

OUTREACH HANDBOOK

Preparing students to step forward with confidence and a vision of lifetime success



SD School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

Dear State of South Dakota Employees,

Public service is essential to maintaining our democratic society, providing services to our citizens, and helping the state and country prosper. Thank you for your dedication to the State of South Dakota and its citizens.

Beyond day-to-day duties, each State employee, regardless of title or pay grade, is responsible to help maintain the public trust. Any misappropriation of resources, conflict of interest or other illegal activity, undermines the confidence citizens have in our State government. It overshadows the otherwise good work being done for society.

In addition to reading and abiding by the personal responsibility policies outlined here, you are asked to report acts that you believe violate these policies. If you see something, please say something. To create a comfortable atmosphere for recounting such concerns, an internal control officer has been appointed in each department. If you do not feel comfortable discussing your concerns with the internal control officer in your department, you may reach out to an internal control officer from another department or contact your human resources manager.

Thank you in advance for representing yourself and your fellow State employees with integrity.

Sincerely,

Governor Dennis Daugaard

Dear Board of Regents Employees,

Integrity. Ethics. Transparency. Protecting the public trust. You and I not only have the responsibility to maintain the very highest standards in these areas, but also to pass these values along to our students. Our society has long depended on higher education to enhance the ability of our democracy to function effectively and fairly for all of the people that call our nation and state home. We must assist students in their search for knowledge, in understanding themselves and their cultural and physical environments, and in developing the wisdom and skills necessary to function as responsible citizens in society.

As a Regental system employee, you play an integral role in carrying out that mission. Each and every employee has a responsibility to demonstrate to each other, our students, and the citizens of the State of South Dakota, a commitment to making stewardship and ethical behavior a part of our everyday activity. Thank you for representing the Board of Regents and your institution with honesty and integrity, and leading by example for the future leaders of South Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Rush".

Mike Rush
Executive Director and CEO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUTREACH HANDBOOK (Salmon)

CELLULAR PHONE POLICY AND PROCEDURES	20
CONSULTATION SERVICES	11
COORDINATION WITH THE SDSBVI.....	17
DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES	4
ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS	2
EVALUATION.....	19
EVALUATION OF STUDENTS	6
EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	6
EVALUATIONS FOR NEW PLACEMENTS	8
THREE-YEAR EVALUATIONS	6
EVALUATION TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	9
LOW VISION SPECIALIST / CERTIFIED LOW VISION THERAPIST® (CLVT®)	9
CERTIFIED ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SPECIALISTS® (COMS®)	11
EDUCATIONAL EVALUATORS	9
LIAISON FOR SERVICES	9
OUTREACH VISION CONSULTANTS (TVI)	10
SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST	10
STUDENT SERVICES DIRECTOR/PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINER	10
TRANSITION SPECIALIST	10
INITIATING SERVICE	16
IN-SERVICE PRESENTATIONS	20
LIBRARY ACCESS	20
LOW VISION SPECIALIST	12
MASTER LISTS.....	18
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.....	18
OUTREACH SERVICES AVAILABLE	1

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT19
PUBLIC RELATIONS/PUBLIC INFORMATION19
REPORTS19
ROLE AND MISSION1
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVALUATORS.....5
STUDENT FILES17
TERRITORY AND CASELOADS15
TRANSITION SPECIALIST13
 REFERRAL PROCEDURE14

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
 - A. 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 outreach 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 Liaison for Services, Student Services Director, and Outreach Vision Consultants 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. **They review areas of concern and determine areas to be assessed. Parents of enrolled students are contacted by phone by the Student Services Director in advance of the evaluation to secure their input into the evaluation process.**

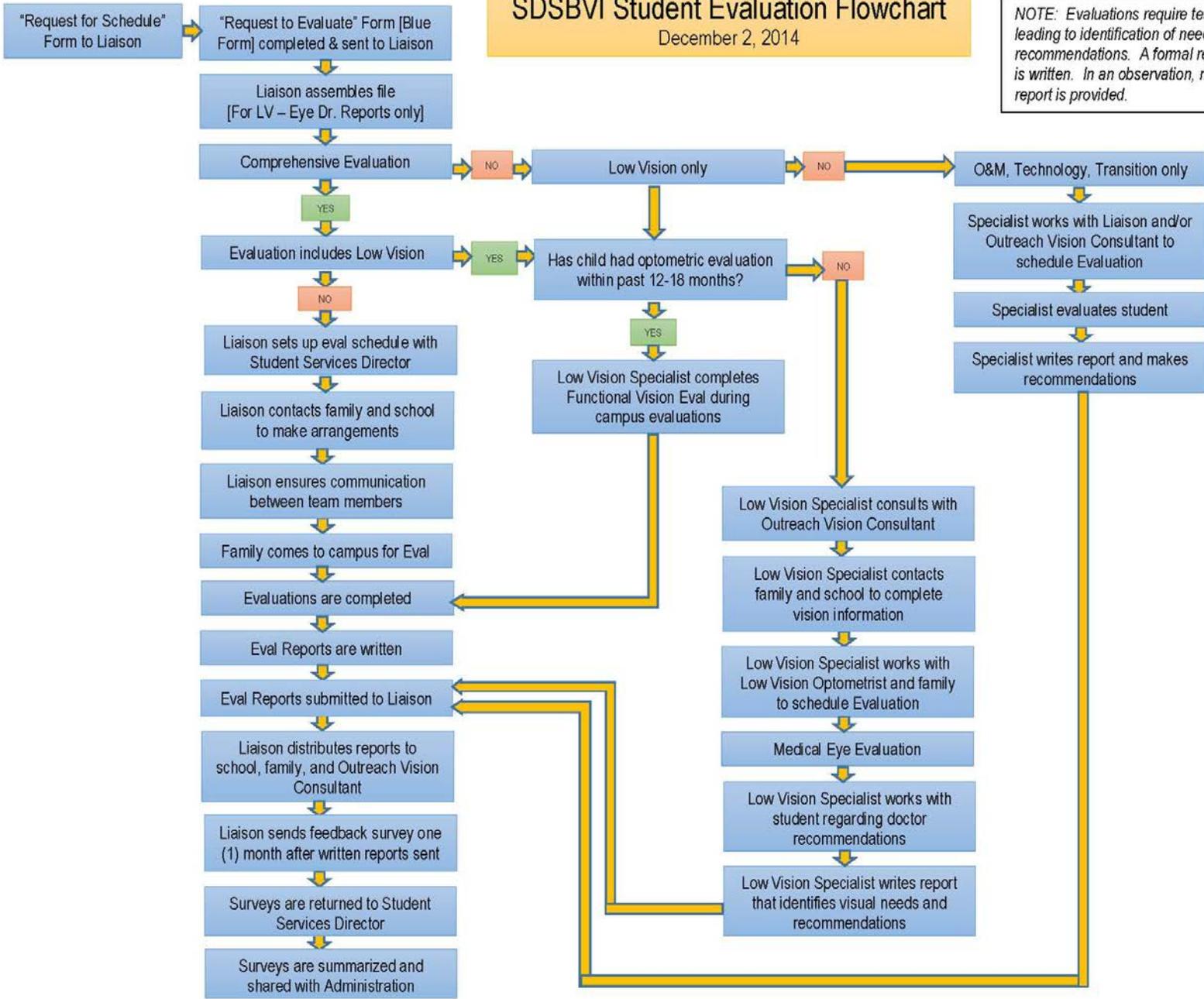
Comprehensive evaluations must be completed within twenty-five (25) school days from receipt of consent for evaluation and an IEP developed within thirty (30) calendar days from the end of the 25 school days evaluation timeline. The Student Services Director ensures that parents receive written prior notice.

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 these experienced personnel, evaluations can be done by the SDSBVI staff upon request of the LEA and parents.

SDSBVI Student Evaluation Flowchart

December 2, 2014

NOTE: Evaluations require testing leading to identification of needs and recommendations. A formal report is written. In an observation, no report is provided.



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, Student Services Director, 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. Coordinates the evaluation schedule.
2. Assembles all paperwork prior to the student's visit.
3. Secures required documents for evaluations.
4. Makes arrangements for on-campus housing and meals (if desired by the family).
5. Greets the student and his/her family upon arrival and answer any questions.
6. Coordinates the evaluation staffings.
7. Gathers the evaluation reports and mails them to the parents, local school district, and others.
8. Schedules IEP Meeting using required documents and procedures.

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

1. Low Vision Specialist consults with applicable Outreach Vision Consultant.
2. Low Vision Specialist contacts family and school to complete vision information
3. Conducts functional vision evaluations where indicated, including observing students during other evaluations and preparing written reports of findings.
4. Accompanies students to appointments with eye professionals.
5. Summarizes medical terms and prepare low vision report, including educational recommendations.
6. Disseminates reports to family, LEA, and Outreach Vision Consultant.
7. Attends IEP Meeting upon request.
8. Introduces low vision aids and appliances to students as appropriate.
9. Trains 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, interviews with parent, teacher and student, 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 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. Provides direct consultation and support services to parents/guardians and local school districts.
2. Conducts formal or informal meetings to discuss transition planning with the student and family.
3. Provides assistance, information, and support for the educational teams who serve students in public school comprehensive teams.
4. Recommends a comprehensive evaluation through the SDSBVI or other appropriate resource for each visually impaired child who needs evaluation.
5. Serves 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 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. Makes 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. Supervises all evaluations conducted at or by the SDSBVI for public school students.
2. Completes assessments, prepare reports, and make educational recommendations. This includes securing the signature of the consulting psychologist.
3. Participates in staffings with other evaluators to analyze comprehensive assessment results.
4. When appropriate, prepares 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. Conducts speech/language evaluations as appropriate.
2. Completes assessments, prepare reports, and make educational recommendations.
3. Participates 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 campus and/or 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 evaluation team as needed 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 (SBVI).

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.

- I. Assists in the development of the transition plan for youth with visual impairments statewide.
 - A. Assists with arranging vocational assessments using resources at the SDSBVI, SBVI and/or local schools.
 - B. Assists youth in identifying post-secondary training and education options.
 - C. Provides work readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills.
 - D. Provides job exploration counseling.
 - E. Provides self-advocacy training opportunities.
 - F. Provides guidance to address transition needs of youth in coordination with educational and vocational programs.

- II. Coordinates transition efforts with Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired to ensure cooperation and planning.
 - A. Works with all SBVI transition age youth to determine transition needs.
 - B. Works with the families to develop natural supports for youth.
 - C. Facilitates communication and cooperation between SBVI transition age youth and their counselors, local school districts, and other service providers.
 - D. Attends the IEP and Transition Planning meetings with SBVI youth.
 - E. Coordinates work-based learning experiences in an integrated environment.
 - F. Coordinates with local workforce development boards and American Job Centers to create work opportunities for students including internship, summer employment, and apprenticeships.

- III. Provides technical assistance, consultant, and training to youth with disabilities.
 - A. Provides training in the transition process including legal responsibilities and self-advocacy skills training.
 - B. Provides training on resources for assistive technology, daily living skills, and independent living skills.
 - C. Provides information and referral services to youth with disabilities.
 - D. Provides technical assistance, consultation, and training to field staff, LEAs, and parents on behalf of the youth.
 - E. Provides post-secondary education counseling.

- IV. Maintains necessary records for youth on employment and progress.
 - A. Compiles and submits quarterly reports to SBVI including narrative reports, quarterly service reports, time studies, and purchase of service expenditure/request for funds form.
 - B. Maintains files for transition age youth.

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 and the 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 active 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, in-service training for school personnel, 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 have access to state e-mail system.
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.
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).
7. When a student's educational program includes both outreach and on-campus attendance, the SDSBVI "primary" contact will be determined by percentage of enrollment.

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. **STUDENT PLAN:** Current and previous
3. **EDUCATIONAL:** SDSBVI, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech, psychological
4. **MEDICAL**
5. **VISION**
6. **CONTACTS:** 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.
7. **CORRESPONDENCE:** all types
8. **LOAN FORMS**
9. **HANDOUTS**
10. **OTHER**

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 followed as directed in the Business Office Handbook through the purchase order process. If a vendor does not take a purchase order a request will be submitted via email to the employee's direct supervisor and the Business Manager with the items being requested and the approximate cost. Both the supervisor and the Business Manager still have to approve this request prior to the purchase of the item or service being requested. Once approval has been received, the purchase can be made and the employee will be reimbursed upon presenting a valid receipt.
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. Travel will **NOT** be reimbursed if passed 60 days of travel date.
3. Outreach staff will have access to telephone service.
 - A. An answering machine will be provided at the office site.
 - B. 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 and iPad 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 monthly updating of the Master List database for all students on their caseload.
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

The following reports are to be submitted to the Superintendent and Administrative Assistant.

1. **TIME ANALYSIS:** The Outreach Vision Consultants 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. Preparation & Follow Up: correspondence with schools, parents, and students (email/phone calls); submitting travel requests, vouchers, time analysis, monthly calendars; maintaining student files, master list and caseload stats; materials maintenance; research; consultant projects; contact notes and report writing
 - E. Professional Meetings: consultant meetings, conference calls, committee meetings
 - F. Professional Training: workshops and trainings for outreach staff
 - G. Other: inservices/presentations we give, vehicle maintenance/oil changes
2. **CASELOAD STATS** are provided four times a year: October 15, December 15, March 15, May 15.
3. **MASTER LISTS** are updated on the database four times annually: October 15, December 15, March 15, May 15
4. In addition, the Transition Specialist also submits a quarterly narrative report of activities and students served, which is also submitted to SBVI.

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.

PERSONAL CELL PHONES – If an employee elects to use their personal cell phone, SDSBVI will reimburse the employee \$15 per month during the months they are on duty. Arrangements must be made through the Business office.