



RESEARCH QUESTION

For those states that have residential schools for the Blind/VI and Deaf/VI students, have they developed policies and procedures for residential placement of these students?

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Scope: **Part B**

RESPONSE SUMMARY

A state requested assistance with research from the RRCP. For those states with a school for the Blind/VI or Deaf/VI, they would like to review examples of residential placement policies and procedures for these students. To develop this response, the IRC conducted web research utilizing numerous search terms. Materials were examined from both State Special Schools and State Education Agencies and identified procedures for residential placement used in **18 states: CA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NM, NC, SD, TX, UT, VA, and WI.**

A **State “Cheat Sheet”** was developed to quickly identify specific information either from the State Schools or from the State Department of Education:

- **State School Procedures: 16 states**
CA, ID, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NM, NC, SD, TX, UT and VA
- **State Education Agency Procedures: 13 states**
ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, NE, NM, SD, TX, UT, VA, and WI

The **State Resources** section summarizes research findings into the categories listed below and includes specific state examples for each category:

- Initial Request for Services (NE, TX, UT)
- Parent Notification (IL, NC)
- Placement (CA, IN, UT)
- Temporary Placements (CA, NC)
- Technical Assistance (NC, TX, UT, VA, WI)
- IEP Addendums (NM, NC)

Additional Resources are offered to provide a research base regarding residential services to students enrolled in “special schools”, for example: National Agendas for visual impairments and deaf or hard of hearing; placement and readiness checklists for IEP teams, etc).

RESPONSE

The IRC examined materials from both State Special Schools and State Education Agencies and identified specific procedures used in **18 states: CA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NM, NC, SD, TX, UT, VA, and WI.**

State “Cheat Sheet”

The state “cheat sheet” can be **found on page 5** and can be used to quickly identify specific information either from the State Schools or from the State Department of Education. The **page numbers are provided** to easily locate specific state information included in this research response.

- **State School Procedures: 16 states**
CA, ID, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NM, NC, SD, TX, UT and VA
- **State Education Agency Procedures: 13 states**
ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, NE, NM, SD, TX, UT, VA, and WI

State Resources

After analyzing research results from various states, it was found that State schools for the deaf and State schools for the blind are sometimes **considered “special schools”** and are referred to as such in this research response. It was also found that most states that have a state school for the blind and/or a state school for the deaf do provide residential services for students. Below is a summary of research findings:

Initial Request for Services

- The initial request for services is **initiated by the LEA** where the child resides.
- Parent requests for placement in a residential program are typically referred to the LEA.
 - **Nebraska** Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired has developed an **online Request for Services form** for LEAs to use.
 - **Texas** guidelines specifically indicate that **direct parent referrals are not accepted.**
 - **Utah** interagency agreement designates the **LEA as the single point of entry** for services. No student may enroll in USDB programs or services without referral from the LEA.

Parent Notification

- Different **state approaches** were found that are specifically related to parent notification.
 - **Illinois** provides a **one-page fact sheet** schools districts have the **option** of using during the IEP meeting which notifies parents of the existence of “special schools” and the services available.
 - **North Carolina** House Bill 317 **requires** developing and implementing strategies to ensure that parents of a child who is deaf and hard of hearing know they are **entitled to request that the child's IEP team consider placement of their child in a residential setting.**

Placement

- Most states refer to a **continuum of services and placement options** for students who are deaf or hearing impaired (i.e., hard of hearing) and students who are blind or visually impaired (i.e., low vision).
- State information reviewed for these “special schools” indicates that **placement decisions are determined by the IEP team at the LEA or school district where the child resides** and involve collaboration with parents and staff from the “special schools”.
 - **Indiana** School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has implemented a **Placement Review Committee** to review applications to the school that have been denied.
 - **California** School for the Blind (CSB) conducts an **assessment of suitability for placement** at the school. This assessment is the period of evaluation and review for purposes of determining whether the CSB is the appropriate placement for an applicant.
 - **Utah** has developed **placement guidelines in the form of flowcharts** to assist with placement decisions for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and also for students who are Blind/Visually Impaired.

Temporary Placements

- Specific examples were identified pertaining to **temporary placements in special schools** are used to allow for additional assessments to determine student needs and whether or not the placement is appropriate.
 - **California** Special Schools conduct an assessment of suitability for placement that may include **temporary assignment for purposes of determining eligibility** for enrollment in the day or residential program and any necessary or appropriate IEP amendments to ensure proper services during this temporary assignment.
 - **North Carolina** School for the Blind provides information on admissions which indicates that **an LEA may request a temporary 30 day assessment to ascertain the most appropriate placement for a student**. During the temporary location, the residential school will conduct formal and informal observations and assessments to determine the needs of the student. An IEP team meeting will be convened following the assessment to determine placement recommendation. If a residential placement is recommended, then the admissions committee will consider the student for immediate admission.

Technical Assistance

- Some states provide **extensive guidance and technical assistance** regarding the provision of services to students who are blind or deaf.
 - **North Carolina** has developed a Statewide System of Support for Students with Visual Impairments consisting of a **VI Outreach Team** aimed at helping LEAs to understand and meet the needs of their students with visual impairments.
 - **Texas** has a **State Plan for Students with Visual Impairments** and a **State Plan for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**. These plans are intended to be tools for use in identifying needs, setting priorities, and guiding the development and provision of services.
 - **Texas** School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has an **online guide to assist school districts** with accessing the school’s services.
 - **Utah Interagency Agreement** was developed for establishing procedures to ensure effective communication and relationships. The agreement explains agency roles,

services for students with sensory disabilities, financial obligations, and a process for resolving disagreements.

- **Virginia** Department for the Blind and Vision impaired has established a **cooperative agreement with school districts** which encompasses the respective responsibilities of the School Divisions and the Department.
- **Wisconsin** provided a special bulletin on statewide services that explains the **procedures LEAs must follow** for evaluations, initial placement at a state school, IEP development, reevaluation, transportation, and removal from a state school.

IEP Addendums

- For students who are deaf or hard of hearing, two states (NM, NC) have implemented an IEP addendum for consideration of communication needs specific for these students.
 - **New Mexico** designed a **communication plan** which incorporates information relating to the continuum of placement options and LRE. A **flowchart provides guiding questions** to facilitate dialogue for exploring educational placement options.
 - **North Carolina** House Bill 317 **requires an IEP team to use a Communication Plan Worksheet** for students who are deaf or hard of hearing for documenting (i) the team's consideration of the language and communication needs, placement decisions, and annual reviews.

Additional Resources

This section **starts on page 39** and consists of resources that may assist in providing a research base regarding residential services to students enrolled in “special schools”, for example:

- ***National Agendas*** (i.e., visual impairments, deaf or hard of hearing)
- ***Policy analysis*** on the current state of practice in educational service delivery for children who are deaf/hard of hearing (Ahearn, 2011)
- ***Legal analysis*** of how the U.S. federal courts have interpreted the least restrictive environment (LRE) clause in IDEA (Aldersley, 2002)
- ***Placement and Readiness Checklists*** designed to assist IEP teams, including students, teachers, specialists, parents and school administrators, when making decisions about programming and placement for students who are deaf and hard of hearing (Johnson, 2011)
- ***Materials are included from:*** the American Foundation for the Blind, the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, the National Deaf Education Center and the National Association of the Deaf.

State "Cheat Sheet"
Deaf and Blind Residential Services Policies

STATE	PAGE #	SEPARATE OR COMBINED SCHOOLS	DEAF	BLIND	DEAF AND/OR BLIND POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES	SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES
CA	8	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission • Placement • IEP 		
ID	10	Combined	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of Services • Placement 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency Agreement
IL	11	Separate	✓	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification • Placement
IN	12	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blind/VI Legislation: Placement Review Committee 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SpEd Regs: Placement, Interagency Agreement
IA	14	Separate		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of Services • Residential Placements 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to Iowa Braille & Sight Saving School
KS	16	Separate	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • IEP 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement • SpEd regs: FAPE, placement

State "Cheat Sheet"

Deaf and Blind Residential Services Policies

STATE	PAGE #	SEPARATE OR COMBINED	DEAF	BLIND	DEAF AND/OR BLIND POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES	SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES
MI	18	Deaf only	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement • Residential placement 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SpEd regs: IEP, Continuum of Services, Placement • Continuum of Services
MN	19	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Statute: Admissions • Enrollment 		
MO	20	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions, Eligibility • Enrollment 		
MT	21	Combined	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Placement 		
NE	21	Combined	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional program • Continuum of Services • Placement • State plan • Request for services form 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SpEd regs: Residential placement

State "Cheat Sheet"
Deaf and Blind Residential Services Policies

STATE	PAGE #	SEPARATE OR COMBINED	DEAF	BLIND	DEAF AND/OR BLIND POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES	SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES
NM	23	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of Services • Placement • LRE • IEP • Enrollment 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf/Hard of Hearing IEP Addendum • Continuum of Services, Placement
NC	27	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral • Admissions • Temporary placements • IEP Communication Plan 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach Team: VI
SD	29	Separate		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of Services • Placement • Admissions • IEP • LRE 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency Agreement: Placement, LRE, IEP Considerations
TX	32	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines & Standards: Placement • Residential program-Deaf • Texas Response to Natl Agenda 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State plan-VI, • Placement

State "Cheat Sheet"

Deaf and Blind Residential Services Policies

STATE	PAGE #	SEPARATE OR COMBINED	DEAF	BLIND	DEAF AND/OR BLIND POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES	SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES	TYPE OF POLICIES
UT	35	Separate	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Placement in the LRE 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency Agreement: Agency roles and services • Continuum of Services • Placement
VA	36	Combined	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative Agreement with School Districts: Technical Assistance, IEPs, Eligibility, Referral 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement
WI	37	Separate	✓	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement • LRE

STATE RESOURCES

18 States: CA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NM, NC, SD, TX, UT, VA, and WI

CALIFORNIA

State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf/Blind separate

California Department of Education
California State Schools for the Deaf, Blind

State Special Schools Admission Process

http://www.uad.org/DeafEd/utah_code/Calif%20admission.pdf

The specific admission process is described for State Special Schools in California, which includes the California School for the Blind (CSB) and the California School for the Deaf (CSD). Since the process appears to be similar for both of these special schools, only **an example for the CSB process is provided below.**

§ 17665. Admission Process for the California School for the Blind (CSB).

For purposes of determining whether an applicant is qualified for enrollment in CSB, the following process shall be followed:

(a) The school district of residence (LEA) shall refer an applicant to CSB by submitting an application packet to CSB.

(b) The completed application packet must be received by CSB within 60 calendar days of the referral. It is the responsibility of the LEA to complete the application packet and submit it to CSB. Applications not completed within 60 days of the referral shall be returned to the applicant's district of residence (LEA), and the applicant shall not be assessed for suitability of placement at CSB.

(c) The Application shall contain relevant information, assessments and reports.

(d) Once a completed application has been received, CSB shall initiate and complete an assessment of suitability for placement at CSB, in accordance with Education Code section 56344. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant's district of residence (LEA) to ensure compliance with Education Code section 56321 prior to CSB's commencement of the applicant's assessment for suitability for placement. This assessment plan may include temporary assignment at CSB for purposes of determining eligibility for enrollment in the day or residential program and should include any necessary and appropriate amendments to the IEP to ensure appropriate services during this temporary assignment.

(e) Prior to the completion of the assessment of suitability for placement at CSB, the applicant's IEP team, including the appropriate CSB personnel, shall meet to determine the appropriate placement. The IEP team may not make a determination of placement at CSB without the agreement of CSB personnel.

§ 17667. Eligibility for Enrollment in CSB's Residential Program.

Applicants eligible for CSB's day program are not automatically enrolled into the residential program. Enrollment into CSB's residential program is a separate and distinct consideration even for a pupil currently enrolled in CSB's day program.

An applicant who meets the criteria established by section 17666 may also be **admitted into CSB's residential program, if CSB determines:**

(a) The **applicant resides beyond a 60-minute commute each way between home and CSB using transportation the LEA provides for day pupils.**

(b) The applicant has the ability to respond independently and appropriately to life-threatening situations.

(c) The **responsible local school district and parent/guardian have approved the applicant's placement in the residential program.**

(d) The applicant does not have a history of un-rehabilitated behavior that poses a threat to themselves and/or others, including but not limited to substance abuse, fire-starting, sexually predatory behavior or assault.

IDAHO

State schools operated by: Another entity
Deaf/Blind combined

Web site: [Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind](http://iesdb.org/)
<http://iesdb.org/>

The IESDB has been serving the Great State of Idaho since 1906, and is established under Section 33-3401 of Idaho Code with the purpose of providing supplemental educational services, early invention/education, consultation, and transition support to families and local school districts throughout the state of Idaho. As stated in Statute: **"The goal of (IESDB) is to assist school districts and state agencies in providing accessibility, quality and equity to students in the state with sensory impairments through a continuum of service and placement options."**

Our continuum of services are provided by our Educational Specialists (Teachers trained in either Deaf/Hard of Hearing or Blind/Visually impaired specialties) through our 7 regional educational centers; and also **includes direct education services through a campus based school, the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind (ISDB).** This school is accredited through Advanced-ED and has a specialized curriculum established for students with hearing and vision loss. **Students who wish to attend must be referred by their local district (LEA) and placed by their IEP or 504 teams** for free and appropriate educational services in **residential or day programming** at the ISDB campus.

Idaho Department of Education
Division of Special Education

Interagency Agreement between the Idaho Department of Education and the Idaho Bureau of Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind
http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/special_edu/docs/whats_new/Contract%20Only.pdf

The SDE and the IBESDB agree that **the LEA should be the single point of entry for initial placement** into all campus-based and outreach IBESDB programs for school-age students (ages 3-21 years of age).

Any LEA seeking a student placement into a campus-based or outreach IBESDB program shall follow **IBESDB's referral process as outlined in this agreement.**

ILLINOIS

State schools operated by: Other state agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools

Illinois State Board of Education
Special Education and Support Services

Web site: **Deaf and Visually Impaired**

http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/deaf_impaired.htm

Notification of Services from Illinois School for the Deaf and 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 and he or 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** or guardian, in writing, of the existence of these schools and the services they provide. This notification shall include without limitation information on school services, school admissions criteria, and school contact information."*

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

Districts are reminded that **all decisions regarding placement** of a student with a disability must continue to be made in accordance with [23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.240](#).

Guidance: Services and Placement Determinations for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2005)

http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/pdfs/hearing_impaired_guidance.pdf

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance regarding the services and placement of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. **The provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for a student with hearing loss can only occur with full communication access to education.** Full communication access depends upon a language-rich environment that fosters age-appropriate communication and language development, utilizes language-proficient educational staff, and provides for direct communication with staff and peers. Children and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing **face unique and significant barriers related to language and communication that profoundly affect most aspects of the educational process.** Attending to a student's communication needs and language development is a vital prerequisite for access to educational opportunities that lead to literacy and academic achievement. **Therefore, placement determinations for students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be based upon meeting each student's language and communication needs.**

INDIANA

State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools

Indiana Department of Education
Office of Special Education

Article 7 – Indiana Special Education Law

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/individualized-learning/laws-rules-and-interpretations>

511 IAC 7-32-77 "Public agency" defined

Sec. 77. "Public agency" means any public entity that is responsible for providing special education and related services, including the following:

- (1) Public school corporations operating programs individually or cooperatively.
- (2) Charter schools that are not part of a public school corporation.
- (3) Programs operated by the state department of health.
- (4) The **Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**.
- (5) The **Indiana School for the Deaf**.
- (6) Programs operated by the department of correction.

RULE 33. GENERAL PROVISIONS

511 IAC 7-33-1 Scope

Sec. 1. (a) This article applies to all special education programs provided for students at least three (3) years of age through the school year in which students become twenty-two (22) years of age, unless a CCC determines that a student will leave school earlier.

511 IAC 7-33-3 Other public agencies' special education programs; state level interagency agreements

Sec. 3. (a) The provisions of this article pertaining to student identification, eligibility, evaluation, and **placement procedures** as well as the provision of a free appropriate public education, including all due process and procedural safeguards, apply to special education programs conducted by, or under the jurisdiction of, the following:

- (1) The Indiana state department of health.
- (2) The family and social services administration, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - (A) The division of disability and rehabilitative services.
 - (B) The division of mental health and addiction.
 - (3) The department of child services.
 - (4) The department of correction.
 - (5) The **Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**.
 - (6) The **Indiana School for the Deaf**.
 - (7) Any public or private agency providing special education programs for students referred by:
 - (A) a public school corporation;
 - (B) a charter school;
 - (C) the division of special education; or
 - (D) any other public agency.
 - (8) Any other public agency that contracts with any of the agencies in subdivisions (1) through (6) to provide special education.

(b) The division of special education must, in conjunction with each public agency in subsection (a), **develop an interagency agreement** or other mechanism for interagency coordination. Interagency agreements or other coordination mechanisms may address educational programs or noneducational programs that provide or pay for services that are considered special education, or both.

Web site: Indiana School for the Deaf

<http://www.deafhoosiers.com/>

Web site: Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

<http://www.isbvik12.org/>

Indiana Legislation: School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title20/ar21/ch2.html>

IC 20-21-2-1 Establishment; services provided

Sec. 1. The Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is established as a state educational resource center that includes the following:

- (1) *A residential and day school.*
- (2) *Outreach services.*
- (3) *Consultative services to local educational agencies to assist the agencies in meeting the needs of locally enrolled students with visual disabilities.*

IC 20-21-2-6 Students admitted to school

Sec. 6. Subject to:

- (1) *the **determination by case conference committees based on individualized education programs**; and*
- (2) *the school's admissions criteria adopted by the board under IC 20-21-3-10(a)(4); the executive shall receive as students in the school Indiana residents who are school age individuals with a visual disability.*

IC 20-21-2-7 Placement review committee

(a) **A placement review committee for the school is established.** The placement review committee consists of one (1) representative of each of the following:

- (1) *The board.*
- (2) *The office of the secretary of family and social services.*
- (3) *The state superintendent.*

(b) **The placement review committee shall meet upon petition of an interested party to review the following:**

- (1) *Applications to the school denied through the process described in section 6 of this chapter.*
- (2) *All instances of dismissal from the school for reasons other than graduation, voluntary transition to another educational facility, or voluntary departure from the school.*

(c) The executive shall serve as an adviser to the placement review committee. The executive shall provide the placement review committee with information and justification for all application denials and dismissals under review.

(d) The placement review committee may recommend that application denials or dismissals be reconsidered.

Residential Service Program Eligibility

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnp2J2aWsxMnxneDo1Zjk2ODEyNTcwMzEwYzc5>

This policy is designed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students receiving services provided by the ISBVI Residential Services Department in the ISBVI dormitories or independent living training programs. Not all students who are admitted for placement in the ISBVI special education program are **entitled to, or automatically qualify for, ISBVI Residential Services.**

The lack of daily transportation due to significant distance and travel time between the student's home residence and ISBVI may make dormitory placement a necessity. **The case conference committee will determine the need for ISBVI residential programs based on this need, as well as the need for "local" students to reside in the dormitory on a "part-time" basis due to identified educational needs resulting in delays or deficits. The residential program must have representation at the case conference to articulate the program and assist in determining the most appropriate residential placement.**

IOWA

State schools operated by: Another entity

Web site: Iowa Feasibility and Planning Study Committee – Iowa Services for Students who are Deaf, Blind, Visually Impaired or Hard of Hearing

<http://www.regents.iowa.gov/feasibilitystudy/FeasibilityandPlanningStudyCommittee.html>

Report Presented to the Board of Regents at its December 5, 2012 Meeting

http://www.regents.iowa.gov/feasibilitystudy/1212_ITEM13.pdf

Executive Summary

The Iowa School for the Deaf and Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired operate under the direction of the Board of Regents as two separate entities to provide needed educational services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing and students who are blind or visually impaired. In order to plan for future effective and efficient operation of services for students with sensory impairments, **it is necessary to examine the administrative and programmatic functions of the two schools.**

Summary of recommendations

The Committee **identified and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each of the guiding questions using the data, information, and public comments received.** The Committee eliminated those options that did not meet the criteria for more effective and efficient administrative and programmatic services. The single campus option was eliminated unless the single campus also included a regional component. All of the remaining options recognized the value of adding a regional program model to the continuum of services statewide. In particular, the Committee determined that there was value in using both special school campuses in configuring the regional programs.

Web site: Blind and Visually Impaired

http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1602&Itemid=2381#Referral

Referral to Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBS)

The Residential Referral to Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS) **flowchart is to be used when IEP teams are considering educational services** on the campus at IBS. Campus based services include:

- Goal focused short term educational programs
- **Residential component** with emphasis on independent living and areas of the expanded core curriculum
- Enriching athletic and activity programs
- Demonstration classrooms
- Transition services

Web site: Iowa Educational Services for the Blind

<http://www.iowa-braille.k12.ia.us/>

Statewide partners include the Iowa Department of Education – Iowa Department for the Blind – and Area Education Agencies. The Statewide System for Vision Services **provides a full continuum of services** for students who are blind or visually impaired with the focus of these services on serving the needs of students **in general education and in the least restrictive environment**. Services are provided directly to students as well as technical assistance, consultation and collaboration with other educators serving students that are blind or visually impaired.

Meeting the Service Needs of Students who are *Blind or Visually Impaired* in Iowa: Special Schools and Residential Placements

<http://www.iowa-braille.k12.ia.us/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/4f577cef492dc/Special%20Schools%20and%20Residential%20Placements.doc>

When a parent or IEP team seeks placement in a special school or residential facility, the parent or team must establish that the local school district cannot provide or offer FAPE within its own facilities, and that the residential placement is necessary for the provision of FAPE. One major hurdle is LRE—a residential placement is a highly restrictive placement, only justified when less restrictive alternatives are not appropriate. Moreover, we have a specific federal regulation that addresses residential placement.

If any of the following are true then a residential placement is not warranted:

- I. *Placement in a residential program is not necessary because the school district has offered FAPE in a non-residential setting.*
- II. *Placement in a residential program is not necessary because services offered in the residential facility are not appropriate.*

- III. *The special education and related services that the child needs do not have to be provided in a residential program. That is, even if residential placement is necessary, it is not necessary for the purpose of delivering special education and related services.*
- IV. *The child is not a child with a disability-not eligible under IDEA.*
- V. *The services provided at the residential facility are medical care.*

KANSAS

*State schools operated by: Another state agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools*

Web site: Kansas School for the Deaf

<http://www.ksdeaf.org/>

Admissions Process

<http://ksdeaf.org/RelatedServices/admissions.php>

- Initial contact with KSD - Related Services/Admissions, phone number: 913.324.0600 **Contact can be made by either parents or the Local Education Agency [school district where the student currently lives].** Parents will be referred to the school district if the student is not currently enrolled in that district.
- When the application (Initial Data Form) and signed release has been received from parent/s, KSD Related Services will send for school records.
- **The KSD Director of Admissions will initiate contact with the Local Education Agency [LEA] to explain and/or confirm the IEP process.**
- The KSD Director of Admissions pursues the IEP conference with the LEA and parent/s.
- Placement is implemented as soon as possible.

Individual Education Program (IEP)

<http://www.ksdeaf.org/IEP/>

An Individual Education Program (IEP) must be developed for every student who attends KSD in order to receive an appropriate education. **The purpose of the IEP meeting** is for KSD, the Local Education Agency (LEA) and the parents to **jointly determine the needs of the particular child**, and to develop an educational plan that is appropriate to meet the child's needs.

The IEP office schedules and notifies parents and the LEA of IEP meetings, gathers evaluation information and reports on students, and conducts all Comprehensive/IEP meetings. The IEP is an important part of the special education process for everyone: students, parents, teachers, related service personnel, general education teachers and administrators.

KSD's Role in the IEP process

Initial placement at KSD is determined at an IEP meeting conducted in the student's local district; with representation from KSD. Subsequent IEP meetings are conducted at KSD on behalf of the Local Educational Agency (LEA). Students attending KSD continue to "belong" to their local school district.

Guide to Education of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2009)

<http://www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=zx2msZjP5YQ=>

Educational Placement (page 6-3)

Educational placement refers to the instructional environment for the provision of special education services (K.A.R. 91-40-1(t)). Federal and state laws require students with disabilities under IDEA to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (34 C.F.R. §300.114(2)(i), K.A.R. 91-40-21). Least restrictive environment means the educational placement in which students with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate and is based upon the individual needs of the child. (K.A.R. 91-40-1(II)).

For children who are D/HH, as with any other student with a disability, a continuum of placement options must be available, including regular or special classes, special schools, home, hospital, or other institution settings (K.A.R. 91-40-21(b)). **For enrolling a student in a state school, such as the Kansas School for the Deaf** (see Appendix C for KSD web site), refer to Kansas Regulation 91-40-4 for applicable procedures.

Kansas State Regulations

https://svapp15586.ksde.org/regs_statutes/Stat_Reg_Results.aspx?Statute=0&Regulation=91-40-4

FAPE for exceptional children housed and maintained in certain state institutions.

(a) Subject to K.S.A. 72-1046 and amendments thereto, each state agency shall provide FAPE to exceptional children housed and maintained at any facility operated by the agency. All educational programs shall comply with the requirements of state special education laws and regulations. **(b) State schools. (1) The procedures for placing Kansas residents into the Kansas state school for the blind and the Kansas state school for the deaf shall meet the following requirements:**

(A) **Admission** procedures shall be initiated by the child's home school district and by the child's parent or parents.

(B) **Placement** of any child in a state school shall be made only after the local school district and the child's parent or parents have considered less restrictive placement options.

(C) **Placement shall be based on a child's IEP**, which shall indicate a need for educational services provided at the state school.

(D) Any agency may refer a child to a state school for a portion or all of the child's evaluation. In such a case, a representative or representatives from the agency shall be included in any meeting at which the child's eligibility for services or placement is determined.

(E) If the initial evaluation and staffing are conducted by any local school district and if one of the state schools is proposed as a placement for the child, a representative or representatives from the state school shall be included in the meeting at which placement for the child is determined.

MICHIGAN

State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf only

Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education

Michigan School for the Deaf: Operational Procedures (2010)

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MSD_Operational_Procedures_April_2010_319557_7.pdf

- **When consideration for placement at the MSD is indicated, an IEP team meeting will be scheduled by the resident school district** per Rule 340.1742 Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE). Representatives of the MSD, the intermediate school district, the resident school district, and the parents shall be invited to the IEP team meeting.
- **Placement at the MSD is an IEP team decision;** there can be no unilateral acceptance/ rejection of the placement by either the parent, resident school district, or the MSD. The parent, the resident school district, or the MSD may initiate a due process hearing complaint regarding the appropriateness of placement at the MSD per Rule 340.1724 MARSE.
- Placement at the MSD and the special education program and services required by the student is determined by the IEP team. **Once the IEP team determines placement at the MSD, a contract with the resident school district will be developed.** The contract will specify the costs for any additional services listed in the student's IEP which will be billed to the resident school district. The MSD and the resident school district review the contract annually, generally at the time of the student's annual IEP team meeting.
- The **resident school district is responsible** for convening and conducting the initial IEP team meetings.

Residential Living Option

Residential student life is available for students who live too far (outside Genesee County) from campus to commute on a daily basis. Day students residing in Genesee County may be considered for residential placement due to family concerns, transportation issues, after school participation, and/or court involvement.

Consideration for residential placement will be determined by the Chief Administrator of MSD on a case-by-case basis. A request for residential placement must be submitted in writing by the parent(s)/guardian(s) to the Chief Administrator of MSD.

Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MARSE_Supplemented_with_IDEA_Regs_379598_7.pdf

R 340.1721e Individualized education program. Rule 21e.

(5) **The Michigan school for the deaf shall be considered a part of the total continuum of services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.** The resident district shall conduct the individualized education program team meeting that initiates an assignment into the Michigan school for the deaf. Representatives of the intermediate school district of residence and the **Michigan school for the deaf shall be invited to participate** in the individualized education program team meeting. The state board of education shall adopt procedures for placement at the Michigan school for the deaf.

(6) The **school district of residence is responsible** for conducting the initial individualized education program team meeting involving a student in its district and shall conduct, or authorize the operating district to conduct, each subsequent individualized education program team meeting at a mutually agreed upon time and place.

(7) Upon request of the parent, **a representative of the school district of residence shall be invited to attend the individualized education program team meeting** if the district of residence has authorized the operating district to conduct each subsequent individualized education program team meeting.

R 340.1722 District responsibilities. Rule 22.

IDEA Federal Regulation § 300.115 Continuum of alternative placements.

Each public agency must ensure that **a continuum of alternative placements is available** to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services. (b) The continuum required in paragraph (a) of this section must—(1) Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under § 300.38 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, **special schools**, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions).

MINNESOTA

State schools operated by: Other state agency

Deaf/Blind separate schools

Minnesota State Academies

- **Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf**
<http://www.msad.state.mn.us/index.aspx>
- **Minnesota State Academy for the Blind**
<http://www.msab.state.mn.us/index.aspx>

State Statutes: State Adopted Procedures

<http://www.msad.state.mn.us/Admissions/forschooldistricts/statutes.asp>

The board of the Minnesota State Academies must establish procedures for:

- (1) admission, including short-term admission, to the academies;
- (2) discharge from the academies;
- (3) decisions on a pupil's program at the academies; and
- (4) evaluation of a pupil's progress at the academies.

Enrollment Policies / Procedures for School Districts

<http://www.msad.state.mn.us/Admissions/forschooldistricts/enrollment-policy-procedures.asp>

The Minnesota State Academies is one state agency that includes two schools: the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf.

When the local education agency (LEA) or parent expresses interest in having a student attend the Academy, they contact the respective Academy for information.

MISSOURI

State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools

Web site: Missouri School for the Blind

<http://msb.dese.mo.gov/>

Admissions Process

<http://msb.dese.mo.gov/admissions.htm>

Students are admitted to Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) in cooperation with your local school district (also called local education agency or LEA). The services at Missouri School for the Blind are provided at no cost to the student, parent or your school district.

The following procedures have been established to determine students' eligibility for admission to Missouri School for the Blind:

- **To initiate a referral to MSB, contact your local education agency (LEA),** which will send a letter of referral and the following four documents to MSB's Superintendent:
 - *The most recent Individual Education Plan (IEP) which provides the information contained in (A)(3)(a, b, c) of the State Plan;*
 - *A three year re-evaluation;*
 - *An optometric and/or ophthalmological report dated within the last year (ophthalmological report preferred;)*
 - *An up-to-date immunization record.*
- *Upon receipt of this information, the Superintendent's office will notify the LEA stating that MSB has received the material. The Student Services Coordinator will contact the LEA representative either for additional material or **regarding the admission team's recommendation.***

Connection Newsletter: Unlocking the Future (Winter 2013, Volume 2, Issue 2)

http://msb.dese.mo.gov/documents/ConnectionW13_FINALe.pdf

This particular issue of this newsletter discusses IEP teams and effective planning for the immediate and future educational needs of students who are blind or visually impaired. The full article can be viewed using the link above. **Here are few summarized items of interest:**

- At annual IEP meetings, the team determines educational placement and the least restrictive environment (LRE) for a student.

- **When considering a child's education, the whole picture must be reviewed** and it must be decided what setting would provide the student with the least restrictive environment in all areas of learning.
- When **determining the least restrictive learning environment** for a student with a visual impairment, an **IEP team must consider if all goals are being addressed**. Parental concerns, poor progress or lack of progress on IEP goals and academic progress in specific areas or overall must also be taken into consideration. Problems with academic success can often be traced to lack of progress on the Expanded Core Curriculum.

Web site: Missouri School for the Deaf

<http://www.msdc.k12.mo.us/>

Enrollment

<http://www.msdc.k12.mo.us/enrollment/>

Q. How are children enrolled?

A. First, you need to **contact your local school superintendent and/or special education director** to inform them you have a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, and are interested in considering placement at MSD. **The local school district personnel will discuss with you a variety of options.** Before a final decision is made, you should make arrangements to visit MSD, have your child evaluated and observe the program.

MONTANA

*State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf/Blind combined*

Web site: Montana School for the Deaf and Blind

<http://msdb.mt.gov/admissions.html>

Upon the request of a local school district or Part C provider (a preschool provider under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), **MSDB will assist in determining the educational needs** of preschool and school age children identified or suspected of having the qualifying disabilities of deafness, hearing or visual impairment and **determining whether placement at MSDB is the most appropriate** way to meet those needs. Any recommendation for evaluation or placement will be preceded by a review of a student's file by the MSDB intake committee. This web site includes ***Procedures for Referral of Students for Placement Consideration at MSDB.***

NEBRASKA

*State schools operated by: Another entity
Blind only*

**Nebraska Department of Education
Special Education**

Rule 53: Regulations for Special Education Residential Care

<http://www.education.ne.gov/legal/webrulespdf/Rule53clean.pdf>

007 Residential Placement Decisions

When **determining whether a residential placement is allowable**, the Department of Education and the resident school district shall take into account specific factors in selecting an appropriate education program as close to the student's resident district as possible. This section provides a listing of the specific factors, which includes the Students' Education History (i.e., placement or placement consideration not requiring residential care at each level of the continuum, school district documentation of efforts to locate or develop an appropriate non-residential education program.

008 Non-Allowable Residential Placements

No school district shall make a placement in a special education program requiring residential care without advance consultation with the State Department of Education to review the child's needs and the availability and appropriateness of each possible placement in the continuum of alternative services except as required by other Nebraska or federal law.

009 State Level Decision

The **Department of Education shall permit or deny a residential placement** within thirty days after the receipt of necessary forms and information from a school district. Applications for approval of special education program placements requiring residential care shall be signed by the parent or legal guardian and submitted via the school district of which the student is a resident to the State Department of Education. If an application is denied, the parent or legal guardian shall be provided written notification by the State Department of Education of his or her right to appeal the decision pursuant to Sections 43-661 and 43-668 and right to name the State Department of Education as respondent in the appeal proceedings.

Web site: Nebraska Regional Programs for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
<http://nrpdhh.esu9.org/>

This program was **developed to support the concept of regional programs and cooperative relationships with the school districts**, educational service units and consortium of school districts in order to:

- *Maximize resources in providing programs and services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing;*
- *Provide a network of support and services that will serve as the state infrastructure to **link programs together** and assist in the enhancement of a child's educational program;*
- *Contain costs now in order to assure future funding;*
- *Provide continued support to quality educational programs, which may include **center-based options**;*
- *Reinforce the belief that children who are deaf or hard of hearing benefit from education with hearing and deaf or hard of hearing peers;*
- *Continue state leadership and support for a **full continuum of placement options** for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

State Plan for Services to Students who are **Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

http://nrpdhh.esu9.org/PDFs/State_Plan.pdf

Guiding Principles For All Programs Serving Children Who Are Deaf Or Hard Of Hearing

Principle 3:

An array of educational programs allowing movement within the options will be available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This document also specifies **particular roles** in serving children who are deaf or hard of hearing and these include the following:

- *School District's Role*
- *Regional Program's Role*
- *State Role (Nebraska Department of Education Director of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments; **Special Populations Office**)*

Web site: **Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired (NCECBVI)**

<http://www.ncecbvi.org/index.html>

Center-based Programs and Residential Services

http://www.ncecbvi.org/center_based.html

Students have the option of attending the Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired for **specialized services based upon the student's educational needs as indicated by the individual education plan**. Full or part-time educational placement for varying durations is available. **Residential services may be provided** in addition to the center-based educational program. Residential services may include independent living skill training, social skill training, community participation, and recreation and leisure activities.

Request for Services Form

http://www.ncecbvi.org/Downloads/rfs2012_13.pdf

This **downloadable form is available online for school districts**, ESU's, and service providers to submit to the Outreach Director for the NCECBVI.

NEW MEXICO

**New Mexico Public Education Department
Special Education Bureau**

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Memo

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/dl09/deaf%20and%20hearing%20memo.pdf>

The Public Education Department's (PED's) Special Education Bureau (SEB) developed **the addendum below to assist school districts in meeting the communication needs for students who are deaf or hard of hearing**. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires IEP teams to consider the communication needs of a student when developing, reviewing, and revising a student's IEP.

The IDEA states that in developing each student's IEP, the IEP team shall consider the communication needs of the student.

Addendum for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Communication Considerations

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/law/dl11/Revised%20Communication%20Considerations%20Addendum%203-11.pdf>

This **addendum must be completed for any student who is deaf or hard of hearing**, even if this is not identified as the student's primary disability. This tool will be helpful in fulfilling the requirements of Special Factors (34 CFR 300.324 (a)(2)(iv)) and the NM Deaf/Hard of Hearing Education Bill of Rights (28 -11C-3). The completed form should reflect a conscientious discussion and connection to services agreed to in the IEP. **A section is included which addresses the continuum of placement options and LRE.**

Communication Considerations 11x17 Guidance Flow Chart

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/se0/dl09/Communication%20Considerations%2011x17%20Guidance%20Poster%202.pdf>

This document **provides guiding questions to facilitate dialogue for exploring educational placement options** that best meets the student's identified needs.

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Understanding and Making the Placement Decision

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/SEB/technical/LRE%20Booklet.pdf>

- What is placement?
- Who makes the placement decision?
- When is the placement decision made?
- What is the LRE Mandate in the IDEA with Respect to Making Placement Decisions?
- The **Continuum of Alternative Placements**
- The Decision

Web site: New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

<http://www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/>

Policy 500: Educational Program

www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/P&P/500%20Educational%20Program.doc

In order to be **eligible for placement in NMSBVI** special education programs, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Committee will affirm that the student is identified as a student with a visual impairment as defined in federal and state regulations and **that the student needs services in addition to or in place of a regular public school program.** The IEP Committee will further ensure that provisions will be made to educate students who are blind and visually impaired with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate in both curricular and non-curricular settings. **Placement will be individually determined** and based on multi-evaluation criteria. The **placement will be reviewed at least annually** and will be based on the individualized educational program.

The decision for residential placement will be made by the IEP Committee and will include representatives of the student's district of residence, NMSBVI personnel as well as the student's parent(s) and the student when appropriate. **Placement in the residential program will be considered in light of the following:** any potentially harmful effect a residential placement might have on the student; specific needs of the student related to his/her vision loss; availability of vision related services in the district.

Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Special Education Services for Students with Disabilities and Gifted Students

<http://www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/P%26P/>

➤ **526 Chapter 5.1 IEP**

<http://www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/P&P/526%20Chapter%205.1%20IEP.doc>

§300.116 Placements (page 16)

In determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, including a preschool child with a disability, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired must ensure that—

(b) The child's placement--

(1) Is determined at least annually;

(2) Is based on the child's IEP; and

(3) Is as close as possible to the child's home, unless the parent agrees otherwise;

For placement in its entirety, please see Chapter 6 – LRE

➤ **526 Chapter 6 Least Restrictive Environment**

<http://www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/P&P/526%20Chapter%206%20Least%20Restrictive%20Environment.doc>

A. Continuum of Alternative Placements (page 3 & 4)

Example of a Continuum of Service and Setting Options

The continuum of alternative placements is service and setting options where an IEP can be implemented. It ranges from less restrictive (all regular education with monitoring services) to more restrictive (homebound), **as well as placements between those two points as shown in the example provided.** State and federal regulations require that the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired make the continuum of alternative placements available as needed in order to meet the needs of the individual student with an exceptionality.

LRE Questions for the IEP Team – Students with more Severe Challenges

This section provides **points for discussion** and documentation as an IEP Team determines the **appropriateness of the Least Restrictive Environment** for a student with more severe disabilities.

B. PLACEMENTS (pages 5 & 6)

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Understanding and Making the Placement Decision

- **What is Placement?** It is not the physical location of the special education services. Rather, it is the set of services and the type of environment, or the spot on the continuum of service and setting options, in which those services are delivered.
- **Who Makes the Placement Decision?** The student's IEP team is the group who makes the decision. This requires an individualized inquiry into the student's unique educational and related services needs.
- **When is the Placement Decision Made?** It is the last of a series of decisions made at the IEP meeting. It is made after goals, objectives/benchmarks, and instructional modifications are developed. The decision is based on those IEP elements.
- **Summary of the LRE Mandate in IDEA with Respect to Making Placement Decisions?**
- **The Decision . . .** When making the placement decision as an individualized inquiry, the IEP team should follow these steps.

First, determine through the IEP process the student's educational needs. Determine what constitutes an appropriate program for the student, not where it will be provided or what pre-existing "program" fits best.

Next, review the continuum of placement options in sequence from least restrictive to most restrictive. Look at how each option currently exists, as well as how it might also be modified.

As the first option, start the decision-making process by examining regular classroom placement. Have a serious and thoughtful discussion about **three factors:**

1. *Consider whether the student can be educated satisfactorily in the regular classroom*
2. *Compare the benefits provided in the regular education classroom and those provided in a special education classroom or segregated setting.*
3. *Consider the potentially beneficial or harmful effects that a regular class placement may have on the student with an exceptionality or the other students in the class.*

Web site: New Mexico School for the Deaf

<http://www.nmsd.k12.nm.us/>

Enrollment

The enrollment process is a coordinated effort involving the parents and child, the child's Local Education Agency (LEA) and the New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD).

NMSD will collect and review current evaluation/ assessment information in order to **determine whether or not the child meets NMSD's Basic Enrollment Criteria.** If eligible, NMSD, with the family, LEA, and all applicable team members, will participate in an IEP/IFSP meeting for the determination that hearing loss is the primary impacting

condition on education, language/communication and overall development and to **determine if NMSD is the most appropriate environment** to provide educational services and supports to meet the student's goals and objectives. If NMSD is found to be the appropriate placement, the family will then register their child as a student of NMSD.

NORTH CAROLINA

State schools operated by: Another state agency
Deaf/Blind separate

House Bill 317: An Act to Improve Educational Outcomes for North Carolina Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (March 2013)

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/House/PDF/H317v1.pdf>

SECTION 1. **The State Board of Education shall do at least all of the following** to improve the educational outcomes for North Carolina children who are deaf or hard of hearing:

(1) *Develop assessment procedures and protocols to measure, at least annually or more frequently if specified in a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), the acquisition of language skills necessary for literacy using linguistically and culturally appropriate assessment tools. The results of these assessments shall be used to determine whether further support and services, if any, are needed for a child.*

(2) **Require an IEP team to use the Comprehensive Exceptional Children Accountability System, Communication Plan Worksheet** for Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, to document (i) the team's consideration of the language and communication needs of the individual child as the IEP is developed, (ii) the **placement decisions** made for that child, and (iii) the team's review, at least annually, of the child's placement and language and communication needs.

(3) *Ensure that personnel who are highly qualified in the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing are available to meet the unique needs of each child, including interactions in the child's language and communication modality to meet academic and social goals.*

(4) **Develop and implement strategies to ensure that parents of a child who is deaf and hard of hearing know they are entitled to request that the child's IEP team consider placement of their child in a residential setting and, if such a request is made, that a representative from one of the two North Carolina residential/day program schools for the deaf shall be a member of the IEP team.**

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Comprehensive Exceptional Children Accountability System (CECAS)

Communication Plan Worksheet for Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

[http://www.nccecas.org/training/downloads/ECForms/F19%20-%20CECAS%20Communication%20Plan%20Worksheet%20\(CPW\)%20Getting%20Started%200Guide%2011.09.11.pdf](http://www.nccecas.org/training/downloads/ECForms/F19%20-%20CECAS%20Communication%20Plan%20Worksheet%20(CPW)%20Getting%20Started%200Guide%2011.09.11.pdf)

This worksheet is **used to document** (i) the team's consideration of the language and communication needs of the individual child as the IEP is developed, (ii) **the placement decisions** made for that child, and (iii) the team's

review, at least annually, of the child's placement and language and communication needs.

Web site: North Carolina School for the Deaf (NCSID)

<http://www.ncsd.net/>

The North Carolina School for the Deaf **provides a residential option** for students who prefer to stay on campus. According to the NCSID brochure, referral to the NCSID is an **IEP team decision** and **must begin in the local education agency** (LEA) where the student resides.

Web site: North Carolina School for the Blind: Governor Morehead School

<http://www.governormorehead.net/>

Admissions

http://www.governormorehead.net/site_res_view_template.aspx?id=b85d9f26-80d1-4c08-926f-2b284a100119

The Governor Morehead School serves all students with visual loss throughout the state of North Carolina. Application for admission to the Governor Morehead School **may only come through the child's local public school system** (LEA) as a referral **through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process**. When a residential school receives an inquiry from parents, legal guardians, a physician, or other interested parties, notification will be given to the student's local school system. If the IEP team decides a referral is appropriate, then **a request for a referral packet** should be made by the Exceptional Children's Director of that LEA. The completed application for admission will be submitted to the Admissions Chair. It is recommended that a **representative from the residential school be invited to attend any IEP meeting** where a referral is being considered, so that, they may provide information and answer questions. This page provides specific information that should be included in the referral packet. In addition to the referral packet, the Admissions Committee will need to **conduct a school observation as part of the decision making process** and/or request the student and their parents to visit the residential campus.

If the student is accepted, there is a larger packet (admissions-medical, residential, transportation) of paperwork that should be completed. It will be sent to the Exceptional Children's Director who will, in turn, get it to the parent/guardian(s). An actual enrollment date is contingent upon receipt of complete records from the LEA and complete admissions information from the parent/guardian(s). A recommendation for placement should also be received from the child's IEP team (Dec 5.) prior to enrollment. **LEAs are expected to work closely with the residential school staff** during the enrollment of their students in our programs and will be invited to all IEP team meetings.

Temporary placements

An LEA may request a temporary 30 day assessment to ascertain the most appropriate placement for a student. Consent for evaluation and an application package will need to be completed prior to locating a child on campus. During the temporary location, the residential school will conduct formal and informal observations and assessments to determine the needs of the student. An IEP team meeting will be convened following the assessment to determine placement recommendation. If a residential placement is recommended, then the admissions committee will consider the student for immediate admission.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children Division

Statewide System of Support for Students with Visual Impairments
<http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/disability-resources/visual-impairments>

The DPI Visual Impairment Outreach Team

Visual impairment is a low incidence condition, but it can have a high impact on student performance. Material and equipment must be carefully chosen to meet the unique needs of each student with a visual impairment. The Exceptional Children Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has developed a Statewide System of Support for Students with Visual Impairments (Visual Impairment, or VI, Outreach Team) to help local education agencies (LEAs) understand and meet the needs of their students with visual impairments.

SOUTH DAKOTA

*State schools operated by: Another state agency
Deaf/Blind separate*

South Dakota Department of Education Special Education Division

Interagency Agreement
<http://www.doe.sd.gov/oess/documents/SDSD2.pdf>

The South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD) and the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI), and the South Dakota Department of Education, Special Education Programs (DOE) are committed to the assurance of appropriate educational services for children with disabilities as identified by IDEIA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, South Dakota Law, and South Dakota Regulations for Special Education.

The SDSD and SDSBVI will provide alternative placement educational programming to assist school districts to make free appropriate public education available to children whose hearing or visual impairments preclude satisfactory educational achievement in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services.

Least Restrictive Environment

The agencies agree that **special emphasis must be given to specific planning criteria** for children with hearing and/or vision disabilities as required by state regulations on *Factors for Determining Placements*.

Individualized Educational Plans (IEP)

The **school district will retain responsibility for providing a free appropriate public education** to each child it has placed at the special school.

Appropriate Educational Programming

Considerations (i.e., Braille, communication needs) are provided for developing IEPs for students with hearing or vision loss.

Web site: South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
<http://sdsbvi.northern.edu/>

Mission Statement

<http://sdsbvi.northern.edu/mission.htm>

The role and mission of the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to **provide statewide services to meet the educational needs of sensory impaired children from birth through twenty-one in South Dakota** by serving in a dual leadership and resource role in the statewide efforts to serve these students.

This mission shall be carried out through cooperative efforts with all appropriate state agencies, educational cooperatives, local education agencies and college and universities. It is recognized that the mission of the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is **a significant part of the continuum of services** in the statewide delivery system for children in need of special education OR special education and related services. The South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired understands this responsibility to include (but is not limited to): **Residential services** for those students whose needs are better served in such an environment.

Faculty Handbook (2012)

<http://sdsbvi.northern.edu/Handbooks/SDSBVI%20Faculty%20July%202012.pdf>

PLACEMENT PROCESS (pages 9-12)

B. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Admission Requirements

A student is recommended for placement through the IEP process when it is determined that an appropriate program cannot be provided locally. Each child's placement is reviewed annually. The local school district obtains the parental consent for evaluation and completes the initial evaluation. Once a student has been enrolled at the SDSBVI, subsequent IEP meetings, including responsibility for parental prior notice are the responsibility of the SDSBVI. Administrative representatives of the LEA and SDSBVI co-chair the meetings, with the SDSBVI assuming responsibility for completing the final IEP document, monitoring student progress, and reporting back to the parents and LEA through quarterly progress reports.

Admission Procedures

All requests for admissions to the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired begin with the local educational agency working together with the parent. The initial contact with SDSBVI is made to the Liaison for Services who gathers the pertinent information, including eye reports and evaluation data. The SDSBVI staff and administration will review all records and information to determine if the child is eligible for services based upon verification of vision loss and **whether the SDSBVI would be an appropriate placement.** The parents and local school district will be notified in writing by the Superintendent.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (pages 13-18)

Pursuant to SDCL § 13-37-1.3, the school district has a non-delegable duty to provide a free appropriate public education for each resident child. Although the preferred placement for all children is in the school that they would ordinarily attend if they were not disabled, for some children, the least restrictive environment may involve an alternative placement in a special school. **Placement in a special school does not transfer the school district's responsibility for FAPE to the special school providing an alternative placement. Rather, it necessitates a close cooperation between the school district and the special school** to assure that the school district can provide necessary educational or related services that are ordinarily unavailable through the special school.

All decisions of the IEP team will be made jointly by the parents, school district, and SDSBVI personnel through the IEP process and specified on the child's IEP. The IEP will be in effect before special education and related services are provided to a child and will be implemented as soon as possible following an IEP meeting.

H. LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Students who have a visual impairment which impacts their education are eligible for services from the SDSBVI. These educational programs and services may be offered in a variety of ways to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. **In all cases the programming and services to be provided are specified in the IEP.**

The following factors in determining placements will be used by the SDSBVI.

- a) *Each child's educational **placement must be individually determined at least annually and must be based on the child's individual education program;***
- b) *Provisions are made for appropriate classroom or alternative settings necessary to implement a child's individual education program;*
- c) *The child's visual impairment impacts their educational achievement;*
- d) *Except where a child's individual education plan requires some other arrangement, the child shall be educated in the school which that child would normally attend if not disabled. Other placement shall be as close as possible to the child's home;*

- e) *Placement in the least restrictive environment will not produce a harmful effect on the child or reduce the quality of services which that child needs; and*
- f) *A child with a disability is not removed from education in age appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum.*

TEXAS

*State schools operated by: Another state agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools*

Texas Education Agency
Division of Federal and State Education Policy

Web site: Services to Students who are **Blind or Visually Impaired**
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147498410>

State Plan for Students with Visual Impairments – VI (2013)
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147499207>

The Texas State Plan for Students with Visual Impairments (State VI Plan) is intended to be a **tool for use in identifying needs, setting priorities, and guiding the development and provision of services** for students with visual impairments and deaf-blindness. **The State VI Plan contains measurable indicators** consistent with prioritized results and aligned with Texas Education Code (TEC) §30.002. To the extent possible, the State VI Plan is aligned with the Texas State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR).

Web site: Texas School for the **Blind and Visually Impaired**
<http://tsbvi.edu/>

TSBVI is a special public school established and funded by the state of Texas to provide specialized and intense services that focus on the unique learning needs of students with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities. The School is accredited by the Texas Education Agency as part of the public education system of Texas. **TSBVI provides a broad range of instructional programs and specialized instruction, including a residential program**, at no cost to students or their families during the regular school year and in summer programs. Students receive instruction that can prepare them for high school graduation, for return to their local school districts, or for transition to further education, training or placement in local communities.

A School District Guide to Accessing Services at TSBVI
<http://www.tsbvi.edu/component/content/article/1-school/3684-guide>

- *Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired*
- *Three-Part Legislative Mission*
- *Program Descriptions and Access of Services*
- **Supporting Local School Districts with FAPE**
- **Length of TSBVI Placements**
- *TSBVI's Relationship with Educational Service Centers*

- TSBVI's Relationship with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services/Division of Blind Services.
- Cost to the District or to the Parent for Outreach services; Special Programs; Comprehensive Programs?

Educating Students with *Visual Impairments* in Texas: Guidelines and Standards (2010)
http://www.tsbvi.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3288:articles-and-papers-vi-and-db&catid=5%20

OR

<http://www.tsbvi.edu/attachments/Educating%20Students%20who%20are%20Visually%20Impaired%20in%20Texas-%20Guidelines%20and%20Standards.doc>

A document developed by the Texas Education of the Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee meant **to provide decision-makers with a set of guidelines and standards** by which they can determine the quality of their programs serving students with visual impairments.

XIV. Appropriate Educational Placements for Students with Visual Impairments (page 32)

Guideline/Standard #10: An array of services and placement options are available based on individual student needs.

After considering educational needs in both the general curricula and the expanded core the committee must carefully select from the full array of potential settings. Co-teaching, content mastery, itinerant teacher services, resource rooms, short term programs or summer programs at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), self-contained classrooms and/or **placement at schools such as TSBVI which have a residential component are all equal options to be considered** by the ARD Committee. Student needs should drive placement decisions. Any service delivery option may be the most appropriate for an individual student at any given time, and the appropriate placement option may change over time for a particular student. (34 CFR §300.116)

Frequently Asked Questions (page 46)

How does a student get referred to attend the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired?

For admission to TSBVI, students must have been determined by their local school districts to be eligible for educational services as students with a visual impairment or deafblindness. **Referrals for consideration for admission must be originated by the student's local school district in collaboration with the student's parent. TSBVI cannot accept direct parent referrals.** The TSBVI is one placement option in the continuum of placement options for students with visual impairments and/or deafblindness.

Texas Education Agency
Division of Federal and State Education Policy

Web site: Services to Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147497727>

State Plan for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147497691>

Texas Education Code §30.083 requires the development of a “comprehensive statewide plan for educational services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.” TEA fulfills this requirement and additional responsibilities by maintaining a State Plan for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing ([State DHH Plan](#)) and by working closely with Education Service Centers (ESCs) in Regions 10, XI, and 20, the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD), and stakeholders from an interagency task force referred to as the Texas National Agenda Committee (TNAC). The service centers provide statewide leadership in areas related to services to infants and toddlers (ESC 10), communication access (ESC XI), and access to the general curriculum (ESC 20). TSD provides outreach support to schools and families through the Education Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD). TNAC provides advisory services on the alignment of the State DHH Plan with the National Agenda for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Web site: Texas School for the Deaf

<http://www.tsd.state.tx.us/>

The Texas School for the Deaf provides educational and related services to students who are deaf and hard of hearing at their **residential campus** in Austin. In addition to serving its residential students, TSD serves as a resources center on deafness for students, parents, professionals, and others throughout the state.

Texas School for the Deaf: Special Needs Residential Program

http://www.tsd.state.tx.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=170240&type=d&pREC_ID=364161

The mission for our Special Needs Residential Program is to provide each of our students with the individual skill sets they need to become as independent as they themselves can possible become.

Texas Response to the National Agenda for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2012)

<http://www.ndepnow.org/pdfs/TexasResponse2012.pdf>

This document is a companion guide for the statewide plan for educational services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TNAC). The Texas National Agenda Collaborative (TNAC) grew out of a history of planning and reform efforts based on the *National Agenda: Moving Forward on Achieving Educational Equity for the Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. The Texas Agenda is divided into eight major areas of concern based on the National Agenda – one of which is **Placements, Programs, and Services discussed on pages 14 and 15 of this document.**

UTAH

State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools

Web site: Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
<http://www.usdb.org/default.aspx>

USDB Admissions

<http://www.usdb.org/admissions.aspx>

How do I enroll my child into the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind?

Students are referred to USDB from the district where they live. The district will hold a meeting for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan. At this meeting, parents have the right to **review the choices for educational placement**, including potential placement at USDB.

Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind: Special Education Procedures (2009)

<http://www.usdb.org/admin/Shared%20Documents/USDB%20SpEd%20Procedures%20Manual%20090809.pdf>

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (page 26)

USDB provides the IDEA required range of placement options, including placement in the regular education classroom, with or without itinerant services; placement in a special class; placement in a special school; **placement in a residential program**; and homebound or hospitalized placement.

Utah Department of Education Special Education Services

Interagency Agreement between the Utah State Office of Education and the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind, and Local Education Agencies (2012)

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/law/iaa-usdb.aspx>

Purpose of the Interagency Agreement (page 1)

This document has been developed to establish procedures to ensure effective communication and relationships with the Utah State Office of Education (USOE), the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB), and Local Education Agencies (LEA). **The USDB is created as a single public school agency that includes** the Utah School for the Deaf, the Utah School for the Blind, programs for students who are deafblind, and the Parent Infant Program (R277-800). This document will further explain agency roles, services for students with sensory disabilities, financial obligations to students and participating entities, and a basic process for resolving disagreements among the parties.

Responsibilities and Designation of the LEA (page 2)

The LEA (i.e., school district of residence or charter school of enrollment) is the single point of entry for USDB services for students ages three through 21. **No student may enroll in USDB programs or services without referral from the LEA.** LEAs and the USDB will continue to consider primary and secondary disabilities and other factors when making special education service and placement decisions (see *Guidelines for Placement on page 19 for details*). Students with a sensory disability may receive services under IDEA, Section 504, or a USDB Preschool Services Plan.

School District/Charter School Is the LEA

The **LEA has responsibility** for the design and implementation of an IEP or 504 Plan for qualifying students. Students with sensory disabilities who enroll in a Utah school district or charter school may be eligible to receive services from sensory specialists employed by the USDB. In this case, the services from the USDB may be included on the IEP as a related service. For some LEAs, services from USDB staff may require payment by contract (see Services Chart on page 14 for details). LEAs always have the option to employ sensory specialists to meet the IEP or 504 Plan needs of enrolled students.

USDB as Designated LEA (R277-800-7(B))

In order to meet the educational needs of students, the IEP team may decide to enroll a student in a program and to designate USDB as the LEA for that student. **In this situation, the USDB program is considered a placement option within the LEA continuum.** When the USDB is the designated LEA, the USDB accepts responsibility for the design and implementation of the IEP or 504 Plan. The USDB accepts all responsibility for the provision of special education and related services and costs documented in the IEP.

Guidelines for Placement (page 18)

Flowcharts are available for:

- *Deaf/Hard of Hearing*
- *Blind/Visually Impaired*
- *Deaf/Blind*

VIRGINIA

*State schools operated by: Another entity
Deaf/Blind combined*

**Virginia Department of Education
Office of Special Education & Student Services**

Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are **Blind or Visually Impaired** In Virginia Public Schools (2010)

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/sensory_disabilities/visually_impaired_blind/visually_impaired_guidelines.pdf

Adapted from the Texas Guidelines.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information for the provision of services to students who are blind or visually impaired to support their educational goals. These Guidelines **provide a resource of suggestions for implementing services**; they are **not regulatory**. They are written for any individual interested in serving the academic needs of students who are blind or visually impaired. These Guidelines will be modified and updated as needed on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Web site at www.doe.virginia.gov.

XII. Appropriate Educational Placements for Students with Visual Impairments (page 17)

After considering educational needs in both the expanded core and general curricula, the IEP team must carefully select from an array of potential settings. Collaborative settings, itinerant teacher services, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms, and **placement at such schools as Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton (www.vsdbs.virginia.gov) are all options to be considered** by the IEP team. Students' needs drive placement decisions. Any service delivery option may be appropriate for an individual student at any given time, and the appropriate placement option may change over time for a particular student. 34 CFR §300.116; 8 VAC 20-81-130 C; 8 VAC 20-81-140.

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Cooperative Agreement between the Department for the **Blind and Vision Impaired** and Virginia's Public School Divisions (2012-13)

<http://www.vdbvi.org/documents/Educ/Agreement2012-13.doc>

The **purpose** of this agreement is to establish cooperation, collaboration, and coordination of interagency efforts that will help students who are blind, visually impaired, and deafblind participate equitably in school and prepare for gainful employment. **This agreement encompasses the respective responsibilities of the School Division and DBVI.** The agreement covers all blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students who are served jointly by the School Division and DBVI. **Children must meet DBVI eligibility criteria** in order to access its services, equipment, and material.

WISCONSIN

*State schools operated by: State education agency
Deaf/Blind separate schools*

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Division of Special Education**

Information Update Bulletin 11.01: Statewide Services Provided by the Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (2011)

<http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/files/sped/pdf/bul11-01.pdf>

These state schools **provide Wisconsin local educational agencies (LEAs) one point on the continuum of alternative educational placements for students with**

hearing disabilities, vision disabilities, or both, as determined by the students' individualized education program (IEP) teams. The state schools, however, are not hospitals or residential treatment facilities for the provision of medical, mental health, or psychiatric treatment services for students.

B. Procedures for Determining Initial Placement at a State School (pages 3-6)

A state school will not consider a request for enrollment of a student until the student's eligibility as a student with a disability in the area of visual impairment, hearing impairment, or both, has been established and an appropriate IEP has been developed. A representative of the LEA where the parent(s) or guardian(s) reside and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) are strongly **encouraged to visit the state school before the IEP team considers a placement determination** at a state school.

Placement determinations are made by IEP teams. If the IEP team is considering the state school as a placement option, a state school teacher or other state school staff, selected by state school management, must participate on the IEP team.

A placement determination must be based on the student's needs as documented in the IEP. The IEP must address the student's individually identified special education needs and cannot be developed based on the availability of the programs and resources at a specific placement site. A state school is not an appropriate placement if the student's IEP cannot be fully implemented at the state school.

If residential placement at the state school is being considered, the IEP team must consider all of the circumstances and conditions that would influence the student's success in a residential placement. The IEP team should discuss relevant family, medical, social, and emotional histories, and other needs that would influence a successful residential experience.

The IEP team, including the state school representative, must determine that the state school is the proper placement for the student before the student enrolls at the state school. Each initial placement at a state school will be for a period of up to 45 school days for the purpose of determining the appropriateness of placement at a state school. During this 45-day placement, the state school will contact the resident LEA and parent(s) or guardian(s) and schedule an IEP team meeting to discuss whether continuing placement at the state school is appropriate.

C. IEP Development, Placement and Reevaluation of Students Already Enrolled at a State School (page 6)

After a student is placed at a state school, a state school representative(s) will be responsible for scheduling and preparing documents related to subsequent IEP team meetings. These documents must be shared with both the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the resident LEA. The state school representative(s) will contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the resident LEA to schedule the meeting at a mutually agreeable time and place and to obtain the names and titles of resident LEA participants. **If placement continues at a state school,** the state school will maintain the responsibility for preparing and sharing documents related to the IEP team process. If the student leaves the state school, the resident LEA will resume the responsibility for paperwork and documentation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ahearn, E. (2011). Children who are **deaf/hard of hearing**: State of educational practices. *inForum Brief Policy Analysis*. National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Project Forum. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://projectforum.org/docs/ChildrenWhoareDeaf-HOH-StateoftheEducationalPractice.pdf>

This document reports results from two surveys that inquired about the **current state of practice in educational service delivery** for children who are deaf/hard of hearing.

State Schools for the Deaf (page 2)

This section describes **how the provisions of instruction and services at schools for the deaf are overseen** by the State Departments of Education, State Board of Education or various other entities.

Funding of LEAs (page 5)

This section **describes how states provide funds to LEAs** specifically for children who are deaf/hard of hearing and the sources tapped for these funds.

Challenges to Serving Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (page 6)

This section **outlines the major challenges encountered by SEAs in assisting LEAs to appropriately serve students who are deaf/hard of hearing.**

Aldersley, S. (2002). Least restrictive environment and the courts. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 7(3), 189-199. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://jdsde.oxfordjournals.org/content/7/3/189.full.pdf>

This article provides a description and an analysis of how the U.S. federal courts have interpreted the least restrictive environment (LRE) clause in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) since passage of the Act by Congress in 1975. It begins with a brief highlighting of critical events in the evolution of the LRE concept in the political environment, particularly the impact of the clause on the educational placement of deaf children. This article then charts the early (i.e., during the eighties and nineties) evolution of judicial interpretation of LRE, before moving on to **a review of cases involving the educational placement** of deaf children where LRE has been a central issue. The article **concludes with a comment regarding the prospects for a more balanced approach to educational placement for deaf children.**

American Foundation for the Blind. (no date). *Educating students with visual impairments for inclusion in society: A paper on the inclusion of students with visual impairments*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?FolderID=3&SectionID=44&TopicID=189&DocumentID=1344>

Experience and **research clearly support** three position statements outlining the **essential elements which must be in place in order to provide an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment** for students with visual impairments.

*II. There **must be a full range of program options and support services** so that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team can select the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment for each individual student with a visual impairment.*

This document contains papers which provide **additional information supporting each of these position statements** and a list of selected readings on inclusion for students with visual impairments.

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD). (2007). *A position paper on the full continuum of educational placements for all students who are deaf or hard of hearing*. St. Augustine, FL: Author. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://www.ceasd.org/letters/continuum.shtml>

A CALL TO ACTION

The CEASD urges state governmental leaders, state departments of education, administrators, teachers, support personnel, parents and students to unite for the purpose of **preserving the continuum of educational placements and ensuring equity and excellence** for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Recommendations for the following are provided:

- State and Local Education Agency Personnel
- Educational Administrators, Teachers, and Educational Support Personnel
- Parents, Deaf Community Members and Advocacy Groups

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) / Council of Schools for the Blind. (2010). *Joint position statement on schools for the deaf and schools for the blind*. St. Augustine, FL: Author. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from http://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/Documents/CEASD_COSB%20Statement.pdf

The recent downturn in the economy has caused state legislatures to reduce expenditures in education and other areas. As a result, several schools for the deaf and several schools for the blind have **closed or threatened with closure**. While we recognize that the economic crisis in this country is real, **these actions raise legal and human rights concerns**. This position statement discusses the implications for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and also the human rights of deaf children and blind children.

Curry, S. A. & Hatlen, P. H. (2007). Meeting the unique educational needs of **visually impaired** pupils through appropriate placement. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*. New York, NY: American Foundation for the Blind. Retrieved April 9, 2013 from <http://www.eccadvocacy.org/section.aspx?TopicID=451&DocumentID=5282>

Author Abstract: A preoccupation with educating visually impaired students in the “least restrictive environment” often overshadows the need to place these students in environments where all their educational needs will be met. **Appropriate placement of a visually impaired student is dependent** on a thorough assessment of the student in all areas of potential need, a determination of that student's instructional needs, and the preparation of goals and objectives to meet those needs. The amount of specialist intervention necessary to meet the many unique needs of visually impaired students in preparation for adult living is graphically depicted.

Fielder, B. C. (Nov/Dec 2001). Considering placement and educational approaches for students who are **deaf and hard of hearing**. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 34(2), 54. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://www.casenex.com/casenex/cecReadings/consideringPlacement.pdf>

Author Abstract: This article examines the educational placement and approaches for students with hearing disabilities in the United States. **Also included are the: Identification of student needs; Importance of evaluating harmful effects in considering appropriate placement; and the Implications of communication and educational needs of hearing-impaired students on education practices.**

Johnson, C. D. (2011). *PARC: Placement and readiness checklists for students who are deaf and hard of hearing*. Denver, CO: ADEvantage: Audiology – Deaf Education Vantage Consulting Services. Retrieved April 11, 2013 from http://www.handsandvoices.org/pdf/PARC_2011.pdf

PARC is a set of **placement and readiness checklists** designed to assist IEP teams, including students, teachers, specialists, parents and school administrators, when **making decisions about programming and placement for students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH)**. Most DHH students are considered for placement in the general education classroom for at least part of their school day. Ultimately, inclusion in the general education classroom for these students should mean that when provided the necessary accommodations, modifications, and supports, they have the ability to actively and meaningfully participate in the communication, instruction, and social activities of their class using their identified communication mode(s). There **are two components that should be considered when evaluating placement and service delivery**; first, the skills of the student and, second, the learning environment. Specifically, students should be matched for the learning environment by 1) demonstrating a set of prerequisite skills that are based on their identified individual goals and 2) documenting that the instructional environment is designed to support the student to achieve those goals.

These checklists may be used as **tools to assist the IEP team in examining the many factors that influence how well a student is able to function and perform in various classroom settings**. Thorough assessment in academic, communication and social areas to identify strengths and challenge areas as well as frequent monitoring of performance is always necessary to ensure that student skills, services and placement are aligned. In some cases, students may be “ready” for some classes or situations while not “ready” for others.

Mann, C. (2006). *Educational placement options for blind and visually impaired students: A literature review*. Olympia, WA: Washington State University, Social & Economic Sciences Research Center-Puget Sound Division. Retrieved April 8, 2013 from <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/06-01-2202.pdf>

Even though this is not a very recent article, this literature review **provides a research review on educational placements of blind and visually impaired (BVI) children**. Relevant Research questions included, but were not limited to the following:

- **Current Educational Placement Options:** What are the current educational placement options for BVI students?
- **BVI Students: Unique Developmental Challenges and Educational Needs**
- **The Effectiveness of Different Educational Settings**

- a. Does the research support one placement type over another?
- b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of different educational settings?
- c. What key factors influence the use and effectiveness of different types of placements?

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT OPTIONS (page 8-10)

The redefinition of educational options for BVI students is a work-in-progress that continues today. **This section describes the two most common** educational settings for BVI students: the local school itinerant teacher model and the **residential schools/outreach services model**. While the continuum of educational services includes other settings, such as day programs, there is little published research on them so they will not be discussed in detail in this report.

Residential School/Outreach Services Model

After the decline in enrollments, many residential schools reinvented themselves to meet local and regional needs (DeMott, 1993; Erin, 1993). **Today, residential schools are often referred to as “specialized schools”** because residential education has become a small part of their educational offerings. **Specialized schools offer** different combinations of long-term and short-term training at onsite and offsite locations, both **residential and day programs, to preschoolers, K–12, adult students, and/or** educational personnel.

Over time, collaboration between specialized and local schools has increased, leading to more fluidity between the two educational settings. This collaboration has resulted in increases in three areas: (1) transfers between the two educational settings, (2) **use of short-term placements at specialized schools**, and (3) **mainstreaming experiences for residential students**, where the students spend part of each day attending classes at a local school district.

As indicated by length of stay data, **short-term placements at specialized schools are becoming more common**. Typically, short stays at residential schools involve intensive training in specific skills (e.g., Braille and orientation and mobility skills), which can be especially useful after a student experiences a decrease in vision. For instance, after a decrease in vision, a student may need training in the use of assistive technology that was not previously required. **Short-term placements vary in length from a week to several months** (DeMott, 1993; Erin, 1993; Erin, 2003; Snyder, 2005).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS (pages 19-21)

This section explores the effectiveness of different educational settings. It explores the difficulties of drawing any definitive conclusions, describes some of the advantages and disadvantages of different settings, and discusses the research on outcomes, including social, academic, mobility, employment, and residential independence.

DOES THE RESEARCH SUPPORT ONE PLACEMENT TYPE OVER ANOTHER?

While this is a reasonable question to ask, it is impossible to answer. There are **three main factors impacting the question of effectiveness**: the students, the classroom, and the outcome measure. None of these factors has a single, clear definition of what makes an effective placement.

State of the Research

- Overall, there is *little research on the effectiveness of different educational settings* for students with visual impairments, especially comparative research.
- There is *far more research on specialized schools than on local school districts*. This may be because political pressures to justify the existence of specialized schools may make funding for research a higher priority.
- Another challenge to finding a conclusive answer in the literature regarding the most effective educational setting is *the fact that visual impairments are a low-incidence disability*.
- Studies that simply compare the outcome results of students in each educational setting run the risk of severe selection bias. Research shows that the BVI students in specialized schools and local school districts can be quite different. ***The many factors that affect the student's placement in a particular educational setting also affect outcome results*** unless the researcher controls for them. These factors include (but are not limited to) household income, gender, ethnicity, presence of additional disabilities, urban/rural/suburban setting of the school, and geographic region (Hebbeler, 1993). In addition, ***research has shown that characteristics of the person making placement recommendations can also affect the placement decisions*** (Kim & Corn, 1998). It is difficult, if not impossible, to control for all factors that may be different among students in each setting.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT SETTINGS (pages 21-29)

Most published work on educational settings for BVI students consists of opinion pieces, not methodically rigorous research. While they are not conclusive evidence, the **research provides a valuable overview of advantages and disadvantages** associated with each model. **This section focuses on local school districts and specialized schools** because these are the two educational settings where most of the research has been conducted.

Masoodi, B. (2012). Issues in education of **blind and low-vision** students: An update. *The Braille Forum*. Arlington, VA: American Council for the Blind. Retrieved April 9, 2013 from <http://acb.org/node/719>

There has been a great response to my article ***Issues in Education of Blind and Low-Vision Students*** (September 2011). We have answered most of the individual comments and communications directly. However, **this article addresses many questions and comments that needed a longer response.**

*National agenda for the education of children and youths with **visual impairments**, including those with multiple disabilities.* New York, NY: Author. Retrieved April 16, 2013 from <http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?SectionID=56>

The National Agenda is a groundbreaking, historical statement of consensus in the field about **how educational programs must change to meet the needs of students who are blind or visually impaired**, including those with multiple disabilities. The tenth anniversary of the National Agenda was in 2003. At that time, the members of the National Agenda Steering Committee reevaluated the goals and strategies and the progress towards them and added two new goals, as well as **strategies** for organized

groups to achieve them. **Goal 5 states** “local education programs will ensure that all students have access to a full array of service delivery options.

National Agenda for Moving Forward on Achieving Educational Equality for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students. National Deaf Education Project. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from http://www.ndepnow.org/pdfs/national_agenda.pdf

This National Agenda brings forward **a set of priorities stated as goals** that are designed to bring about significant improvement in quality and nature of educational services and programs for deaf and hard of hearing students. It is brought forward as an “agenda” or a list of things to be done in order to close the achievement gap that exists for our students. **The National Agenda is a unique document** because it **represents a collaboration** of parents, professionals, and consumers working as equal partners to achieve a common vision. No single individual or school or organization created the National Agenda. The National Agenda Advisory Group received thousands of comments and suggestions during the period of public input and each had a voice in the development of the National Agenda.

Goal Five: Placement and Programs (page 29)

Goal Statement: Deaf and hard of hearing students require a full continuum of placement options that recognize, provide for, and are based upon their language and communication needs. A **determination of what constitutes the “least restrictive environment”** for deaf and hard of hearing students must be determined by considering first and foremost these unique communication and linguistic needs and then the student’s educational, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical abilities and needs.

National Association of the Deaf. *Position statement on inclusion*. Silver Spring, MD: Author. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://www.nad.org/issues/education/k-12/inclusion>

The **NAD believes** that ALL deaf and hard of hearing children are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), the **environment that presents the fewest language and communication barriers to their cognitive, social, and emotional development**. The NAD also believes that direct and uninhibited communication access to all facets of a school's programming is essential for a deaf or hard of hearing child to realize his or her full human potential.

National Deaf Education Center. (no date). *Reviewing the placement*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from [http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/educate_children_\(3_to_21\)/resources_for_mainstream_programs/reviewing_the_placement.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/educate_children_(3_to_21)/resources_for_mainstream_programs/reviewing_the_placement.html)

This information is part of an online guide, [Resources for Mainstream Programs](#). There are many factors in determining the most appropriate educational environment for a deaf or hard of hearing child. IDEA encourages all children with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment. This article **summarizes the U.S. Department of Education guidance as to what LRE means** for a deaf child. Also provided is a link to *Placement: Individual Student Considerations*, which is a list of **considerations that should be reviewed when determining whether a mainstream placement continues to be appropriate** for an individual deaf or hard of hearing child.

National **Deaf** Education Center. (no date). *Placement considerations*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 9, 2013 from [http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/educate_children_\(3_to_21\)/placement_issues/placement_considerations.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/educate_children_(3_to_21)/placement_issues/placement_considerations.html)

Many different types of schools and programs educate deaf and hard of hearing children. Who decides which one is best for a particular child? How is the decision made? Are there any laws that guide that decision-making process?

An Introduction to Placement Options is provided in addition to answers for the following:

- *Who decides the student's placement?*
- *What else does the law say?*
- *How does the IEP team decide what the student's needs are?*
- *What factors should the IEP team consider when deciding on placement?*
- *What challenges may the IEP team face during this process?*

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. (2000). *Educating **blind and visually impaired** students*: OSERS Policy Guidance. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9806.html>

Summary: The Department issues this Notice of Policy Guidance (notice) to address the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, as they apply to the education of blind and visually impaired students. This notice **updates OSEP memorandum 96-4**, Policy Guidance on Educating **Blind and Visually Impaired** Students dated November 3, 1995, to reflect new and revised statutory provisions added by the IDEA Amendments of 1997 and conforming regulatory changes to implement those requirements. The Department issued guidance for the education of students who are **deaf** in the form of a Notice of Policy Guidance published in the Federal Register on October 30, 1992 (57 FR 49274). That policy guidance also is being updated for consistency with the IDEA Amendments of 1997.