



SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

OUTREACH HANDBOOK

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OUTREACH HANDBOOK (Salmon)

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ROLE AND MISSION

The role and mission of the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI) is to provide statewide services to meet the individual educational needs of children who are visually impaired from birth through age twenty-one by serving a dual leadership and resource role. The SDSBVI offers a variety of services to meet the individual needs of blind, visually impaired and deaf/blind children. The SDSBVI is a state-supported school and services offered by school personnel are at no cost to parents or local school districts.

In addition to the educational programs offered on the campus in Aberdeen, the SDSBVI has an Outreach Program designed to meet the needs of children and youths with visual impairments who are being served in their local communities. SDSBVI personnel serve as the vision specialist on the child's team. The type and frequency of service is individually determined by the child's Individual Family Service Plan/ Individual Educational Plan (IFSP/IEP) team.

Our outreach team plays a significant role in ensuring children throughout the state who have a vision loss have access to an appropriate education. It is essential that we work respectfully and collaboratively with parents, local school personnel, birth to three programs, vocational rehabilitation, eye care professionals, and other service providers. Ongoing public information and public relations are critical to our success.

OUTREACH SERVICES AVAILABLE

The SDSBVI provides the following services:

1. Diagnostic Services
 - A. Comprehensive Evaluations on the SDSBVI Campus
 - B. Disability-Specific Evaluations
 - a. Functional Low Vision Evaluations
 - b. Orientation and Mobility Evaluations
 - c. Braille Evaluations
2. Consultation with parents, LEAs, and other service providers
 - A. Outreach Vision Consultants
 - B. Low Vision Specialist
 - C. Transition Specialist
3. In-service with topics relating to vision loss, educational interventions, and the skills of blindness
4. Loan library of toys, classroom materials and reference materials
5. Access to the SDSBVI school library collection

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

A person is visually impaired if sight limitations interfere with acquiring information from and interacting with the environment. These sight limitations may relate to eye problems that effect central, peripheral, binocular or color vision. Conditions which limit affective use of vision may be partial or total and be of a temporary, reversible, progressive, or permanent nature.

The age of onset is crucial to the impact of the loss on learning activities. It may be necessary to make environmental modifications or utilize instructional techniques utilizing the other senses. The need for and intensity of specialized programming including equipment, materials, and instructional techniques will depend upon each individual's ability to cope with his/her visual limitation, the severity of the loss, and the task to be done.

A student may qualify as visually impaired if he/she falls into one of the following categories:

1. Vision loss including blindness defined (ARSD 24:05:24.01:30). Vision loss including blindness is an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

A student with a vision loss has a deficiency in visual acuity that, even with the use of lenses or corrective devices, requires special education or special education and related services.

Partial sight is one or more deficiencies in visual acuity, as follows:

- (1) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;
- (2) Restricted visual field;
- (3) Limited ability to move about safely in the environment because of visual disability.

Blindness is a deficiency in visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses or a limited field of vision in which the widest diameter subtends an angular distance of no greater than twenty degrees or has a medically indicated expectation of visual deterioration.

2. In addition to the state definition, the following may create a significant visual impairment and will be considered by the SDSBVI when services are requested by an LEA.
 - lesions/tumors affecting visual track causing visual limitations
 - degenerating eye condition such as progressive cataract, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, etc.
 - is undergoing medical treatment for an eye problem causing limitation in sight, such as patching
 - experiences significant eye strain, fatigue or other vision related problems

AND

3. The student demonstrates a deficit in visual development based on chronological age and/or ability in one or more of the following areas:
 - academic achievement
 - social development
 - physical development
 - visual/perceptual development
 - orientation to the environment
 - movement within the environment

OR

4. Demonstrates a need for consultation or special vision services from a certified educator of the visually impaired.
 - Whenever the medically documented visual limitations impact learning as verified by an assessment battery and a functional vision testing, educational services must be made available.

The assessment battery should be administered and the results interpreted in consultation with a vision teacher to assure appropriateness of test items as they relate to the vision limitations and to prevent misinterpretation of phenomenon frequently associated with visual impairment.

Decisions regarding needed services should be made with the consultation of a certified teacher of the visually impaired. Eligibility and placement are determined by the student's IEP team.

24:05:24.01:31. IEP team override. If the IEP team determines that a student is eligible for special education or special education and related services because the student has a disability and needs special education even though the student does not meet specific requirements in this chapter, the IEP team must include documentation in the record as follows:

- (1) The record must contain documents that explain why the standards and procedures that are used with the majority of students resulted in invalid findings for this student;
- (2) The record must indicate what objective data were used to conclude that the student has a disability and is in need of special education. These data may include test scores, work products, self-reports, teacher comments, previous tests, observational data, and other developmental data;
- (3) Since the eligibility decision is based on a synthesis of multiple data and not all data are equally valid, the team must indicate which data had the greatest relative importance for the eligibility decision; and
- (4) The IEP team override decision must include a sign-off by the IEP team members agreeing to the override decision. If one or more IEP team members disagree with the override decision, the record must include a statement of why they disagreed signed by those members.
- (5) The district director of special education shall keep a list of students on whom the IEP team override criteria were used to assist the state in evaluating the adequacy of student identification criteria.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

One of the significant roles of the SDSBVI, as a part of the continuum of services, is conducting educational evaluations and interpreting results for parents/guardians and educators, and making recommendations for appropriate educational interventions and educational programs.

The SDSBVI bears a responsibility to all students in South Dakota who have visual impairments. Since most local schools lack the trained and experienced personnel for evaluation of these students, evaluations can be done by the SDSBVI staff. The steps in the evaluation process are sequential. Individual circumstances may cause some minor variations.

Under Federal and State law a handicapped child must be evaluated before an Individual Educational Plan is developed and follow-up evaluations must be conducted at least every three years. The rules and regulations of the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs (ARSD 25:05:24:04) require the following.

1. Tests and other evaluation materials must be provided as follows:
 - a) administered in the child's native language or by another mode of communication the child understands, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, and
 - b) validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and administered by trained personnel in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer.
2. Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
3. Tests are selected and administered so as best to ensure that a test administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills accurately reflects the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than the child's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills except where these skills are the factors which the test purports to measure.
4. No single procedure is used as the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.
5. The evaluation is made by a comprehensive team or group of persons, including at least one teacher or other specialist with knowledge in the area of the suspected disability.
6. The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, where appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communication status and motor abilities.
7. Additional evaluations that address the Expanded Core Curriculum include functional academics, orientation and mobility, braille, independent living, recreation and leisure, assistive technology, visual efficiency, and vocational, self-determination/transition skills.

South Dakota Administrative guidelines suggest evaluations of visually impaired students should contain the following: ophthalmological/optometric, ability, academic achievement, adaptive behavior, and transition (if age 16 or older).

Under South Dakota statute students who are legally blind must be evaluated to determine whether Braille instruction should begin or continue. (ARSD 24:05:25:04.01) The evaluators at the SDSBVI will complete a Braille assessment for all eligible students on campus and from public school upon request for evaluation.

The role of the SDSBVI comprehensive evaluation assessment team is to assist in translating what is known about the student and the student's vision into practical terms for the classroom.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVALUATORS

The SDSBVI has staff that work with persons who are visually impaired on a regular basis. The SDSBVI has staff that meet the following South Dakota State Rules and Regulations criteria for child evaluators:

1. Educational Evaluator. An educational evaluator must possess a valid teaching certificate and must have training in individual and group tests to be administered. (24:05:23:01)
2. Psychological Evaluator. A psychological evaluator must be a school psychologist certified by the division of education or a school psychological examiner certified by the division of education. A school psychological examiner's report must be cosigned by a certified school psychologist. (24:05:23:02)
3. Language, Speech or Hearing Evaluator. A language, speech or hearing evaluator must have a valid South Dakota certificate as a speech/language therapist. (24:05:23:04)

In addition to meeting the qualifications specified above, the evaluators at the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired possess one or more of the following certifications.

1. Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI): This South Dakota State Department of Education endorsement requires completion of specific university courses and a practicum working with students who have vision loss.
2. Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist[®] (COMS[®]): This national certification through the Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Educational Professionals (ACVREP) requires a Bachelors or Masters degree from a program in O & M, completion of a practicum, and passing score on a national examination.
3. Certified Low Vision Therapist[®] (CLVT[®]): This national certification through ACVREP requires a Bachelors or Masters degree with concentration in low vision, completion of a practicum, and passing score on a national examination.
4. Adaptive Physical Educator: This South Dakota State Department of Education certification requires at least a Bachelor's degree in physical education, additional coursework and practicum in adaptive physical education.

The services of the SDSBVI evaluation personnel are available without charge to students residing in South Dakota.

Additional local professionals are available to serve on individual student's assessment teams on an as needed basis. Typically, these services would be provided by the low vision optometrist, ophthalmologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist. These services can be coordinated through the SDSBVI with additional charges billed directly to the school district by the service provider. These additional available services are as follows.

1. Vision Evaluator. A vision evaluator must be an ophthalmologist licensed by the state board of medical and osteopathic examiners or an optometrist licensed by the state board of optometry. (24:05:23:09)

2. Audiological Evaluator. An audiological evaluator must have a valid South Dakota certificate as a school audiologist. (24:05:23:05)
3. Occupational Therapy Evaluator. An occupational therapy evaluator must be licensed by the state board of medical and osteopathic examiners. (24:05:23:07)
4. Physical Therapy Evaluator. A physical therapy evaluator must be licensed by the state board of medical and osteopathic examiners. (24:05:23:08).

All evaluations and assessments will be performed by personnel who (1) meet all State and Federal rules and regulations and (2) are familiar with and have experience with blind, visually impaired and multihandicapped children.

For students age 14 and older, the Transition Specialist will conduct an interview with the student and family to discuss long-range plans and dreams, as well as any needs or concerns regarding the transition process.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

All evaluations and assessments will be performed by personnel who (1) meet all State and Federal rules and regulations and (2) are familiar with and have experience with blind, visually impaired, and multihandicapped children.

THREE-YEAR EVALUATIONS - The Pre-Evaluation Team (PET) will monitor the schedule for comprehensive evaluations that must be completed every three years or more frequently if requested by parent/guardian or teacher. This team will establish schedules and ensure proper notification to parents. The Principal ensures that parents receive written prior notice. **Parents are contacted by phone by the Student Services Director in advance of the evaluation to secure their input into the evaluation process. They review areas of concern and determine areas to be assessed.** Comprehensive evaluations must be completed within twenty-five (25) school days from receipt of consent for evaluation and an IEP developed within thirty (30) calendar days from the end of the 25 school days evaluation timeline.

EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS - The SDSBVI bears a responsibility to all students in South Dakota who have visual impairments. IDEA requires that students be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability. Visual impairments must be determined by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Best practice would indicate that for students with visual impairments meeting the state's disability definition, an educator trained and experienced in the educational implication of vision loss should be a part of the evaluation and IEP teams. Since most local schools lack the trained and experienced personnel for evaluation of students with severe vision loss, evaluations can be done by the SDSBVI staff upon request of the LEA and parents.

ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
1. Need for evaluation is identified. The SDSBVI diagnostic video may be sent or reviewed with the parents.	LEA, B-3 Coordinator, Parent, Outreach Vision Consultants, Transition Specialist
2. Referral for Evaluation; Request for Evaluation Form is completed	LEA, B-3 Coordinator, Parent, Outreach Vision Consultants, Transition Specialist
3. Request for Evaluation Form is sent to the Liaison	Outreach Vision Consultants Transition Specialist, LEA
4. Request for Evaluation Form brought to Pre-Evaluation Team (PET). The Pre-Evaluation Team includes the Liaison for Services, Student Services Director/Psychological Examiner, Speech/Language Pathologist, and Certified Low Vision Therapist®.	Liaison
5. Acceptance of student for evaluation. Decisions made about who will complete which tests; minutes kept on white sheet (PET meets weekly). Evaluations are scheduled in the order in which the Request for Evaluation Form is received by the Liaison unless special circumstances arise.	PET
6. Parents and LEA are called to set up date	Liaison
7. E-mail date to Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist	Liaison
8. Written confirmation of dates to parents with cc to LEA and Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist	Liaison
9. Authorizations forms sent out for signature	Liaison
10. Gather information on student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. get vision consultant or transition specialist's file and/or b. get from LEA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ last three years of IEPs ▪ any related service reports ▪ most recent vision reports ▪ any testing in past three years ▪ any other relevant information c. Consultants may do some assessments—adaptive behavior surveys, functional vision, and/or vocational surveys 	Liaison
11. File is compiled	Liaison
12. File is brought to PET for review	Liaison
13. Review of student's file and Request for Evaluation Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. request any missing information 	Liaison
14. Decisions made about who will complete which tests; minutes kept on white sheet (PET meets weekly)	PET, Liaison, Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist
15. Schedule is developed for the evaluation (usually two weeks prior to evaluation date); time is blocked out and length of evaluation is determined. Prior Notice Form is sent.	Liaison
16. Evaluators, Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist are notified by e-mail and in print	Liaison

ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
17. The schedule with cover letter is sent to the parents with cc to LEA and Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist Enclosures -- maps of Aberdeen and school, information about accommodations, information about SDSBVI. Video may be sent or is viewed with Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist.	Liaison
18. Student file goes to Staff Work Area to be accessible to evaluators for review	Liaison
19. Thursday prior to the evaluation, all staff involved in the evaluation meet to review the schedule and student file, and share pertinent information on the student. The Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist may be involved in person or by teleconference.	PET, Evaluators, Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist
20. Family is called to finalize travel plans and answer any questions	Liaison
21. All staff are informed of the accommodations for the family (guests on campus).	Liaison
22. Family arrives on campus and are met by staff	Liaison
23. Evaluation	Evaluation Team
24. Synthesis of findings	Evaluation Team
25. Wednesday meeting with evaluation team to review results	Parents, LEA, Evaluation Team, Outreach Vision, Consultants/Transition Specialist
26. Written reports completed	Evaluators
27. Reports brought into final package and mailed to parents, LEA, Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist, and others as identified	Liaison
28. Contact with LEA and/or parents for follow-up questions	Outreach Vision Consultants /Transition Specialist
29. File returned to Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist	Liaison
30. Survey sent to LEA and parents within three weeks	Liaison
31. Surveys shared with PET and Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist	Liaison
32. Annual summary of survey results	Liaison

EVALUATIONS FOR NEW PLACEMENTS - When a local IEP team determines that the SDSBVI may be an appropriate educational placement for a student, if that student has not been evaluated in the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum, those evaluations need to take place before a new IEP is written. The student's current IEP will remain in place until these evaluations are completed (within 25 school days from the date of receipt of parental consent) and a new IEP meeting will be held within 30 calendar days after the completion of the evaluations.

1. The parent and LEA send a written request for placement to the SDSBVI Superintendent.
2. After initial contact from parents/LEA, the Liaison for Services requests the student's current IEP, recent evaluations, and last medical eye report.
3. The Liaison for Services will notify the Superintendent, Principal, and Residential Supervisor that the student's records are ready for review.
4. Requests for placement are reviewed by the Admissions Committee to verify vision loss and consider educational, medical and behavioral issues that might effect placement. The Admissions Committee makes a recommendation which is forwarded to the SDSBVI Superintendent for action. The SDSBVI Superintendent determines whether an appropriate program can be provided at the SDSBVI. Placement can only be determined by the child's IEP team.
5. The local school district and parents, with the participation of SDSBVI staff including Outreach Vision Consultants, will determine if any additional testing in the Expanded Core Curricular areas is warranted. If so, the parent will be asked to give written consent. The parents are also required to complete necessary medical authorization and release forms.

Initial evaluations must be completed within 25 school days after receipt by the district of signed parent consent to evaluate unless other timelines are agreed to by the school administration and the parents.

6. The Superintendent, Principal, and Residential Supervisor will schedule and supervise the student's initial educational program (using the existing IEP) and dorm program (if applicable).
7. The evaluations in the Expanded Core Curriculum will be scheduled by the Liaison for Services in coordination with the Principal and follow the same procedure as the evaluations for public schools. The Liaison for Services will notify the faculty and therapists of the evaluation schedule. Written evaluation reports, determination of eligibility, and conducting an IEP team meeting must be completed within 30 days from the end of the 25 school day evaluation timeline. If another timeline for completing the evaluation process is agreed to by the parent and school administration, the written evaluation reports, determination of eligibility, and conducting an IEP team meeting must be completed within 30 days from the end of agreed upon evaluation timeline.
8. A staffing will be held upon completion of the evaluations to review the evaluation results.
9. The parents and LEA are contacted by the Liaison for Services to arrange for an IEP meeting. Written PRIOR NOTICE procedures will be followed.
10. The IEP meeting will include participation by the student (if appropriate), parents, LEA representative, and members of the evaluation team. The evaluation reports are shared. The child's educational strengths and needs are identified and placement options are considered. Most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment is determined and the IEP is written.
11. If placement is to be at the SDSBVI, the parent will be required to provide a copy of the child's birth certificate and immunization record and to complete release and authorization forms.
12. Written copies of the evaluations and IEP are provided to the parents and LEA with a copy placed in the student's file.

EVALUATION TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EDUCATIONAL EVALUATORS

1. Review Evaluation Request Form on the student, noting specific concerns expressed by parents or classroom teachers.
2. Determine which test instruments would be appropriate given the visual impairment, developmental level, academic needs, and additional disabilities.
3. Complete assessments, prepare reports, and make educational recommendations.
4. Participate in staffing with other evaluators to review comprehensive assessment results and formulate team recommendations.

LIAISON FOR SERVICES

1. Serve as a member of the Pre-Evaluation Team (PET).
2. Coordinate the evaluation schedule.
3. Assemble all paperwork prior to the student's visit.
4. Follow through with the requests of the Pre-Evaluation Team (PET) and evaluators.
5. Make arrangements for on-campus housing and meals (if desired by the family).
6. Greet the student and his/her family upon arrival and answer any questions.
7. Coordinate the evaluation staffings.
8. Gather the evaluation reports and mails them to the parents, local school district, and others.

CERTIFIED LOW VISION THERAPIST[®] (CLVT[®])

1. Serve as a member of the Pre-Evaluation Team (PET).
2. Conduct functional vision evaluations where indicated, including observing students during other evaluations and preparing written reports of findings.
3. Accompany students to appointments with eye professionals.
4. Summarize medical terms and prepare low vision report, including educational recommendations.
5. Introduce low vision aids and appliances to students as appropriate.
6. Train students in the use of low vision aids in their school/home environment.

OUTREACH VISION CONSULTANTS (TVI)

1. Provide direct consultation and support services to parents/guardians, B-3 providers, teachers, and therapists.
2. Conduct classroom or home-site observations, which may include formal or informal assessments, meetings to discuss findings or observations, written recommendations and/or information to assist with specific identified needs.
3. Provide assistance, information and support for the educational teams who serve students in home or school settings.
4. Recommend a comprehensive evaluation through the SDSBVI or other appropriate resource for each visually impaired child who needs evaluation.
5. Serve as a team member for any diagnostic evaluations done at the SDSBVI. Work with parents and LEA to complete Request for Evaluation Form, meet with Pre-Evaluation Team to plan evaluation, and participate in staffings with other evaluators to review comprehensive assessment results and formulate team recommendations.
6. Make a contact with LEA and/or parents within two weeks after each evaluation to follow up on recommendations and answer questions.

TRANSITION SPECIALIST

1. Provide direct consultation and support services to parents/guardians and local school districts.
2. Conduct formal or informal meetings to discuss transition planning with the student and family.
3. Provide assistance, information, and support for the educational teams who serve students in public school comprehensive teams.
4. Recommend a comprehensive evaluation through the SDSBVI or other appropriate resource for each visually impaired child who needs evaluation.
5. Serve as a team member for any diagnostic evaluations done at the SDSBVI for students age 16 and older. Work with parents and LEA to complete Request for Evaluation Form, meet with Pre-Evaluation Team to plan evaluation, meet with the student and family, summarize ideas related to transition planning, and participate in staffings with other evaluators to review comprehensive assessment results and formulate team recommendations.
6. Make a contact with LEA and/or parents within two weeks after each evaluation to follow up on recommendations and answer questions.

STUDENT SERVICES DIRECTOR/PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINER

1. Serve as a member of the Pre-Evaluation Team (PET).
2. Supervise all evaluations conducted at or by the SDSBVI for public school students.
3. Complete assessments, prepare reports, and make educational recommendations. This includes securing the signature of the consulting psychologist.
4. Participate in staffings with other evaluators to analyze comprehensive assessment results.
5. When appropriate, prepare summary of evaluation, including the student's major strengths and weaknesses in performance and identifying the major needs to be addressed.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

1. Serve as a member of the Pre-Evaluation Team (PET).
2. Conduct speech/language evaluations as appropriate.
3. Complete assessments, prepare reports and make educational recommendations.
4. Participate with other evaluators to analyze comprehensive assessment results.

CERTIFIED ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SPECIALISTS® (COMS®)

1. Review Evaluation Request Form on the student, noting specific concerns expressed by parents or classroom teachers.
2. Determine which test instruments would be appropriate given the visual impairment, developmental level, academic needs, and additional disabilities.
3. Complete assessments on and in the community as indicated, prepare reports, and make educational recommendations.
4. Participate in staffing with other evaluators to review comprehensive assessment results and formulate team recommendations.

CONSULTATION SERVICES

1. The Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist play key roles in the service delivery system off-campus and share the responsibility for working with on-campus personnel.
2. The Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist provide technical assistance to classroom teachers and parents. The primary focus will be on the impact the child's vision loss has on learning and any compensatory skills that need to be taught (Expanded Core Curriculum). For older students, the focus will be on experiences that will help them move from the educational setting to their next learning or work environment, and a transition plan that includes available adult resources.
3. The primary role of the Outreach Vision Consultant is to provide information about visual impairments and eye conditions of referred students, offer ideas for classroom and curricular modifications, assist in securing adapted educational materials and equipment, share information about the skills of blindness, conduct in-services for school personnel, and provide information/assistance to parents.
4. The primary role of the Low Vision Specialist is to evaluate functional vision, follow up on recommendations by medical eye care professionals, train students in the use of specific devices, and provide training to parents and professionals.
5. The primary role of the Transition Specialist is to assist the team in addressing the transition services in the IEP, make referrals and coordinate efforts with Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, collaborate with the Transition Services Liaison Project, and provide technical assistance, consultation and training to others who work with students with vision loss.
6. Because they are dealing with the educational needs of children of all ages, it is essential that persons employed as Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist be well prepared for their assignment. Outreach Vision Consultants will be certified teachers of the visually impaired. The Low Vision Specialist will be certified by ACVREP. The Transition Specialist will have training and experience specific to the transition process.
7. The written philosophies of the SDSBVI are to serve as a guide for the Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition specialist, as they do for all faculty and staff members.
 - a. Children who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf/blind from birth through age 21 are entitled to an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.
 - b. The SDSBVI serves in the capacity of educational advocate for the visually impaired child.
 - c. The SDSBVI serves as a resource for the State of South Dakota, providing both direct and indirect educational services.

8. It is necessary for the SDSBVI to work cooperatively with parents, Birth-3, local education agencies, and others to ensure appropriate educational services. The development of positive working relationships is essential and will be a goal of the Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist. Coordination of effort will result in better programming for students.
 - a. It is recognized that the local education agencies are responsible under state and federal law for the education of all handicapped children.
 - b. It is also recognized that the SDSBVI has been given statutory responsibility for the education of blind, visually handicapped, and deaf/blind children in the State.
 - c. The South Dakota Board of Regents and the South Dakota Board of Education have confirmed their commitment to coordinating efforts on behalf of visually impaired children through the Cooperative Agreement originally signed in October of 1986 and regularly updated.
 - d. Parents are the key element in determining what is best for their child and must be active and informed members of the Individual Educational Program Committee.
9. The Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist are under the direct supervision of the Superintendent.

LOW VISION SPECIALIST

The SDSBVI has designated a Low Vision Specialist position to focus attention on the visual needs of students at home, at school, and in the community. The Low Vision Specialist specifically addresses functional vision and works with the student, teachers and family to follow through on medical recommendations.

The Low Vision Specialist serves on the Pre-Evaluation and Evaluation teams at the SDSBVI, conducts functional vision evaluations, and writes reports. The Low Vision Specialist provides input into the IFSP/IEP for students, including both goals and accommodations as appropriate.

The Low Vision Specialist follows up on recommendations from ophthalmologists and optometrists for magnification, lighting and other optical or assistive technology devices, trains students (teachers and parents) in the use of specific devices for near and distant tasks, and monitors usage of devices after initial training.

The Low Vision Specialist may provide information and assistance to schools who conduct routine vision screenings.

TRANSITION SPECIALIST

The SDSBVI makes a Transition Specialist available to assist public schools working on transition for students with visual impairments. The SDSBVI Transition Specialist is available to provide assistance to students with visual impairments on a statewide basis. This position is jointly funded by the SDSBVI and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The word "transition" conveys a sense of change and specifically refers to the preparation for a move from an educational setting to the adult working world. This can be a frightening and overwhelming experience, especially for a person with a disability. Visually impaired individuals, for example, have an unemployment rate approaching 80 percent nationally. To help alleviate this problem, Federal Law now mandates that beginning at the age of 16, each student must also have included in the IEP a statement of the transition services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living (Section 601 - IDEA 2004).

Transition is a coordinated set of activities that:

- are a part of a results-oriented process focused on improving academic and functional achievement of the child's movement from high school to post-secondary activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation,
- are based on the individual child's needs, strengths, preferences and interests, and
- includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult learning objectives, and, where appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (Section 601 - IDEA 2004).

The South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Transition Program is designed to help students with visual impairments, their families and school districts with transition planning. The Transition Specialist may provide the following.

- A. Technical Assistance: General and specific information regarding transition and its implementation.
- B. Assistance in Addressing Transition Services: Help with writing the transition portion of the IEP. What should be included and how to complete objectives.
- C. Information and Referral Regarding Other Adult Service Agencies and Programs: Research and provide information on resources, services, and agencies that can help with the students' transition.
- D. Assistance in Identifying and Securing Work Experiences: Help with job development in the student's community and provide suggestions for workplace modifications and adaptive equipment.
- E. Identification of Transportation Needs: Short and long-term look at ways to meet the transportation needs of the individual students.
- F. Identifying Adaptive Technology Needs and Sources: Assist in identifying the student's adaptive technology needs, vendor information, and methods of obtaining the needed technology.
- G. Options of Long-Range Residential and Vocational Goals: Assistance in identifying the residential and vocational needs of the student, including where these options exist and how to obtain the student's goal.
- H. Provide information on Post Secondary Education Programs: Assistance with looking at various schools and disability services.

REFERRAL PROCEDURE

When a student who is served by an Outreach Vision Consultant reaches the age of 14 or when the SDSBVI becomes aware of a student with a visual impairment who is age 16, the following process will take place.

1. The Outreach Vision Consultant sends a letter to the SDSBVI Transition Specialist making the referral. This letter is also copied to the parents and local school district.
2. The Transition Specialist sets up a meeting with the parents, student, LEA, and Outreach Vision Consultant to discuss transition planning and obtain a release of information so that a referral can be made to Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired.

3. Upon receipt of the release of information forms, the Transition Specialist will send a letter of referral to the SBVI District Office nearest the child's home. Enclosed will be a copy of the current eye report, latest IEP, most recent evaluation, and release form.
4. Copies of the referral letter will go to the parents, local school district, and the SDSBVI Outreach Vision Consultant.

The SDSBVI Transition Specialist will work with the assigned personnel in the SBVI District Office to coordinate efforts with the local school district and parents to develop and implement transition services on the IEP.

It will be the responsibility of the individual working directly with the student to share contact reports with the other parties to ensure coordination of efforts and improve communication.

TERRITORY AND CASELOADS

1. The territory covered by each Outreach Vision Consultant will be established cooperatively by the administration and Vision Consultants. With four (4) Outreach Vision Consultants, the territory will be split so that one person covers the north central part of the State, one the south central, one the eastern and one the west. Location of the Outreach Vision Consultants' home office will be determined by the administration. The Low Vision Specialist and Transition Specialist work with students statewide.
2. Caseloads will be established for each Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist subject to final approval by the Superintendent. A maximum caseload has been established to ensure adequate service. The "Active" caseload for any Outreach Vision Consultant during one quarter will be thirty (30) students.
 - A. Additions to the caseloads are made by referral through Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, Transition Specialist, or Liaison for Services and require approval by the Superintendent.
 - B. Prior to any assignment, current caseloads and proximity to other students receiving service will be evaluated. This will be determined cooperatively by the administration and the Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist.
 - C. **No child will be added to an Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist, or Transition Specialist's regular caseload until he/she has had a current evaluation by an eye care specialist or other qualified medical professional and the report is provided to the SDSBVI.**
 - D. When an Outreach Vision Consultant assigned to that region, Low Vision Specialist or the Transition Specialist has a full caseload, the Superintendent will make the initial contact to determine services.
3. The Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist will code their caseload as follows:
 - A. Referral: Receipt of name and data collection; may include a preliminary visit.
 - B. Active: Regular visits and contacts as determined by the IFSP/IEP or 504 Plan.
4. A contact may consist of a classroom observation, attendance at a meeting, consultation with a teacher or parent by telephone or e-mail, a home visit, or presentation of an in-service. The number of contacts is determined by student need and the needs of the teacher/family.

5. An Outreach Vision Consultant may provide a professional consultation on a one-time basis upon request by school district personnel, if he/she is in the area. The professional consultation is for general information purposes only, and the Outreach Vision Consultant is under no obligation to provide assessment or programming recommendations without formal request (IEP) and parental permission. Professional consultation will only be made by Outreach Vision Consultants when they can be handled without conflict with active caseload assignments.

INITIATING SERVICE

1. Whenever a school district or parent requests outreach services from the SDSBVI, the outreach staff or the Liaison for Services will facilitate the referral process and provide the required forms and information about available services. Once the information is received by the Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist, or Transition Specialist, appropriate services can be determined.
2. To establish active regular services for any child through an Outreach Vision Consultant, the SDSBVI must be included on the IFSP/IEP for that child. In the event the Outreach Vision Consultant is the sole service provider and an IFSP/IEP is not written, consultant services may be requested by a letter signed by the parents and local school district representative or through a 504 Plan. No services will be provided without parental consent.
3. Active Caseload: Admission to the active caseload means access to considerable resources, both personnel and materials, of the SDSBVI and provides ongoing support for students, teachers, and parents. This may be combined with other services by the Outreach Vision Consultant. Services may include:
 - a. Regular visits to the school or home for observation and consultation.
 - b. Phone or E-Mail Contact: This service would make the Outreach Vision Consultant available to parents or teachers by phone or e-mail. The Outreach Vision Consultant would conduct research, locate materials, and provide information between regular visits.
 - c. Attendance at IFSP/IEP meetings or other meetings regarding the student. The Outreach Vision Consultant will either attend IFSP/IEP meetings or will provide vision-related input to other team members. No service from SDSBVI (including Outreach Vision Services) can be added to a child's IFSP/IEP without the prior agreement of the SDSBVI.
 - d. Informal assessments, meetings, and written recommendations for curriculum or other classroom modifications.
 - e. Research and other assistance in identified areas of need.
 - f. Additional consultation from an on-campus faculty or staff member from SDSBVI may provide service to any child on the regular caseload upon submission of a travel request form and written approval from the Principal and Superintendent.
 - g. Access to the SDSBVI Loan Library through which Outreach Vision Consultants make toys and teaching materials available to parents and school districts for periods determined by the Outreach Vision Consultant.
4. The school district is responsible for assigning a contact person within the district. This is the individual who will be contacted for schedule changes and will receive reports and mailings.
5. The Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist must receive a copy of the child's IFSP/IEP, transition plan, evaluation reports, and eye reports as they become available during the school year.
6. A child/student will be removed from the outreach caseload when the decision is made by the local IEP team that services are no longer required, the child is enrolled at the SDSBVI, the child moves out of state, or the local school district fails to provide periodic reassessment as required by State law.
7. In the event a student served by the outreach staff seeks enrollment at the SDSBVI, the outreach staff member will have an advisory role during the Placement for Evaluation period.

COORDINATION WITH THE SDSBVI

Ongoing communication between the outreach staff and the SDSBVI is essential for the coordination of services to children on the caseloads.

1. In-service: The outreach staff will take part in all scheduled faculty in-service programs unless other arrangements are made with the Superintendent.
2. Information: The outreach staff will receive copies of all general memos and e-mails, and receive the Uncovered Wagon with access to state e-mail.
3. Conference Calls: Monthly telephone conference calls will be scheduled to maintain communication between the outreach staff and their supervisor. The Superintendent is responsible for establishing the schedule and agenda for these calls.
4. Evaluation Team: Outreach staff will serve on the evaluation team to provide information on children on their caseload who are requesting evaluation. For Outreach Vision Consultants not based at the SDSBVI, a conference call can be made if desired. The Low Vision Specialist will serve as a regular member of the Pre-Evaluation Team.
6. Transition Team: The Outreach Vision Consultant will refer all students age 16 and older to the Transition Specialist. (Some students may require the services of both the Outreach Vision Consultant and the Transition Specialist).

STUDENT FILES

Outreach Vision Consultants and Transition Specialist will maintain the master file for the students on their active caseload. The SDSBVI personnel are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of these files.

Vision Consultants and Transition Specialist are expected to manage files in accordance with SDSBVI established guidelines for records retention and destruction. Files are organized as follows:

1. FORMS: Release, referral (initial and evaluation), orientation and mobility, loan agreement, etc.
2. IEP: Current and previous
3. EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION: SDSBVI, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech, psychological
4. MEDICAL EVALUATION
5. VISION REPORTS
6. CORRESPONDENCE: all types
7. CONTACT REPORTS: Contact reports are used to document outreach staff visits and recommendations made. Contact reports are to be distributed to parent, school contact person, local school administration, and placed in student file.

The Low Vision Specialist will maintain files that contain basic working information, such as a copy of the eye report, correspondence, and contact reports.

NOTE: When a child is no longer to be served on the caseload, the file is returned to the Liaison for Services.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. The procedure for ordering materials will be as follows:
 - A. Items of less than twenty dollars (\$20) may be purchased directly. The cash register receipt and description of the item will be submitted to the Business Office for reimbursement. These should be submitted monthly along with travel reimbursements.
 - B. Purchase orders will be required for any item over twenty dollars (\$20). These purchases require advanced approval by the Superintendent.
2. The regulations established for travel and reimbursement which apply to the SDSBVI employees apply to the Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist.
 - A. State vehicles are to be used whenever possible.
 - B. If approval is given to use a private vehicle, reimbursement will be based on approved state rate. The proper forms must be submitted to the Business Office.
 - C. For the outreach staff not based at the SDSBVI, a "work station" will be identified for travel purposes.
 - D. Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement for lodging; meals will be reimbursed on a per diem basis determined by the established times of travel. Receipts are required for airline, parking, and ground transportation.
 - E. Travel reimbursements should be submitted by the end of each month
3. Outreach staff will have access to telephone service.
 - A. Long distance telephone calls may be billed directly to the SDSBVI credit card.
 - B. An answering machine will be provided at the office site.
 - C. A cellular phone will be provided.
4. The cost of postage will be the responsibility of the SDSBVI.
5. The outreach staff will have access to a copy machine. The SDSBVI will make provision for a tabletop unit or provide access to another copier.
6. The outreach staff will be provided a laptop for their exclusive use.
7. The Outreach Vision Consultants and Low Vision Specialist are covered by the COHE Contract, as are all other faculty members.
 - A. Outreach Vision Consultants and Low Vision Specialist are responsible for scheduling their own time to meet the needs of the families on their caseload. They are not expected to exceed the hours established under the contract.
 - B. Provision has been made in the BOR/COHE contract to allow some flexibility for outreach services to be scheduled to meet student needs (Section 8.6:10).
 - a. Some faculty responsibilities, such as attendance at the faculty meetings, may be waived for Outreach Vision Consultants and Low Vision Specialist. These exceptions will be mutually established with the Superintendent.

MASTER LISTS

1. Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist are responsible for maintaining their Master Lists.
2. Information must be entered in a consistent manner. All relevant fields must be completed.
3. Each Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist and Transition Specialist is responsible for updating the Master List database of all students on their caseload quarterly.
4. The Master List provides information needed for administrative reports, special education monitoring, and APH quota account. It is essential that the entries are complete, correct, and current.

REPORTS

1. All reports are to be submitted to the Superintendent and Administrative Assistant.
2. CALENDARS: Each Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist and Transition Specialist will provide a monthly calendar to the Superintendent and Administrative Assistant by the fifth of each month.
- 3: TIME ANALYSIS: The Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist will maintain logs of time spent in direct service, preparation and travel, etc. These logs will be given to the Administrative Assistant by the second week of each month. The logs detail the time spent as follows:
 - A. Travel: loading/unloading, driving
 - B. School Visits: IFSP/IEP/504, staffings, visits, evaluations @ SDSBVI, attending eye doctor visits (students in public school)
 - C. Home Visits: home, daycare, attending eye doctor visits
 - D. Office:
 - E. Professional Meetings: consultant meetings, conference calls
 - F. Professional Training: workshops and trainings for outreach staff
 - G. Other: inservices/presentations we give, vehicle maintenance/oil changes
3. MASTER LISTS are updated four times annually: October 15, December 15, March 15, May 15
4. CASELOAD STATS are provided four times a year: October 15, December 15, March 15, May 15.
5. In addition, the Transition Specialist also submits a quarterly narrative report of activities and students served.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Outreach personnel are included in SDSBVI professional activities. In some cases, other professional development activities may be substituted by mutual agreement with the supervisor. The SDSBVI supports participation in various professional development activities. Attendance at conferences or training sessions requires submission of a Travel Request for prior approval by the supervisor.

EVALUATION

The immediate supervisor will annually evaluate the Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, and Transition Specialist using the adopted formats. Information may be gathered from parents, B-3 Coordinators, LEAs and other service providers regarding the efficacy of services. The supervisor will travel with each member of the outreach staff a minimum of once each year.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Outreach Vision Consultants prepare a newsletter that is distributed to parents and local schools three times annually. In addition, outreach staff are encouraged to provide articles for the Pioneer or recommend topics that may be suitable for distribution to local news outlets. It is also important to share information with Birth-3, SBVI offices, and eye care professionals.

IN-SERVICE PRESENTATIONS

Training sessions for public school teachers, administrators and/or parents will be tailored to meet specific needs and be done either in the local district or at the SDSBVI. These sessions may be conducted by the Outreach Vision Consultants, Low Vision Specialist, Transition Specialist, or other staff members. Public school teachers, Classroom Braillists, and therapists working with visually impaired children will be invited to take part in the regular staff development activities at the SDSBVI before school starts in the fall.

LIBRARY ACCESS

In addition to the materials in the Outreach Vision Consultant's Loan Library, the collections in the SDSBVI library are available by interlibrary loan. The records of the SDSBVI library can be accessed through the Northern State University Library.

CELLULAR PHONE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

OVERVIEW - Cellular telephones (cell phones) may be issued to SDSBVI employees who have a frequent need for remote phone access. For the purposes of this policy, cell phone use includes all forms of cell phone use including but not limited to voice calls, internet access, and text messaging. SDSBVI employees shall use their SDSBVI provided cell phones for necessary and business related purposes. Each employee shall be responsible for the safekeeping, care, and custody of the provided cell phone.

The SDSBVI reserves the right to monitor the use of all SDSBVI provided cell phones. Repeated employee misuse of SDSBVI provided cell phones may lead to disciplinary action.

Employees should avoid talking on a cell phone while driving a motor vehicle due to safety concerns. Employees should be aware that cell phone conversations are not secure and should use discretion in relaying confidential information.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURE - SDSBVI employees who wish to acquire the use of a cell phone and service shall request approval from their supervisor. Upon approval the request shall be submitted to the Business Manager for processing.

TAX CONSEQUENCES

Overview - IRS Code provides that no deduction shall be allowed with respect to "listed property", unless a taxpayer substantiates such deduction by adequate records regarding the amount, time, and business purpose. Listed property includes any cell phone or similar telecommunications equipment. Listed property, by IRS definition, means the very nature of the property subjects itself to personal use and is subject to strict substantiation requirements in order to be excluded as a taxable benefit.

In general this means that unless the employee keeps records to substantiate the business use of the phone, the value of the use of the phone will be income to the employee.

Taxability - Effective **January 2009**, the monthly service plan amount paid for an employer provided cell phone will be treated as taxable income to the employee **unless** the employee signs a SDSBVI cell phone usage agreement, and agrees to only use the cell phone for "SDSBVI business".

In order to exclude the SDSBVI provided cell phone value from taxable income, the employee must sign a written agreement that the usage of the SDSBVI provided cell phone is solely for business purposes. The employee must maintain auditable records on a monthly basis showing that all calls made or received on the SDSBVI provided cell phone have a SDSBVI business purpose.

For purposes of this policy, inadvertent or infrequent personal use of a SDSBVI provided cell phone of up to 10 minutes per month will be considered to be a “de minimis” fringe benefit and will not be considered as a taxable benefit to the employee.

Employees signing a SDSBVI cell phone usage agreement must submit adequate documentation to the Payroll Office by the 20th of each month. If personal use of a SDSBVI provided cell phone in excess of the de minimis amount is found, the pro rated personal use portion of the monthly service will be added to the employee’s taxable income. If proper substantiation is not submitted by the 20th of each month, the entire cost of the monthly service will be included as taxable income.

The following are some suggested methods for documentation that will be considered acceptable:

- All numbers called or received having a “626” or “773” prefix can be considered to be business related calls.
- If a phone number is called for a business purpose on more than one occasion in a particular month, the same number does not need to be documented every time a call is placed to that particular number.
- A single phone log of commonly called business numbers, including the business purpose for each number, can be maintained as documentation.

SHARED CELL PHONES – In situations where SDSBVI provided cell phones are shared by more than one employee, each employee that uses the cell phone is required to abide by these policies. It is the departmental responsibility to ensure that cell phone usage is substantiated as for business use only.