

A young man with short brown hair, wearing a blue t-shirt with a large white letter 'K' and a blue lanyard, is looking upwards with an open mouth, appearing to be in the middle of a presentation or a discussion. He is in the foreground, slightly to the left of the center. In the background, there are other students, including a boy with glasses and a girl in a green shirt, and a shelf with various items. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**THE RIGHT HELP**  
**THE RIGHT TIME**  
**THE RIGHT LOCATION**

for students with visual impairments

1867

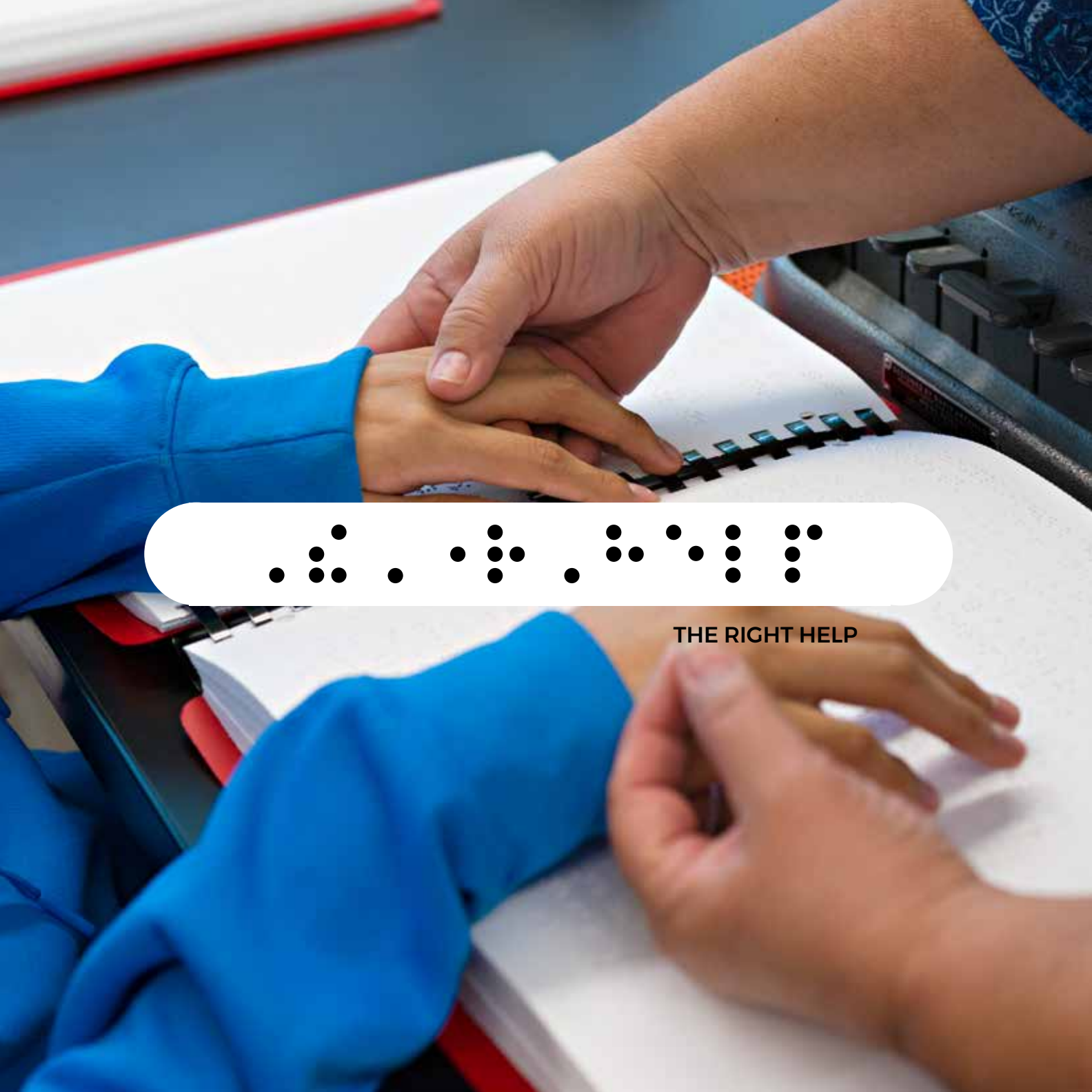


10

**1,200**  
STUDENTS

Established in 1867, the Kansas State School for the Blind began as a small trade school with just 10 students on its campus in Kansas City, Kansas. Today, it works with school districts and agencies statewide to provide information, education, consultation, and resources for more than 1,200 children birth through 21 years of age and those who support them.

**TODAY**



THE RIGHT HELP

The Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB) provides a broad range of instructional programs for students aged birth through 21 at no cost to parents. Highly specialized services focus on the unique needs of students who have a visual impairment, including those with additional disabilities.

KSSB partners with public school districts in Kansas and advocates for students to learn and live in their own communities. KSSB teaches students the skills they need to do this successfully, either through its on-campus school program or with support out in the field.

The curriculum and instruction are designed to meet the academic, social, and adaptive needs of a wide range of student learners. The unique Expanded Core Curriculum, designed for students who have a visual impairment, is emphasized throughout the day, with specialized instruction where needed.









## What we do

Whether on campus or in their home community, every student receives instruction and guidance from staff specially trained in blindness and low vision as well as the impact these have on children's development. All staff members function as part of a multidisciplinary team that guides the education of each student.

The Expanded Core Curriculum is a part of every class, incorporating braille reading and writing skills, learning how to use technology, and working on independent mobility on campus and in the community.

Starting at birth, early childhood specialists, who also have certificates to teach students with visual impairments, provide direct instruction, consultative services, evaluations and trainings for children birth to five throughout the state.

In addition to the outreach the early childhood specialists provide, KSSB offers a classroom for young students who are deaf-blind and/or have additional disabilities. Instruction for students is carefully designed to meet IEP goals and the specific needs of each child.



"I told my parents that I needed to go. I advocated with my IEP team to come to KSSB because I didn't have access to skills that I needed to learn if I was going to be successful."

*~ Rich, residential student who came to KSSB in high school.*



## NINE AREAS OF THE EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM

- Assisted Technology
- Career Education
- Compensatory Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Orientation and Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure
- Self Determination
- Sensory Efficiency
- Social Interaction Skills

## What we teach

KSSB faculty teach elementary, middle, and high school classes. In addition there is a transition program for students 18 through 21. Students attending KSSB receive instruction in core areas such as science, social studies, math and literacy—each personalized to fit that student’s needs. Adaptive PE, music therapy and accessible arts also are a part of the campus-based program.

Students may attend full-time, part-time (with the remainder of their educational day or week spent in their home district) or attend for intensive instruction for a year or two before going back to their home district. This blend of more diverse classes in an integrated setting, combined with a specialized curriculum at KSSB, is invaluable to students.

In 2018, KSSB began offering online courses in Algebra 1 and 2 and braille music literacy. Starting spring semester of the 2019-2020 school year, a computer science course will be added. These online courses represent an opportunity for students across the state to participate in courses taught specifically for students with visual impairments.

## TRANSITION PROGRAM

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The transition program is a one-year, renewable specialized program for students who want intensive instruction in independent living skills, paid employment and/or access to technical education certificate programs in order to meet their post-secondary goals. The student’s home school district works in collaboration with KSSB to develop a Person Centered Plan to identify what the student/team want to focus on for the coming school year.

Students are given individualized instruction with a focus on the expanded core curriculum, readying the student for life as an adult. Students can choose to take college courses, enroll at a technical school or learn a trade through on-the-job training.

“I can’t even begin to list all of the accomplishments and opportunities the transition program has opened up for him.”

*~ Lindsay Beal, mother of a former transition student.*





*Students become adept at gaining access to print through the use of technology. Braille displays, cell phones, braille note-takers, embossers, tablets and voice output software are tools that enable students to become independent, critical thinkers as they pursue their educational and career goals.*



# How we play

KSSB provides opportunities to grow and learn outside the classroom through a variety of extracurricular activities.

Students are encouraged to join a competitive sports team, hone speaking skills on our championship forensics team, and expand their ingenuity and creativity through assistive technology and STEM projects. Involvement in extracurricular activities encourages sportsmanship, patience, teamwork and good communication, in addition to promoting academic accountability and physical education.

KSSB is a member of the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind (NCASB). The 12-member state Schools for the Blind in this conference include: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee and Wisconsin. Each school hosts a sporting and academic competition on a rotating basis throughout the year.

## KSSB OFFERS THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:



Track & Field



Forensics



Goalball



Swimming



Wrestling



STEM Club



Cheerleading







*Often the simple pleasures of childhood, such as riding a bike, are not afforded to children who are blind or visually impaired. Adaptive bikes provide independence, confidence, the opportunity for physical fitness and unlimited joy to students at KSSB.*



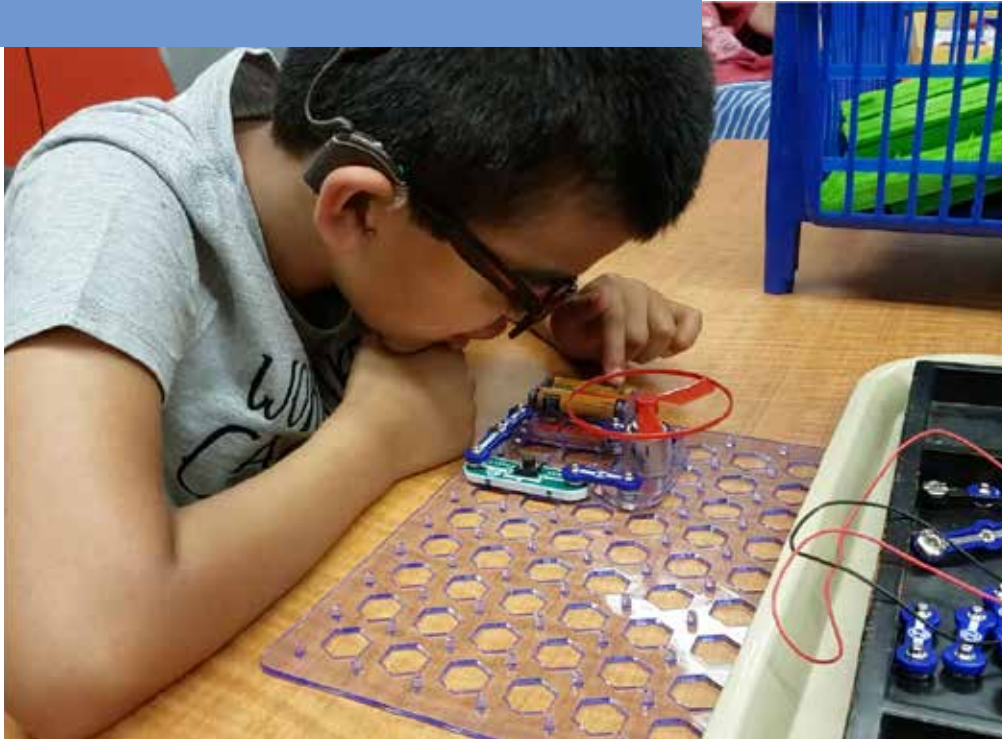
## How we explore

Stop by the school on a Wednesday afternoon, and you'll find a highly engaged group of students diving into activities and games that allow for both self-directed and group learning.

The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Club does everything from controlling robots and flying drones to creating music and learning to code. These amazing hands-on experiences are more than just fun—it's a great way to expose students to the possibilities of tech careers.

“What started with several kids wanting to learn more about the technology—coding, robots, Internet radio, drones and more—quickly turned into our now-weekly Tech Club meetings.”

*~ Bob Taylor, Ed.S, social studies teacher, assistive technology specialist, and faculty sponsor of the STEM Club.*





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THE RIGHT TIME

*KSSB students take field trips to gain opportunities not only for academic reasons, but also to practice daily living skills that will help them navigate adulthood.*

## How we connect

### Braille Challenge (February and March)

KSSB hosts two Braille Challenge events: one in the Kansas City region (hosted on KSSB's campus) and one in the Wichita region (hosted at Derby Middle School). Braille Institute developed the Braille Challenge to motivate students to practice and hone their braille literacy skills, which are essential to academic and employment success. KSSB believes every child who competes in these events are winners, regardless of where they are on their personal journey toward braille proficiency. The top performers are able to qualify for a final round of competition in Los Angeles each June.



### Boys and Girls Weekends (Fall and Spring)

Every fall and spring, KSSB hosts the Boys and Girls Weekend where students with a visual impairment come from across the state to focus on the Expanded Core Curriculum, with a special emphasis on the domains of daily living skills and orientation and mobility.

### Extended School Year (June)

Extended School Year, or ESY, is considered for every student by their Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. KSSB offers students who are blind/visually impaired the opportunity to develop skills in vocational training, independent living, assistive technology, orientation and mobility, and recreation and leisure, among others, in our intensive ESY programs. The development of "Expanded Core Curriculum" skills are essential for students to become independent, successful adults. There is a three-week session on KSSB's campus, and a one-week session in Hays, both in June.





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THE RIGHT LOCATION

## Where we live

KSSB offers a day program for local students and an extended day program for those students who travel from across the state for instruction and need to stay on campus during the week.

The dormitory gives students ages 10 through 21 the chance to learn and practice the skills of daily living in a rich environment. Students learn to do their own laundry, prepare meals, clean and become independent with self-care.

KSSB's dormitory director, nursing staff and overnight staff help guide students through the Expanded Core Curriculum skills while also supporting their academic program. When the work is done, dormitory residents and staff enjoy community outings, pizza nights, karaoke contests, swimming in the campus indoor pool and just hanging out.



"I like KSSB because it is designed specifically for those with visual impairments to help them learn independence"

*~ Patrick, high school student who splits his academic day between his home school and KSSB.*

7.5

instructional hours per day

2

average length of  
stay in years, in campus dorm

2:1

staff to student  
on campus ratio



*Students learn to keep their living spaces tidy when staying in one of KSSB's living spaces: the dormitory, apartment or cottage. These are critical, life-long skills that are carried into the future. Here a student learns to make her bed prior to the start of the school day.*







*Students enjoy art activities in KSSB's sensory garden and develop social skills and friendships, under the guidance and supervision of KSSB's instructional staff.*

## How we progress

On campus, students have access to a game room with a wide variety of activities. The indoor pool is a great way to get exercise, work on motor skills or just relax on a float. The campus also has a beautiful oval track, a 60-meter straight track with guide wires, and an infield that allows for field events and special activities like archery.

The indoor gym is large and is used for Adaptive PE as well as special events such as Goalball tournaments, wrestling practice and much more. The music therapy room is filled with a multitude of musical and noise-making instruments for the students to learn and play. There is a music therapist on staff that ensures that the music activities are spurring development in all areas.



# How we serve

The KSSB Field Services is a statewide resource for schools and families with a child who has a visual impairment, including those with additional needs and/or deaf-blindness.

KSSB serves as the point of contact for parents, teachers and other professionals who play a role in the education of students with a visual impairment. The Field Services team is available for vision assessments, consultations, technical assistance and professional development to educational teams at the local level.

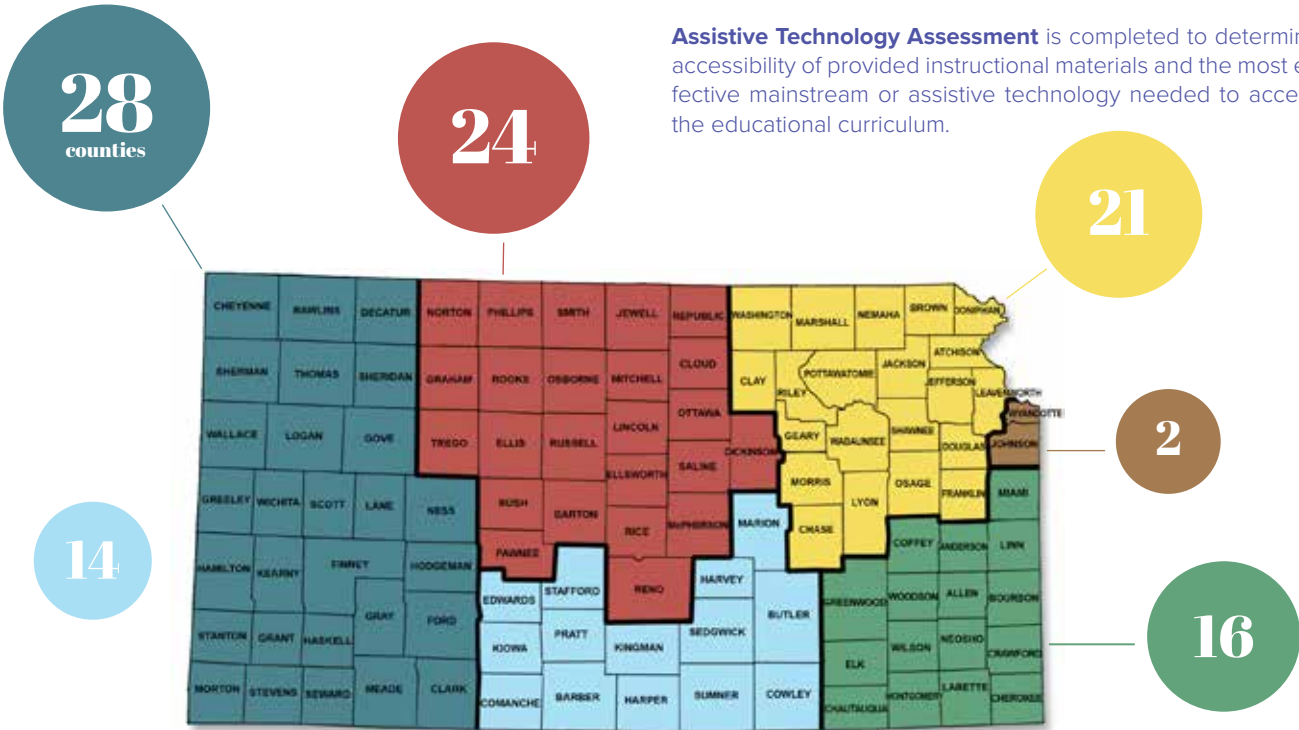
## FIELD SERVICES ASSESSMENTS

**Functional Vision Assessment** to determine the student’s ability to use his or her vision in a variety of settings and describe the impact of vision loss on learning. Included in the FVA is instructional and environmental modifications, accommodations and suggestions related to specialized instruction.

**Learning Media Assessment** to determine the most effective learning medium for literacy and communication. Recommendations include appropriate formats for instruction such as print, auditory, tactual, digital or a combination.

**Orientation & Mobility Assessment** evaluates the ability to travel safely in both familiar and unfamiliar home, school and community environments.

**Assistive Technology Assessment** is completed to determine accessibility of provided instructional materials and the most effective mainstream or assistive technology needed to access the educational curriculum.



Each color is assigned to a specific Field Service Regional Specialist.



*All students at KSSB are encouraged to participate in academic and extracurricular activities as part of a holistic program. Accessibility is provided from the beginning, and students are taught to advocate for their own needs both on campus and on the next step of their journey.*



## How we serve

KSSB provides a “hub of services” with many integrated, specialized projects that coordinate statewide resources for students with a visual impairments including those who are deaf-blind. These projects and programs include the **Kansas Deaf-Blind Project**, the **Kansas Instructional Resource Center**, **KanLovKids** (statewide low vision clinics) and **Accessible Arts**. KSSB aligns our initiatives to support the work of the Kansas State Department of Education and the State Board of Education’s vision for all Kansas students. One example is the Technical Assistance Systems Network (TASN) personnel preparation grant that trains new teachers of students with visual impairments.

### Vision Symposium

This annual one-day event features breakout sessions for Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (including those in university training program), Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (including those in university training programs), instructional assistants/braillists and other professionals working directly with students with a visual impairment.

## FIELD SERVICES PARTNERS

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**Kansas Instructional Resource Center (KIRC)** provides state education agencies, including public, private or parochial, with braille, large print, recorded or digital textbooks, and assistive technology to support Kansas students who are blind or visually impaired.

**The KanLovKids Project** holds Low Vision Collaborative Clinics (LVCC) and Low Vision Collaborative Clinics + (LVCC+) for Kansas children ages birth through 21.

**Kansas Deaf-Blind Project**, funded with a federal grant, offers technical assistance, training, resources and products for children and young adults (birth to 21 years) who are deafblind, their families and educators in the state of Kansas.

**Accessible Arts** provides opportunities for students to engage in different art and music media through exploration and structured activities.

**[www.kssb.net](http://www.kssb.net)**





**KANSAS STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

[WWW.KSSB.NET](http://WWW.KSSB.NET)

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