

2022 -2023

ANNUAL REPORT

KANSAS STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND





Jon Harding, Ed.S.

Superintendent

Kansas State School for the Blind

Dear Friends,

For 156 years, KSSB has been here for Kansas' children and families who need vision expertise, support, encouragement, and skill-building. We are honored to continue this tradition and to explore new ways to promote independence and success for children who are blind or visually impaired. Our world is changing rapidly, and the ability to adapt quickly is important, for both individuals and organizations. This report highlights some of the ways we are adjusting (and helping students adjust) to the new challenges of this era.

KSSB's vision is "The right help, at the right time, in the right location", and we are committed to helping students reach their full potential regardless of where they reside in Kansas. Our outreach continues to expand and grow through new, innovative programs designed to meet the needs of our students and families. Annual events like the Braille Celebration, Vision Symposium, Extended School Year, White Cane Day, Trailblazer Weekends, and Blind Sports Day have been developed and are directed by our staff of over 30 certified vision teachers who are highly qualified and dedicated to their craft. Over 800 students are impacted each year by programs such as these.

In December of 2022, KSSB was proud to partner with "Make48" in offering anSTEM inventor's challenge, with six teams competing for a chance to advance to a national competition. Teams comprised of students who are blind or low vision from across Kansas developed a prototype of a countertop egg dispenser for the "Chickens in the Kitchen" challenge. Students were supported by tool technicians working in KSSB's MakerSpace to make their prototype concept three-dimensional. This highenergy, real-world challenge allowed our students to demonstrate their potential and capabilities when expectations were high and barriers to access were low.

KSSB's Mobile STEM Unit has offered hands-on learning to over a thousand students all across Kansas since its inception in 2021. Students have the opportunity to experience activities while blindfolded, and teachers learn about simple adaptations that can make STEM accessible for students who are blind or low vision. This past May, KSSB sponsored a "Remake Learning" Day, where students from across the KC metro

came together for hands-on learning experiences using technology equipment in our MakerSpace. Finally, our Microsoft TEALS Computer Science program continues to offer rigorous, and accessible, content to students grades 9-12 who want to learn about coding using the Python programming language.

As we move into the 2023-2024 school year, KSSB intends to press forward with new partnerships and programs. One goal is to better identify, refer, and serve infants and toddlers across Kansas who are blind or visually impaired and to provide their families with trustworthy information that will allow them to make the best choices for themselves and their children. We know these children will be better equipped to succeed in preschool and kindergarten programs if they receive support from one of KSSB's vision specialists in their home environment.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Kansas and for their stalwart support and belief in the mission of our school. We are honored to serve, and we look forward to even brighter days ahead.

Sincerely,

Jon Harding

WE

create potential

WE
CREATE

potential



“I think this was an incredible opportunity for our students to understand that these creative pathways are also career pathways.”

~ Lydia Knopp, Makerspace coordinator

In December 2022, students from across the state of Kansas joined KSSB for the first ever Make48 competition weekend. Make48 is a 48-hour competition where teams are presented with a challenge and tasked to build a physical prototype, create a sales sheet, produce a 1-minute marketing video and pitch their big idea to a panel of judges. Teams consisted of three Kansas State School for the Blind recruits and one team captain from a sponsoring company. It was exciting to see them work against the clock and collaborate together on functional and accessible maker solutions. The challenge competitors were tasked with was to create a versatile structure that could hold farm-fresh eggs for consumers and farmers alike. Many students had little to no experience with production, but sharpened their skillsets working alongside industry professionals to come up with very different prototypes using 3D printers, laser cutters, and traditional power tools (with help).

We are passionate about encouraging real-world technical and innovation skills in our students and this event helped enhance their understanding of STEM... helping them build skill sets for future careers.

For more information about Make 48 visit: make48.com



FIRST PLACE

Little Red Hens

Team captain Mariah Presley, Trane team members: Cecilia Leal, Callie Dyches and Lyra Thompson



WE
CREATE

potential



OUR TEAMS



Intellegtuals

Team members (left to right): Hashim Syed, Taylor Bailey, Patrick Wilson and team captain Adam Smith, Wet & Forget



Wild Wings (left)

Team members (left to right): Jetta King, Addie Bartels, Riley Warrick, team captain Dr. Christina Twardowski, Children's Mercy and Iris Chambers



Three Chicks and a Dude (right)

Team members (left to right): Yvonne Waitiki, team captain Karita Matlock, Operation Breakthrough, Therese Marciniak and Braydn Ghram



Noble Nuggets (left)

Team members (left to right): Caleb Schlatter, Jimmy Lewis-Swain, Rich Yamamoto and team captain Matt Zimmerman, The DeBruce Foundation



Varicella (right)

Team members (left to right): Team captain Jonel Loreno, Gabe Reyes-Gonzales, Issac McBurney, Liam Thurlby and team captains Marites Altuna and Nick Privitera, KC Blind Allstars



Kansas Trailblazers Weekend

Twenty-two students from 19 Kansas school districts joined us on campus for Rockin', Rollin' and Racin', the theme for the Fall Trailblazers weekend at KSSB. Trailblazer weekends are unique because registration priority is given to students who do not have the benefit of attending the KSSB campus year round.

Events are planned and facilitated by Kansas certified TSVIs and ACVREP Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists, not only KSSB staff, but also statewide district staff. The Expanded Core Curriculum is always at the forefront of these weekends, along with a focus on physical fitness, health and self care, access technology, orientation and mobility, and activities of daily living are all part of this signature weekend event.

Activities at the fall event focused on increasing skills with self care, planning healthy meals, managing their personal health and safety and acknowledging the importance of staying active as they enter into adulthood. Empowering these young adults to join local community recreation centers, YMCA's, or even run in local running/walking club events as a part of their journey.

For the first time the focus of the Spring Trailblazer weekend was recreation and leisure. Twenty-seven students from 21 school districts came together to experience a 'City to the

Country' weekend at Camp Wood YMCA Camp near Emporia, KS. New partnerships between KSSB and several non-profit organizations including Envision Inc. of Wichita, KS and the Forseeable Futures Foundation, allowed students to travel via a chartered bus to the camp to participate in archery, rock climbing, fishing, kayaking, and the highlight - horseback riding. It was a memorable experience from start to finish!

Every single student who sets foot on the KSSB campus - can be a trailblazer. We encourage students to create their own path and grow in their advocacy skills and all areas of the expanded core, while at the same time making lifelong connections and gaining what they crave the most - friends who are like them.



Project Search

The **Transition Program** helps support the student who is leaving high school, but is unsure, undecided and perhaps not quite prepared for the demands of adulthood. Project SEARCH is one of the three pathways in the Transition Program at KSSB.

Project SEARCH is a partnership between KSSB and the YMCA of Greater Kansas City, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the local Community Developmental Disability Organization. This unique and dynamic program is a one year opportunity for high school students who have met their graduation requirements to prepare for the future through on-site job training, coaching and education to prepare them for competitive employment.

KSSB is only the second school for the blind in the United States to partner with Project SEARCH. The YMCA of Greater Kansas City has agreed to serve as a host site for KSSB's students, who will develop job skills in a community-based setting. Project SEARCH improves employment outcomes for young adults who complete the program.

As part of the program students:

- Gain independent living skills. This could be living on the KSSB campus in the dormitory, apartment, and/or cottage
- Receive individualized instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)
- Have paid work experiences
- Must bank their diploma, not exit, and remain on their home district's IEP



“Keizer was super excited to participate. He just wanted to work. He has been very flexible no matter where he is working. Very motivated.”

~ Tim Schierbeck, Transition instructor



STUDENT PROFILE

NAME: KEIZER

HOMETOWN : SALINA, KANSAS

EMPLOYER : NORTH KANSAS CITY YMCA

Biggest lessons/skills learned while participating in Project SEARCH:

- Problem solving
- Social skills
- Flexibility

Future plans: Get a job in Salina, KS and find a place of his own.



“Abrienda jumped into her job in the Kid Zone at the YMCA with both feet. After this job she may be looking into working with young children as a career path.”

~ Tim Schierbeck, Transition instructor

STUDENT PROFILE

NAME: ABRIENDA

HOMETOWN : HUTCHINSON, KANSAS

EMPLOYER : NORTH KANSAS CITY YMCA

Biggest lessons/skills learned while participating in Project SEARCH:

- Have a great attitude
- The ability to keep your cool when working with young kids, no matter what.

Job rotations participated in:

- Kid Zone
- Front desk attendant
- Equipment maintenance

Abrienda's advice to other Project SEARCH students:

"No matter what field you work in you have to have a great attitude."



“Project SEARCH has contributed greatly to my independence. I learned how to stay in the dorm and be away from home. I feel like now I can go out on my own whereas before I always wanted a guide with me.”

~ Jimmy

STUDENT PROFILE

NAME: JIMMY

HOMETOWN : MAIZE, KANSAS

EMPLOYER : NORTH KANSAS CITY YMCA

JIMMY'S ADVICE TO OTHER PROJECT SEARCH STUDENTS:

Be on time, be courteous and friendly and have a positive attitude.

Biggest lessons/skills learned while participating in Project SEARCH:

- People skills
- Being part of a team
- Independence

Job rotations participated in:

- Garden and greenhouse maintenance
- Equipment maintenance
- Food pantry assistance
- Hospitality room duties

After Project SEARCH:

Jimmy plans to work at Moxi Junction coffee shop in Maize, KS.

Discover Podcasting



Podcasting has been an interest to kids with visual impairments here at the Kansas State School for the Blind for several years. Since 2020, the seven students in the podcast group have broadcasted 23 episodes, with more to come. Podcasting hosts are high school and transition students that audition at the beginning of the year. Once chosen, students meet weekly and suggest guests that they are interested in inviting to be on the podcast. Once a guest has accepted, hosts are then chosen to lead the interview. This season included guests that participated in events on campus.

KSSB also hosts an online Introduction to Podcasting class that is a precursor to the in-person club. Currently there are four students from across Kansas that participate in the club. During this class students record a small podcast called 'Take 10' to get them used to the feel of talking about a subject and the equipment used to in podcasting.

Season 2 Episodes

S2 E6

April 27, 2023

Blind Sports and the Forseeable Future Foundation

S2 E5

March 13, 2023

Brent Harbolt, Harbolt Company

► *Bonus Episode: Make 48 in a nutshell*

S2 E4

March 10, 2023

Theresa Van Goethem, Leadership 200

► *Bonus Episode: Hosts discuss their experience in Make48 competition*

S2 E3

February 13, 2023

Bucky & Melissa, Millers Rustic Sawmill, King City, MO

► *Bonus Episode: Hosts discuss their experience as a blind person watching movies*

S2 E2

December 2, 2022

Tom Gray, Make48
Co-Creator and CEO

S2 E1

November 14, 2022

Hannah Christenson, Envision

Low Vision on the Road



“We had an amazing day at the Kansas State Capitol! Thanks for planning such a fun and educational day. Your efforts were noticed and very much appreciated.”

~ Teacher response

“Thank you all for putting this together! We had a blast, and we all learned so much. I love opportunities like this for my students to get out and generalize all the skills they have been working on.”

~ Teacher response



March 7, 2023 Low Vision Advocacy for 5th-9th grades. Fifteen students, one parent, and twelve teachers (TSVIs, COMS and a paraprofessional) gathered at the KSDE offices in Topeka. After the morning rotations, we were joined by eight students and two teachers from the KSSB campus to explore the Kansas State Capitol and meet legislators. Two students met their legislator from their home district. At the beginning of the day one student commented that he didn't know what the word "advocate" meant, so the opportunity to be educated specifically during the "Advocacy 101" rotation was crucial.

Blind Sports Day



Rec and Leisure is one of the nine components of the Expanded Core Curriculum. Many students who have a vision impairment are not given the opportunity to participate in blind sports. Kansas State School for the Blind is working to change that for students in Kansas.

On May 6, students from across the state gathered on the campus of KSSB for the first ever Blind Sports Day. Participants were introduced to the sports of track & field, blind soccer and goalball. For some this was their first opportunity to play these blind specific sports. Parents were invited to observe the games to learn about these sports along with their children.

“I want to thank you for a fantastic sports day! Jack has been talking about it to anyone who will listen since we returned! It was wonderful to see our kid smiling and feeling successful that day!”

~ Parent



KC Parade of Hearts



The multisensory heart project led by Lydia Knopp, Makerspace coordinator and created by KSSB students was designed to be enjoyed by all audiences, especially individuals who are blind and have low vision. Using the sunflower as a symbol of pride for the great Midwest, elements of the design incorporate visually impaired student participation for young learners to contribute to the creative process. Locally sourced tactile elements like river rocks from Missouri and limestone from the Flint Hills in Kansas were used within the heart to lovingly frame the high-contrast and recessed “KC” letters at the center. Wind chimes at the base welcome visitors using auditory cues and encourage touch, play, and orientation.

The heart proudly displays a Helen Keller quote in braille on the back of the heart and text on the front that reads: “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.”

To learn more about the Parade of Hearts project visit: theparadeofhearts.com



“We produced a heart that showcased not only our love for the region but also our love for accessibility by using materials that could be accessed by people with different abilities.”

~ Lydia Knopp, Makerspace coordinator

WE

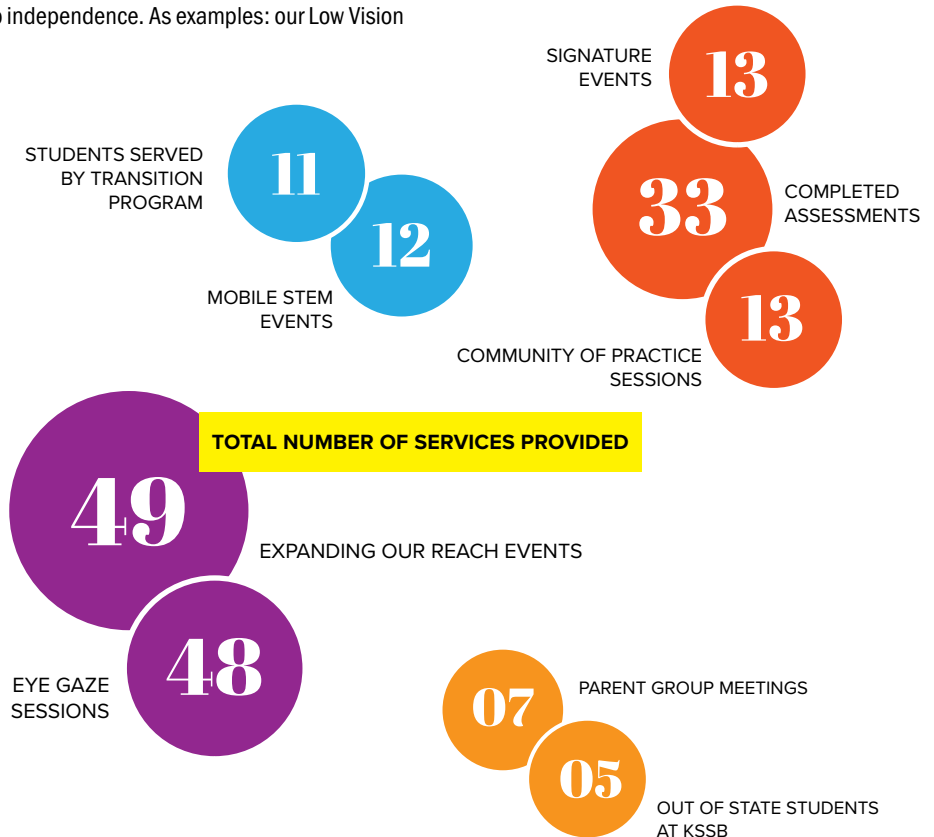
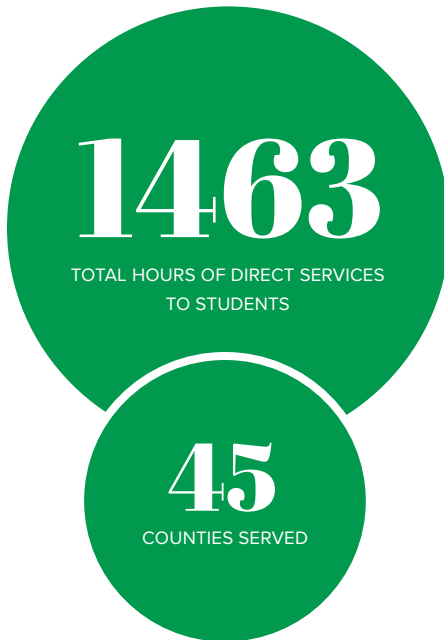
create participation

Since 1867, KSSB has opened its doors to students from across the state who need specialized instruction in braille, independent living, vocational skills, mobility, and academics. While we still maintain a vibrant campus as the hub of our school, we can now deliver many of these specialized skills to students in their home schools and communities. KSSB Field Services specialists can visit students' homes and schools to provide instruction, administer assessments, or to partner with regular and special education teachers. We also offer remote instruction for those students who prefer learning at a distance or who are unable to receive help in more traditional ways. KSSB is ready to serve today's students who are blind or have low vision, regardless of location.

Even if a student who is blind never steps foot on our campus, they are likely to receive a service or product from KSSB that helps them along their journey to independence. As examples: our Low Vision

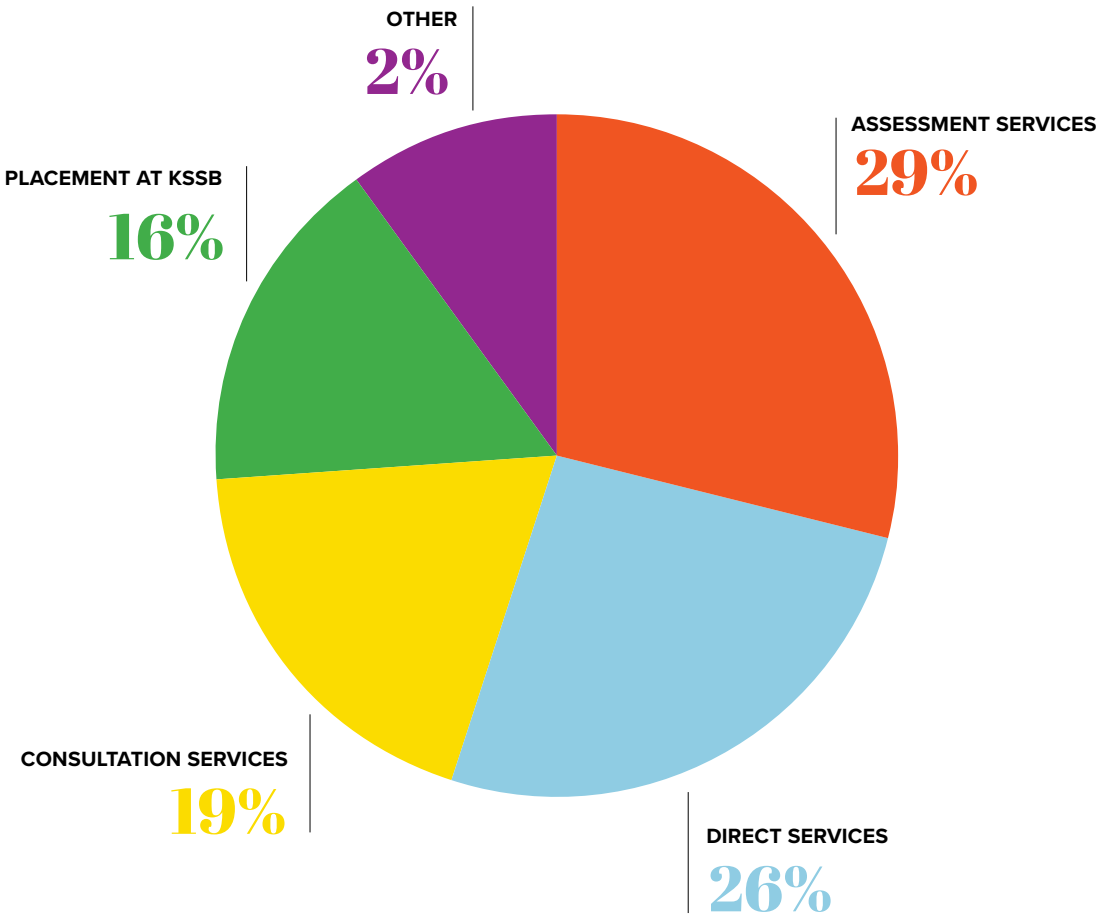
Clinics are offered across the state; we also offer specific online instruction for braille and technology to students in their home schools via the Kansas Instructional Resource Center; and our Mobile STEM Unit is offered to all 286 school districts of Kansas.

DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS



SERVICE REQUESTS

REASONS FOR REQUESTS
(SERVICE REQUESTS FROM 27 KANSAS COUNTIES)



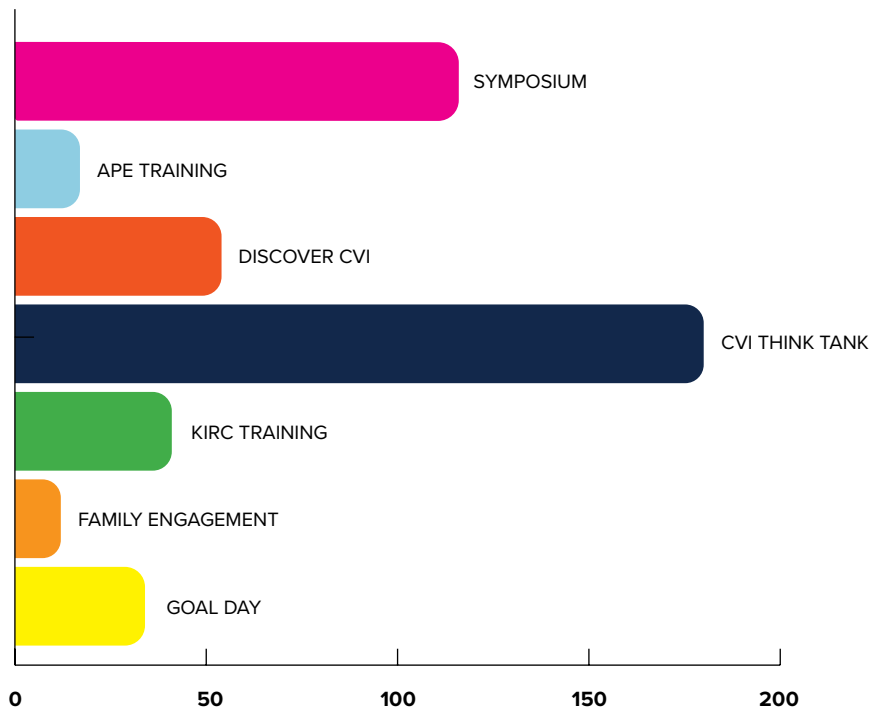
With over 22 TSVIs and COMS and 11 additional staff who are licensed in other areas of teaching, KSSB has an incredible amount of talent and expertise at our disposal. Certified teachers on campus provide daily instruction to our students in core academic subjects and the Expanded Core Curriculum. In addition to our campus teaching staff, KSSB also employs a Social Worker, a Physical Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, a Speech Language Therapist, Music Therapists, and licensed Nurses.

Our Regional Field Services team offers technical assistance to schools and direct services to students throughout the state of Kansas. The goal is to partner with educational

teams to address the unique educational needs of students who are blind or have a visual impairment. The most common technical assistance topics requested are related to assessment procedures, technology that will provide the student access to the curriculum and addressing the needs of students who have a visual impairment and additional disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCE

(TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDED)



WE

create partnerships



KC Blind All-Stars

The KC Blind All-Stars Foundation (KCBAS) seeks to imagine, execute, fund, and support the needs and dreams of blind and visually impaired youth who benefit from the Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB), and the educators who believe in them. KCBAS believes in the unlimited potential of all youth in Kansas who are blind or visually impaired and is dedicated to expanding society's perception of them as valuable, contributing members of their schools and communities. Within the last several years, the organization has become a very active proponent for KSSB in the community, establishing a yearly community event for fundraising and awareness, partnering with the school on several major improvements including a new playground, resurfacing the athletic track, and distributing student scholarships for those seeking higher education.

The Foundation was incorporated on March 19, 1973 as the Endowment Fund for the Kansas State School for the Visually Handicapped. (The school's name was changed to the Kansas State School for the Blind during the 1991-92 school year, and the fund was renamed the KC Blind All-Stars in 1998.) The fund was intended to benefit the students

at the school and later, students in the regional area who were blind or visually impaired.

In order to support KSSB students, the KC Blind All-Stars Foundation employs the "TEAMS" approach for support in Technology, Education and Employment, Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, Music and the Arts, and Skill Building. KCBAS mitigates some of the cost barriers for specialized assistive technology and ensures students are given exposure to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) learning that fosters imagination, creativity, and problem-solving. KCBAS offers two annual scholarships, in addition to providing program and project support at KSSB.



KSSB PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY THE KC BLIND ALL-STARS INCLUDE:

- KanLovKids Low Vision Clinics
- Project LIFE & the Brailled Bean
- Extended School Year
- KSSB Makerspace
- Transition program
- Mobile STEM Unit
- Athletics Program
- Trailblazers Weekends
- Space Camp

KC BLIND ALL-STARS FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

John DeLeon, President, MTI Events
Jon Harding, Vice President, Kansas State School for the Blind
Tom Johnson, Treasurer, Bank of Labor
Amy Jungk, Secretary, Jungk Food Innovation
Marites Altuna, Kansas State School for the Blind
Madeleine Burkindine, Kansas State School for the Blind (retired)
David Byerley, McKay & Byerley
Larry Hisle, Greater Kansas City Federal Executive Board
Chad Jansen, Donor Centric Consulting, LLC
Monique McDaniel, Wellspring School of Allied Health
Christian Puett, Kansas State School for the Blind

The Kansas Instructional Resource Center (KIRC) resources include: instructional materials; braille and large print textbooks; library books & educational aids; braille transcription of educational materials; continuing education and professional development opportunities for teachers; and adaptive equipment for students. KIRC conducts an annual APH registration for Kansas students, and it was finalized on March 15, 2023. 822 individuals were registered in the 2023 APH annual count.

This year, approximately 2,333 items (large print and braille textbook sets, professional materials and equipment) were circulated, with an estimated value of \$505,677. These materials and equipment allow children who are blind to have low vision access to the same content as their peers, in their home, schools and communities.

KANSAS INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

STATE YEAR 2022

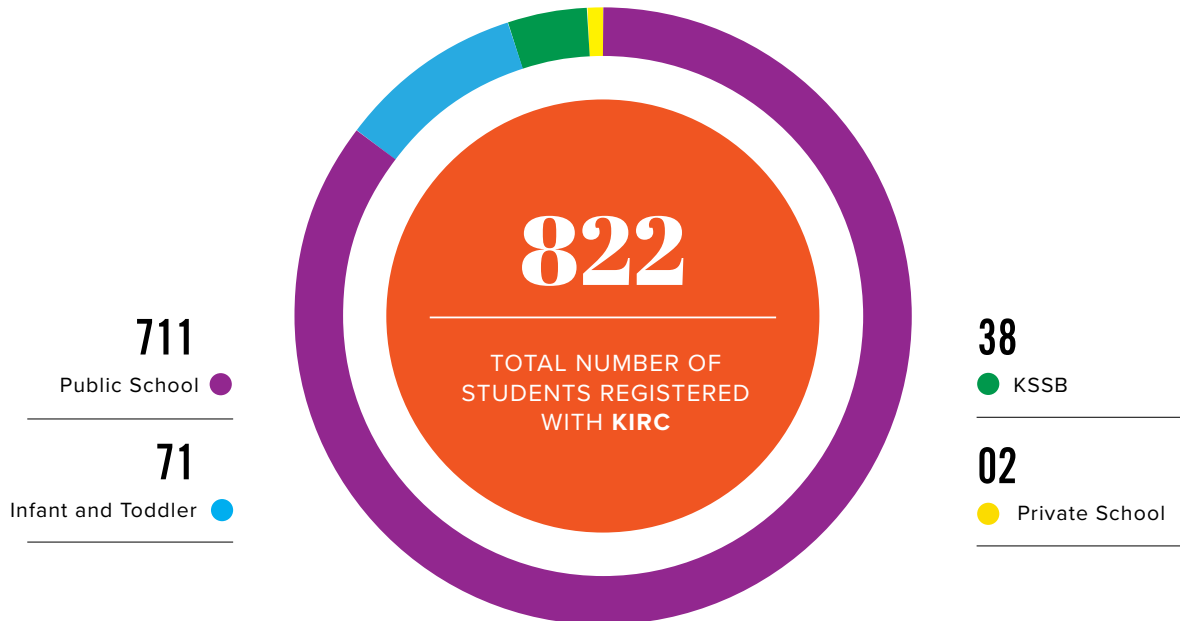
\$505,677 = 2,333 items

VALUE OF ITEMS SHIPPED FROM KIRC FOR USE WITH STUDENTS

STATE YEAR 2021

\$418,800 = 2,007 items

VALUE OF ITEMS SHIPPED FROM KIRC FOR USE WITH STUDENTS





KANSAS DEAF-BLIND PROJECT

The Kansas Deaf-Blind (KSDB) Project provides technical assistance to improve services for 175 children and youth on their registry who are deaf-blind between the ages of 0-21. The KS Deaf-blind Project is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

The Deaf-Blind Project: maintains a statewide child count of children and youth with combined hearing and vision loss, provides training to families and professionals and acts as a resource on deaf-blindness.

PROMOTING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- **Offered nine Discover CVI Parent Group meetings** for parents of children with Cortical Visual Impairments (CVI). Topics included CVI and literacy, activity-based schedules, travel strategies, social skills, CVI resources, and IEP toolkit.
- **Coordinated Annual Family Day** in collaboration with the Kansas Children's Service League.
- **Provided seven Music and Me sessions.** Music and Me is an online music therapy for young children, ages birth to five, who are deaf-blind or visually impaired.
- **Facilitated Make and Take activity** for parents of children ages birth to three to create simple adaptations to picture books and facilitate tactile exploration.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

- **Sponsored four webinars** **Audiology 101:** Hearing Screening, Diagnosis & Intervention, Components of a Successful Education Program for Students who are deafblind, KSSB Project Search and Transition Programs and information about the Kansas DeafBlind Fund (with KSDE).
- **Provided additional webinars in collaboration with:**
 - Oklahoma DeafBlind Technical Assistance Project: Six ASL online classes
 - Maize School District
 - Envision and Helen Keller National Center
 - CVI Think-Tank: Cortical Visual Impairments
 - KSSB and the Kansas Instructional Resource Center for a statewide Vision Symposium. One hundred two service providers participated. Offered training to six school districts, by creating DB Core Teams, which act as an intermediary between the KSDB Project and the school districts.
 - Partnered with KSSB, Kansas School for the Deaf, and the Helen Keller Regional Center to expand awareness of options and services for Kansas families and young

adults with deaf-blindness about transition for children and youth ages 14 to 21.

- Provided scholarships to eight service providers to attend the CEC Division of Visual Impairments and Deafblindness webinar, Maryland and DC Deaf-Blind Projects Virtual Summer Institute, and the 2022 Language First Conference.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Delivered a presentation about deaf-blindness to undergraduate and master's level students at the University of Kansas Department of Special Education Early Childhood program to help prepare prospective educators to meet the unique needs of children with deafblindness in their future careers.
- A member of the Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel to help implement the All in for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan.
- Participates in efforts to improve access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities as an Advisory Council member of the Assistive Technology for Kansans.
- Advises researchers at Juniper Gardens Children's Project on development and testing of interventions and strategies to improve outcomes of children with disabilities in the local community.

Without the partnerships between KSSB, The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Missouri State University for Teaching Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI) and Stephen F. Austin University for Orientation and Mobility (COMS)...students across Kansas would not have access to highly qualified vision professionals providing the specialized instruction they so deserve. The partnership between Kansas State School for the Blind, the Kansas Department of Education and the Technical Assistance Systems Network ensures that teachers are provided funding to attend these out of state accredited university training programs.

The beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year included 11 teachers, from ten different regional areas of the state, working on certification and enrolled in courses. Tuition, course fees, textbooks, supplies are all funded for these graduate students. In addition, KSSB provided inkind support as mentors, coaches, trainers, observers and motivators. Statewide professional development via the annual Vision Symposium saw an all time attendance number with the teachers in training first to register for this signature event!

Kansas, like every other state, struggles to find educators. However, because of these strong partnerships, the support of the state department of education and the commitment KSSB believes in-local education agencies are benefitting—teachers are benefitting—and most importantly students with a visual impairment are benefitting across this beautiful Sunflower state.



PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

KSSB's preschool program provides students who are blind or have low vision experiences that are tailored to their developmental needs. Our TSVIs assemble learning activities that promote curiosity, exploration, and movement. We provide a literacy-rich environment, including pre-braille activities that promote tactile awareness and sensitivity. Our students learn through structured play activities that involve the use of multiple senses. Social skills, self-regulation, and orientation skills instruction is embedded throughout the curricular activities. Our early childhood program is designed as an "enrichment" experience, meaning that our students also attend their public school preschool with typically developing peers. This allows a "best of both worlds" experience for our students.

KSSB has seen a tremendous increase in requests for services for infants and toddlers. As a result, our agency will be adding several 0-3 services providers beginning in 2023-2024 who will work with **Tiny K Infant-Toddler Network Alliance** across the state to provide vision services to our youngest students. These providers will work in the natural environment and partner with families and other service providers to meet the needs of these children.

PRESCHOOL DETAILS

8
STUDENTS
4
TEACHERS/AIDES
5
MORNINGS A WEEK (MON-FRI)
3
HOURS A DAY (8:45 - 11 AM)



LOW VISION CLINIC

The KanLovKids Project offers **Low Vision Clinics** to children from ages birth through 21 who reside in Kansas. Students, parents, teachers and related service providers are invited to share perspectives, identify needs, and obtain answers to questions about vision loss from optometrists and ophthalmologists. This collaborative approach provides an opportunity to identify the devices to best address low vision needs in the school, home and community. During the 2022-2023 school year, a total of 73 students from 32 different districts attended 29 low vision collaboration clinics in eight locations in Kansas as well as virtually. Eight students were below age three.



LOW VISION CLINIC NUMBERS

73

STUDENTS

32

PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS

29

LOW VISION COLLABORATION CLINICS

LOW VISION CLINIC LOCATIONS

Garden City

Hays

Kansas City

Lawrence

Salina

Topeka

Wichita

Virtual Clinics via Zoom



BRAILLE CHALLENGE

The **Braille Challenge** is the only competitive braille competition in North America. It shares the same goals both locally and nationally: to promote braille literacy, provide resources for families, and create an experience participants will not forget.

The academic Braille Challenge includes students in grades 1 through 12 who read and write braille. Students compete in contests including: spelling, reading comprehension, proofreading, speed and accuracy, and interpreting tactile charts and graphs. The Kansas regional events also celebrate young students and new braille readers by providing additional sessions for these students.

Participants from all over Kansas are eligible to participate in regional events with a chance to go on to the national competition at the Braille Institute in Los Angeles. KSSB is extremely proud of our regional participants who qualified to attend the final competition in California. This signature event helps motivate students to practice and sharpen their braille literacy skills, which are essential to academic and employment success.

BRAILLE CHALLENGE @KSSB

27

PARTICIPANTS

@WICHITA, KS

15

PARTICIPANTS

28

TOTAL PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS



EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

KSSB hosted 93 students this summer for the Extended School Year (ESY). Students participated in activities with other students with visual impairment from across the state. They worked specifically on the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) domains of: Social Interaction, Daily Living Skills, Access Technology, and Recreation & Leisure. Braille and Orientation & Mobility are embedded throughout the program. These functional skills are important for future success in school and in the workplace. They often need to be intentionally taught as students don't learn them through observation. The ECC are considered the "specialized skills of blindness" and are as crucial to student success in life as academic skills.

ESY PARTICIPANTS

KSSB STUDENTS (99)

Returning (67)

New (27)

Peer models (5)

STAFF (65)

Returning (47)

New (18)

HAYS, KS STUDENTS (10)

Returning (5)

New (5)

STAFF (6)

Returning (4)

New (2)



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



Architect One

Bank of Labor

BlueCross BlueShield

Blind Spot

Commercial Floorworks

Hallmark

Hermes Landscaping

Kansas City Kansas

Chamber ofCommerce

Kansas City Kansas

Community College

Kansas Relay

Linaweaver Construction

RA Long Foundation

Reardon Pallet Company

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KANSAS STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

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