



BOARD OF VISITORS

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND
P.O. BOX 2069
STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Board Chairman

January 5, 2011

Call to order: Vice Chairman Delegate Bell called the meeting to order. He reported that Senator Hanger was in route from an early morning meeting.

Members Present: Diane Sandidge, Donna Gately, Alice Frick, Jane McNeil, Delegate Bell, Virgil Cook, John Pleasants, Senator Hanger

Members Absent: Delegate Landes

Seats Vacant: Senate Representative from eastern Virginia and one member position

Reading and approval of September 2010 BOV meeting minutes: Jane McNeil motioned to dispense with the reading of the minutes and accept as written, Virgil Cook seconded. Motion was passed. Minutes of September 2010 board meeting were approved.

Executive Committee Report: Minutes of the BOV Executive Committee held on December 8, 2010 were read. (Attachment 1) Delegate Bell reported there was no update on the request for exemption from VITA. Delegate Bell polled the board on each item. The Master Site Plan was approved as recommended by the Executive Committee. The Decision Packages were approved as recommended by the Executive Committee. The Superintendent's IEP and evaluation process was discussed. Donna Gately asked Dr. Armstrong if she had any input for the new document. Dr. Armstrong responded she had read the new Employment Work Profile (EWP) and found it very acceptable. Discussion took place on when next evaluation should occur and how. Next evaluation will be in October and each member of the board will complete a performance input form that will be consolidated by the executive board then approved by the whole board. The Superintendent's EWP and evaluation process was approved as discussed.

School Reports:

Residential report by Mary Murray, Director of Student Life- Mary Murray presented a series of pictures depicting life on campus. (Pictures can be viewed on the VSDB web page under the Board of Visitors) The pictures provide a look into the many activities available to students in the residential program. Some of these activities include a private pool party at the local city pool after students return in September, girls night and boys night in the student center, the students created tile mosaics for the student center, the Blind students have a band that performs on campus, the students have a food committee that assist in the cafeteria with feed back on food selection and help plan and serve special meals and much more. There are chances for the older students to mentor the younger students through group activities. With all the construction and changing pathways on camps the last two years have been a challenge. The construction company Kjellstrom and Lee work very closely with the staff and students and have been very helpful. There is a student safety committee that works with the construction company to help keep the campus safe for the students. The blind students will have the opportunity to tour and touch the new blind dorm in different phases of construction. The residential program operates on a positive points system to encourage good behavior and independent life skills.

Personnel report by Nathan McLamb, Human Resource Director- The following reports were presented.

Wage Staff

<u>Department</u>	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>Filled</u>	<u>Percent of Fill</u>
Administration.....	1	1	100%
Clinical & Educ Support.....	1	1	100%
Blind Department.....	9	9	100%
Deaf Department.....	22	18	82%
Residential.....	15	12	80%
Student Health Services... ..	7	7	100%
Food Services.....	1	0	0%
Public Safety.....	12	11	92%
Operations.....	4	4	100%
Total	72	63	88%

Faculty and Classified Staff

<u>Department</u>	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>Filled</u>	<u>Percent of Fill</u>
Administration.....	4	4	100%
Clinical and Educ. Support.....	19	18	95%
Blind Department.....	20	18	90%
Deaf Department.....	49	41	84%
Residential.....	46.5	44.5	97%
Student Health Services.....	5	4	80%
Food Services.....	7	6	86%
Public Safety.....	3	2	67%
Human Resources.....	3	3	100%
Operations.....	24	23	96%
Total	180.5	163.5	91%

There were no questions from the board.

Budget report by Janice Rankin, Director of Operations- Currently the budget is 5% over for November and December. This is normal with heating requirements and large items paid up front in first part of new fiscal year. Travel reimbursement went up to \$.51 per mile on January 1. Board members will not be paid for attending executive committee meeting, but will receive mileage to and from those meetings.

Foundation report by Nancy Armstrong, Superintendent- We are still waiting on the IRS to approve the formation of the Foundation Board. Once the Foundation Board has approval the first meeting will be scheduled. At this point the number of members on the board is set, but as the board progresses the numbers might expand.

Technology report by Doug Wright, IT Manager- The VSDB web page has been moved to a new public hosting company. The new site looks the same but have many new features and possibilities. One feature is the ability to track web page access. The VSDB web page has on average 150 visits a day. The new address, vsdb.k12.va.us, reflects that VSDB is a school. Alice Frick asked if sports information was included on the web page. Yes, under calendars. The minutes for the board meetings are also available from the web page. The question was asked if it would be possible to have links from the VSDB web page to other organizations like the Deaf Alumni. There are plans in the future to have links to several resources for the Deaf and Blind.

The move of the blind department to Byrd Hall went smoothly. The staff did amazing work in the short time frame given for the move.

Departmental reports by Nancy Armstrong (for Rebecca Plesko-Dubois) and Jack Johnson, Principal-

Rebecca Plesko-Dubois submitted a report to the board for review before the meeting. The report is attachment 2. Dr Armstrong gave a quick update on campus construction.

Over Christmas, furniture from Peery and Swanson Hall was moved to a renovated Byrd Hall. Students in the blind department returned from their holiday vacation to a new setting for their educational program. A big thanks is extended to all the maintenance staff, housekeeping staff and Camp 10 inmates for working so diligently to make this happen. In addition, thanks to all the staff in the Blind Department for boxing up their classrooms and offices and then coming in over break to set up your new space. There were days when I thought we were not going to make it but the dedicated staff continued to sift through rooms that had years and years of stuff in them!

Now that Peery and Swanson are vacant, asbestos removal started on January 3 and will continue for approximately six weeks. After the abatement the construction firm of Kjellstrom and Lee will demolish the stairwells to make room for wider, improved stair cases. An elevator will connect the two floors of Peery Hall which will make this building handicapped accessible. Ultimately, these two buildings will house the new elementary program, new audiology lab, speech language laboratories, psychology offices, social work offices and occupational and physical therapy labs.

Progress is going well with the rest of the consolidation project as well. The dormitory for the deaf boys hopes to be completed in May so we will plan to move the middle/high school boys into this area. The dormitory for the blind students will open in August. The middle/high school educational building will soon be under roof so work will continue through the winter on this project. As construction evolves on campus, we continue to keep the safety committee composed of students involved in helping to keep travel routes safe for students and staff.

Student enrollment is at 111. Currently there are 70 students in the Deaf Department, 30 in the Blind Department and 11 students with multiple disabilities. We continue to receive applications and are working to get enrollment back up to the numbers from last year.

Jack Johnson commended the staff on the smooth transition to Byrd Hall. Today was the first day of High School SOLs, the deaf department is 100% computerized for the SOLs this year and with the exceptions of some VITA issues in the morning the testing was going well. A new ASL class will be offered to students with low vision, a first for VSDB! Several interns are on campus from Kent State and Radford University. The boys and girls basketball teams will be competing in the Mason-Dixon tournament the end of January. The boys will be traveling to South Carolina while the girls travel to Georgia. Goalball will be starting in three weeks. The school is in the process of being accredited by SACS in April.

A concern was brought forth from the floor about the low number of students attending VSDB. An inquiry was made into what type of recruiting was being conducted to increase both the numbers of students and knowledge of VSDB. The response was that VSDB is not allowed to recruit students to our school, but we do have flyers that we have sent to all school districts in the state as well as meeting in person with regions to give information on our services.

Community Based Instruction by Anna Hoover, Transition Specialist- Anna Hoover presented a power point with information on the work base program. (The power point is available to review on the VSDB web page under the Board of Visitors)

We currently have five (5) students enrolled at Valley Vocational Technical Center. VSDB pays tuition and provides interpreters. One low vision student who is enrolled in a masonry program has been approved by Kjellstrom and Lee to assist with the brick laying of the blind dorm. A concern was raised about the number of graduating seniors not participating in the work based program and what was being provided for them. The work based program is a voluntary program and the students who wish to participate are included but not all students need or are interested in participating. The demands of the SOLs often make it hard on students to participate in all programs. Senator Hanger would like to look into vocational training more in-depth in the future.

Construction Report by Chinh Vu, Department of General Services- Chinh Vu introduced Fulton Sensabaugh with Kjellstrom and Lee and Vijay Ramnarain with VA Department of Education. The power point and construction pictures presented by Chinh Vu are available on the VSDB web page under the Board of Visitors. The deaf dorm is on schedule for completion in May, construction is progressing without problems, as is the construction on the blind dorm. Both buildings are in the process of being closed in either by plastic or roofs and wall so indoor construction can continue through the cold weather. There was a problem identified with the school building, the foundation settled 2.5 inches at the north east corner stairwell. Additional geo-technical exploration was conducted in the area of settlement and all other sides of the building for structural and geotechnical analysis. A sinkhole was discovered 43-48 ft right below the column that settled, and the area of southeast corner stairwell experiencing "soft" materials below. A remediation structural design for the foundation is to install micro piles as added support due to the unforeseen ground conditions. The foundation will be lifted to the original design elevation as part of this remediation effort. All construction activities directly adjacent to and above the settlement area are on hold until the foundation issue is corrected. Anticipate completion date is spring 2012. The question of how this will affect the budget was put forward. Mr. Vu responded that it will not push the project over, an amount is set aside in the budget to cover unexpected events up to a certain amount.

New Business:

The new VSDB flyer was approved by all present.

Alice Frick indicated she appreciated the information presented by Anna Hoover asked that in the future the board have guest speakers in who can educate the board on other transition services for the students.

Senator Hanger suggested that now that the board has received the basic information about VSDB that the spring and summer meeting become more work sessions to finalize plans.

Public Comment:

Rachel Bavister, President of the Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD), addressed the board. Ms. Bavister presented the board with a packet for review regarding a recommendation that the VAD will be presenting to the General Assembly about a Bill of Rights for deaf children. The packet includes the study completed by VAD as well as information supporting the request for a Bill of Rights. Currently the Commonwealth of Virginia has recommendations in place for deaf children but no laws. Deaf children are being cheated out of proper education without laws to protect them. The VAD will be meeting in Richmond and more information will soon be available on their web page, VAD.org. Or contact Rachel at rbavister@comcast.net.

Wayne Frick handed out brochures from the Deaf Alumni reunion and calendars to the board.

Daphne Cox, 1978 VSDB graduate, Associate Director in the Office of Admissions at Gallaudet, and VSDAA President. In 2014 VSDB will celebrate 175 years, the VSDAA is working on publishing a historical book following up on the book published by Mr. Bass as part of the celebrations.

No further public comment.

Nate McLamb reminded the board members that conflict of interest papers need to be turned into his office.

Board is still two members short. Need appointments to fill spaces.

Next meeting it tentative scheduled for Thursday March 31, 2011.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Executive Committee
VSDB Board of Visitors
Minutes
December 8, 2010

The Executive Committee of the Board of Visitors for the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind met on December 8, 2010

Members present: Chair Emmett Hanger, Vice Chair Vickie Bell, Secretary Virgil Cook, Alice Frick, Donna Gateley

Superintendent Evaluation Process--The committee considered the criteria for evaluating the superintendent. The evaluation period runs from October 25 through October 24 of the following year. Concerning Number 18 of the core responsibilities, Donna Gateley suggested referencing Items to corresponding sections of the bylaws. She moved adopting the guidelines with the suggested changes. The motion passed.

Decision Documents

Master Site Plan—Virgil Cook moved that the committee recommend to the board that we accept the recommendation to raze Darden Hall and to leave Price Hall. The motion passed.

Decision Package

Funding of the Parent-Infant Program—Senator Hanger expressed his concern that asking for funding during a tight-budget period when we had asked for the program without funding would be inappropriate.

VITA Rates—Janice Rankin reported that the school is paying over \$500,000 a year for VITA services. Our grant has been dropped to \$230,000. The committee felt that given the very specialized nature of the school's technology needs, we should seek withdrawal from VITA control. Virgil Cook moved that we seek approval to withdraw from VITA. The motion passed.

Operation of New Buildings—Janice Rankin reported that the allotment for FY2011 is \$50,000. The request is for \$55,000 for FY2012. This will be an ongoing cost as new buildings come on line. If Planning and Budget does not provide the Funds, Senator Hanger is willing to sponsor a bill.

Public Safety—The request is for \$156,984 to fund three positions.

Furniture for New Buildings—The request is for \$865,000. A motion to support the request passed.

Using State Payroll Services—Dr. Armstrong reported that Payroll hired someone especially for VSDB at \$56,000 per year. We have personnel to take care of this problem. There is no saving. Donna Gateley moved that we request the withdrawal from Payroll in favor of in-house management. The Motion passed.

Agenda for the December 16 Meeting—Senator Hanger presented the proposed agenda for the December 16 meeting. Virgil Cook moved approval. The motion passed.

Report submitted by Rebecca Plesko-Dubois to the board for review before meeting.

In prior meetings, we have reviewed as a group the number of students enrolled in each department and the types of students who are applying for admission. In this meeting we also wanted to share more detailed information about the students that are currently enrolled. Many members of the Board of Visitors are familiar with the students that have historically graduated from VSDB. In the past there were larger numbers of students enrolled at the school that represented a broad range of abilities and interests. More recently, VSDB has noticed that many of the students applying for admission have applied after lack of academic and social success in the public schools. As a result, the proportion of students with needs that go beyond traditional deaf education and traditional blind education has increased. We would like to highlight that VSDB is currently providing educational services that meet the needs of students with sensory impairments as well as learning disabilities, Autism spectrum disorders, language impairments, intellectual disabilities, attention disorders, emotional issues and other health impairments. Teachers and related services providers do a wonderful job of collaborating so that these students can access and benefit from the more traditional aspects of the curriculum. Next is a brief snapshot of just how many students are currently receiving services that go beyond traditional Deaf and Blind education. These numbers were collected by looking at the areas of special education eligibility on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). There are always some students that may have needs that have not yet been formally identified through the IEP eligibility process.

Of the 71 students placed in the Deaf department, there are currently 32 who are receiving special education under the category of hearing impairment only. Of the students placed in the Deaf Department, many also receive special education services in other areas of disability. The numbers for students placed in the Deaf department are as follows: 15 for Speech-Language Impairments (or specific language impairments), 7 for Specific Learning Disabilities, 6 for Other Health Impairments (such as diabetes or ADHD), 3 for Autism, 1 for orthopedic impairment, 1 for intellectual disability, and 1 for emotional disturbance. Of the students placed in the Deaf Department, there are 8 students receiving special education services under the category of multiple disabilities. Each student is receiving special education services for a different combination of disabilities. The specific areas of disability for the 8 students with multiple disabilities are as follows: 6 with intellectual disabilities, 3 with Autism, all with speech-language impairments, 5 with a visual issue/impairment of some nature, and 4 with other health impairments. Of the students placed in the Deaf Department, there are 3 who receive special education services under the category of deafblindness. Two of these deafblind students also have intellectual disabilities.

Of the 38 students in the Blind department, there are currently 15 students who are receiving special education services under the category of visual impairment only. The number of students placed in the Blind Department that receive other areas of services are as follows: 5 for Speech-Language Impairments (or specific language impairments), 3 for Specific Learning Disabilities, 2 for Other Health Impairments, 1 for orthopedic impairment, and 1 for traumatic brain injury. Of the students placed in the Blind Department, there are 11 students receiving special education services under the category of multiple disabilities. Each student is receiving special education services for a different combination of disabilities. The specific areas of disability for the 11 students with multiple disabilities are as follows: 8 with intellectual disabilities, 2-3 with Autism, 6 with speech-language impairments, and 4 with other health impairments. Of the students placed in the Blind Department, there are 2 who receive special education services under the category of deafblindness or VI, HI. None of the students placed in the Blind Department with dual sensory impairments have intellectual disabilities, but they both have other health impairments and one has a specific learning disability.

If we look across the entire student body, there are about 36 students with speech-language impairments, 11 with specific learning disabilities, about 18 with other health impairments, about 9 with Autism Spectrum disorders, 3 with orthopedic impairments, 17 with intellectual disabilities, 1 with traumatic brain injury, and 1 with emotional disturbance. There are a total of 19 students with a summary eligibility of Multiple Disabilities and about 11 students with some type of dual sensory impairment.

While VSDB provides comprehensive and individualized services to meet a variety of disabilities for students who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, and deafblind, it is important to remember that these special services are dependent upon a strong traditional educational program for students who deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired. As VSDB moves forward, it is important to recognize that all educational services require a strong core program to be in place. Students with multiple disabilities do not benefit from a residential placement unless there are opportunities to socialize with a wide variety of more typically developing deaf and blind children. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and deafblindness do not benefit from placement here unless there are opportunities to be "mainstreamed" with students working on grade level standards of learning. Students with multiple disabilities at VSDB have opportunities for peer mentors, to manage sports teams, to be involved with clubs, and to work in the community. As we look into the future of VSDB, we should be thinking about how to maintain a strong traditional program while continuing to build services for students with multiple disabilities. Students are often the best teachers, and we need all the children here to have the opportunity to learn from each other.