

Information for Parents



Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is a vital part of educational opportunities that are available to blind and visually impaired students in Texas. In order to make informed decisions about their children's education, parents should know about the programs and services available from TSBVI.



For further information, contact:

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
1100 W. 45th Street
Austin, Texas 78756

General Information (512) 454-8631

Admissions (512) 206-9182

Outreach Services (512) 206-9268

Website: www.tsbvi.edu

Toll-free number (answering machine)
1-800-872-5273 (TSB-KARE)
TDD (512) 371-1599

The Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired (TSBVI) is a special public school established by the Texas Legislature to provide specialized and intensive services which focus on the unique learning needs of students with visual impairment, including those with additional disabilities.

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TSBVI is located in a pleasant neighborhood in Austin, Texas. The forty-five acre campus is close to shopping, recreation areas, restaurants and public transportation. Students attend school in well-equipped classrooms. They live in homelike residences with living rooms, playrooms, bedrooms, study areas and kitchens.

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TSBVI recognizes and addresses the unique educational needs and interests of each student.

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Every student receives instruction and guidance from staff who have been specially trained to work with children and young people with visual impairments.

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TSBVI is a partner to the public schools of Texas, advocating for students to be able to learn and live in their local communities. The School can help students to do this successfully.

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We offer a variety of short-term and long-term programs, as well as outreach services specially designed to meet the unique needs of students with blindness or a visual impairment.

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We stand ready to assist local schools and parents whenever students need the specialized services and resources of this School.

YOU HAVE OPTIONS

Soon you will be having your annual ARD meeting to develop your son or daughter's educational program and placement. Often your local school can provide the educational services which your child needs. However, there may be times in your child's education when specialized, intensive services might be needed from a special school. The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired can help when this happens, either at its Austin campus or in your local area.

YOU PROBABLY HAVE QUESTIONS

What can TSBVI offer students with visual impairment and those with disabilities in addition to their visual impairment?

TSBVI provides a broad range of specialized instruction and services on its campus. Students can:

- Learn with specially trained teachers and other staff who understand vision loss and its effects on development
 - teachers certified in visual impairment
 - orientation and mobility specialists
 - occupational and physical therapists
 - adaptive physical education teachers
 - speech/language therapists
 - counselors and social workers
 - low vision specialists
 - technology teachers
- Have access to a 24-hour per day Health Center, staffed by licensed nurses 7 days a week
- Experience a school day which integrates language development, motor skills, independent living and self-help skills, behavior management, and social development into all aspects of learning
- Learn to talk and communicate, read and write, using braille or other special communication systems
- Become familiar with specialized technology such as adapted computers and notetakers
- Acquire academic skills at TSBVI and in Austin public school classes
- Learn to get around independently using orientation and mobility skills
- Participate fully in extracurricular activities:
 - be in a school play
 - learn photography and create art
 - join the wrestling, swimming, or track teams
 - participate in tandem biking
 - learn to play a musical instrument
 - learn outdoor sports such as fishing, boating and running
- Have a home away from home
 - live in pleasant dorms with caring staff
 - visit museums, parks, malls, and more
 - have fun with friends at the School's Recreation Center, bowling alley and pool
- Learn the skills needed to live independently, from dressing, eating and cooking to having an apartment, and budgeting money
- Learn work skills; explore a career; get a job on campus or in the community
- Grow with special friends who share and understand visual loss

Where does the student live while going to TSBVI?

Students live in campus houses, apartments, and dorms with one- or two-student rooms. Students go home on a weekly or monthly basis to be with their families. The School operates a “Weekends Home” program using School vehicles. Some students from the Austin area live at home and attend TSBVI as day students.

How long does a student attend TSBVI?

TSBVI returns students to local programs as soon as possible. The student’s family, local school, and the staff of TSBVI decide together when a student is ready to make a successful transition to home and local programs. The School offers both long-term and short-term programs. Some of these programs take place during the school year; others are offered during the summer.

How much do these services cost?

There is no cost to students or their families for instructional and residential services. Families simply provide for their child’s clothing, medical care, and personal needs.

Are there services provided by TSBVI for families and students throughout Texas who attend their local schools and live at home?

Yes. TSBVI has a group of excellent teachers and other professionals in our Outreach Department who can work with parents and local school teachers to develop ideas on how to improve learning in the student’s local program. Workshops, on-site consultations, newsletters and parent support are available.

What are the eligibility requirements for services from TSBVI?

A student must be 21 years of age or younger, must have a visual impairment or a visual impairment with an additional disability, and must need specialized services related to the visual impairment to receive services. The student’s local school and parents must agree to request the services of TSBVI, whether those services are at the School or provided locally by Outreach Services.

However, TSBVI would not be able to meet a student’s educational needs if the student requires educational services in a hospital or in the home, or requires intensive services related to a severe emotional, behavioral, or mental disability, including the services of a residential treatment facility.

YOU HAVE RIGHTS

What rights do parents have if they request any of these services from TSBVI, and either the local school or TSBVI disagrees?

Although this does not happen very often, the parent may request assistance from the Texas Education Agency to provide mediation in order to resolve the problem, or the parent may request a due process impartial hearing in accord with the provisions of the federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

How do I get more information about services from TSBVI?

Contact the School’s admission office if you are interested in school year, short-term or summer programs.

Contact Outreach Services if you desire services to be provided in your local area.