.

their child.

- impaired.
- 2. Develop and implement an introduction to blindness workshop, with special emphasis on education, for families as part of the Parent Academy.
- 3. Develop a parent organization to provide information and support to families of children who are blind and visually impaired statewide.
- 4. Develop a mechanism to routinely gather information from families regarding their preferences for communication and parent engagement.
- 5. Develop and disseminate accessible and family-friendly materials that detail the processes, policies and roles within DVI and DOE.
- community-based partners.



Outcome C

Families of infants and children who are blind and/or visually impaired will have access to information and training related to the development, habilitation and education of

1. Develop and disseminate a guide for families that includes information on services available to families that reflects high expectations and standards for children who are blind and visually

6. Develop and fund a variety of parent-youth training opportunities to be provided by a network of

MOVING FORWARD

This document summarizes the core outcomes and activities that were developed and validated by the members of the planning workgroups and provides a framework to move the State forward in addressing the issues impacting the education of children who are blind and visually impaired. A core group of stakeholders must continue to meet and detail further action steps under each activity, assign responsibility for each action and develop specific timelines. In the spirit of continuous improvement, this group must employ an ongoing review of progress and celebrate accomplishments as they occur.

GLOSSARY

Accessibility features (technology): Built-in extensions to the operating system of a device that are designed to help people with disabilities use technology more easily/effectively.

Blindness Skills: Alternative skills independent blind people use to succeed in various independent living and learning activities.

Expanded Core Curriculum: A set of knowledge and skills outside of the general academic curriculum that reflects a wide range of independent living and access skills essential to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Independent Living Skills (ILS) Instructors: Specially trained instructors who assist individuals who are blind and visually impaired to develop independent living and personal care skills in the home and community.

Learning Media Assessment (LMA): An evaluation conducted by teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) to determine the most appropriate approaches to literacy and learning.
Legally Blind: Visual acuity that is 20/200 or worse in the better eye with correction or a field restriction of 20 degrees or less.

Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS): A Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist teaches skills enabling individuals who are blind and visually impaired to know where they are in space and where they want to go both in terms of physical and psychological orientation.

SETT: A framework for gathering data in order to make effective assistive technology decisions that considers the student, the environments in which students engage, the tasks to be accomplished, and the tools that support participation and achievement.

Severely Visually Impaired: Visual acuity that is 20/70 or worse in the better eye with correction or a field restriction of 20 degrees or less.

Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI): Specially trained and certified professional that provides instruction and consultation on behalf of children who are blind and visually impaired.



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