



# Washington State School for the Blind

# Strategic Plan

July, 2015 – June, 2025



## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Vision Statement.....	3
Mission Statement.....	3
Purpose Statement.....	3
Philosophy Statements.....	3
Future Direction Statements.....	4
Priorities of Government.....	4
Value .....	4
Agency Overview.....	4-6
Agency Description .....	6
Authority Statement .....	6-7
Clientele Characteristics.....	7
Major Assumptions.....	8
Population Trends.....	8-9
Service Needs.....	9-10
Organizational Chart.....	10
Organizational Structure.....	10-11
2015-2025 Goals .....	11-12
<b>Goal #1: Leadership</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	12-16
<b>Goal #2: Academic Achievement</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	16-20
<b>Goal #3: Best Practices</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	20-24
<b>Goal #4: Service Provider/Parent Training</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	24-27
<b>Goal #5: Public Awareness</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	27-29
<b>Goal #6: Communications</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	29-30
<b>Goal #7: Safe Environment</b>	
Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures, Activity Inventory.....	30-32
Acknowledgements .....	32

***“We will provide world-class educational services to the blind and visually impaired”***

**Introduction:**

The primary purpose of the State School for the Blind (WSSB) is to educate and train visually impaired and blind children (RCW 72.40.010) throughout the state of Washington. WSSB is unique in the fact that it is both a public school and a state agency providing “Basic Education” services to blind and visually impaired (BVI) children addressing unique learning needs in order to reduce the opportunity gap for students with disabilities.

WSSB has a rich history of providing quality services to BVI children throughout the state. WSSB was established in 1886 as a territorial school and has provided leadership and direction in the development of services to the BVI for over 128 years. WSSB is nationally accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) and serves as a statewide demonstration and resource center providing direct and indirect services to students both on campus and in the child's local community. Services are provided to families, educators, blind consumers and others interested in assisting BVI youth in becoming independent and contributing citizens.

**Independence** is the best single word to describe the school.

As philosophical views have changed over the years, so has WSSB. Beginning in 1990, the school has changed service delivery models from one of primarily a residential model to one that meets children, parents, and local school districts needs not only on the campus, but throughout the state and Pacific Northwest. Since 1990, WSSB has increased the number of children being served by over 600% through a diversification of service delivery models, development of hundreds of partnerships with services being provided to over 2,000 students per year, providing training to over 300 teachers, para-professionals, parents and others working with the BVI on a yearly basis, and providing digital curricular materials that are access by over 50,000 individuals per year.

Under the direction of the Board of Trustees and in consultation with parents, students, and personnel throughout the state, WSSB examines its role to guarantee that customers’ needs now and in the future are being met.

The WSSB Strategic Plan represents a commitment from many individuals over the years in helping set the direction for WSSB, while continually re-evaluating this plan, therefore keeping the efficacy of programs and services on target for those receiving services.

**Vision Statement:** “Independence for Those Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired”

**Mission Statement:** To provide specialized quality educational services to visually impaired youth ages birth to 21 years of age.

**Purpose Statement:** WSSB serves as a statewide demonstration and resource center providing direct and indirect services to students both on campus and in the children’s local communities. Services are provided to families, educators, and others interested in assisting visually impaired youth to become independent and contributing citizens.

**Philosophy:** WSSB believes all students have the right to a safe and stimulating learning environment and the right to an appropriate education. We also believe that all students can benefit from intensive short-term placement options and a menu of services that can be provided through partnerships with LEAs and ESDs. Conceptually, WSSB is like a revolving door that allows students to enter, learn a skill and exit back into their local district and then re-enter for additional intensive learning and then exit again. It is this ease of movement between LEAs, ESDs, and WSSB, which helps improve the overall programs for BVI within the entire state. No one school or agency can accomplish what these children need without this spirit of cooperation and sharing.

**Future Direction Statements:**

- Improve services through effective partnerships.
- Birth to Three – work in partnership with numerous agencies to better coordinate and therefore improve services to BVI students and their families.
- Place more emphasis in actively involving parents in their child’s program.
- Continue to place a heavy emphasis on WSSB as a hub of service delivery and as a demonstration center for “Best Practices.”
- Develop programs to assist students in developing positive self-image about blindness.
- Strengthen Educational and Residential programs through short-term placement with all goals leading toward independence.
- Continue to set high expectations for all students.
- Strengthen programs by guaranteeing that each student accepted for enrollment has vision loss as a primary disability. (It is important to note that this is not an acuity dependent issue, but dependent upon each child’s independent evaluation and functional/performance-based vision assessment.)
- Work with all consumers of services in developing school and agency pride.
- Continue to develop creative solutions through on-campus and outreach services in providing for the needs of students, parents and LEAs throughout the state.
- Continue to place strong emphasis on student safety.
- Explore changing the name of the agency to better reflect the agencies wide mission, while retaining the on-campus name (Washington State School for the Blind)

**Priorities: Governor Jay Inslee**

- Create more innovative schools for students around Washington.
- Encourage continuous improvement of our educators and administrators.
- End the unacceptably high number of students who drop out of high school.
- Eliminate the persistent opportunity gaps that have kept too many children from achieving their full potential.
- Make sure all students graduate from high school prepared with 21st century skills.

**Value:**

- Comprehensive skill development and high expectations for each BVI child to include: braille, independent travel, social skills, use of technology, personal management, use of low vision aides, and job skills.
- Literacy for all those who are BVI.
- Helping families support and understand their BVI children.
- Development of collaborative partnerships.
- Efficient and effective use of resources.
- Trained and competent personnel.
- Commitment to work with partners throughout the country in research and development of new approaches to learning, new products and new training.

**Collaborative Provision:** To initiate collaboration with groups or agencies interested in assisting BVI youth in becoming independent and productive citizens to their fullest potential.

**Agency Overview****Agency Description:**

WSSB is nationally accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) and serves as a statewide demonstration and resource center providing direct and indirect services to students both on campus and in the child's local community. Services are provided to families, educators, blind consumers and others interested in assisting BVI youth in becoming independent and contributing citizens. The school/agency provides

services to over 2,000 students per year, provides training to over 300 professionals working with BVI students, provides digital curricular materials to over 50,000 individuals per year and produces approximately 600,000 pages of braille on a yearly basis. Currently 63% of support for services comes from state appropriations and 37% from private local funds which are generated by WSSB. The chart below provides an example of the menu of types of services that are provided in partnership with many organizations. An additional role the school fulfills is providing in-service and pre-service to educators through specialized training for those who are BVI, and serving as a partner with universities on research to improve access and opportunities for BVI students.

# Washington State School for the Blind

**Statewide Service Delivery Model**  
Thousands served through Effective Partnerships



As the population of our state has grown, WSSB's role has also expanded to meet the demands set forth by LEAs and ESDs from throughout our state and the Pacific Northwest. There is no teacher-training program for the BVI in the state of Washington; therefore, the school helps fill this void. WSSB continues to explore the development of partnerships with university programs to reduce the tremendous lack of trained personnel within our state.

In fulfilling the school's Mission Statement and following the Strategic Plan, the school continues in its direction of becoming a Center of Best Practices for services to BVI children within our state, and demonstrating through empirical data that intensive short-term on campus programs, mixed with expansion and improvements in outreach services along with digital learning options will dramatically increase the quality of services for BVI children. As components within the plan progresses, improvements in services to BVI children will occur, as should the efficiency in statewide services. WSSB Outreach Mission continued to expand with the recognition by OSPI of WSSB's Director of Outreach as the State Vision Consultant, and recommendations by numerous state

agencies/stakeholders for WSSB to hire a Statewide Coordinator for Birth – Three services to help improve services to these children and their families. Over the years, continued increases in partnerships have resulted in improved services for those who are BVI on a statewide basis. These programs have proven to be not only extremely valuable to LEAs, ESDs, parents and children, but have also assisted districts in making better use of limited resources in improving the quality of services to children.

Over the years, WSSB has worked at consolidating various fragmented service delivery components for the BVI into a very efficient one stop system that has made major improvements in reaching out to more children, families and local school districts. As part of the Strategic Plan, WSSB in partnership with numerous organizations and agencies will continue to examine the networking of resources in order to better serve BVI children.

BVI students are entitled, under RCW 72.A.13, to an equal educational opportunity. RCW 28A.150.200 states that it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of **all children** within its borders. Furthermore, it is recognized that typical educational practice relies heavily on presentations which are predominantly visual in nature and, unless specially adapted, do not necessarily convey the concepts intended to the BVI student. Research has shown that approximately 90% of what we learn is acquired through incidental learning, and that 90% of incidental learning is acquired visually. Therefore, an emphasis on experiential learning needs to be a major component in the education of BVI students wherever they are and these differences need to be recognized and considered.

The educational program at WSSB and outreach services are designed to facilitate the particular learning characteristics of the students served. Likewise, all staff has been trained in working with BVI students and are a tremendous state resource which needs to be more effectively utilized to provide quality services to students at WSSB and BVI students throughout the state and region.

Continued diversification of services has resulted in efficiency gains and WSSB’s ability to provide services to a greater number of children. The increase in students served would have been much greater over the past few years if we were able to fill needed positions throughout our state. **Teacher shortage:** the state of Washington currently has an 8% vacancy rate of TVI & O&M instructors based upon current postings of unfilled positions. This shortage will continue to worsen unless new partnerships are formed with in state universities to help filled the void. Over the next 2-5 years an additional 30% of current vision teachers will be retiring.

WSSB also believes that the facilities need to be used efficiently. Whenever possible WSSB’s facilities are open to the public for use. Currently over 50,000 people a year uses the School's facilities.

**Authority Statement:**

(Chapter 72.40 RCW) Since 1886, WSSB, established by Territorial and State Authority, has provided comprehensive educational programs for students whose vision loss required special education programs.

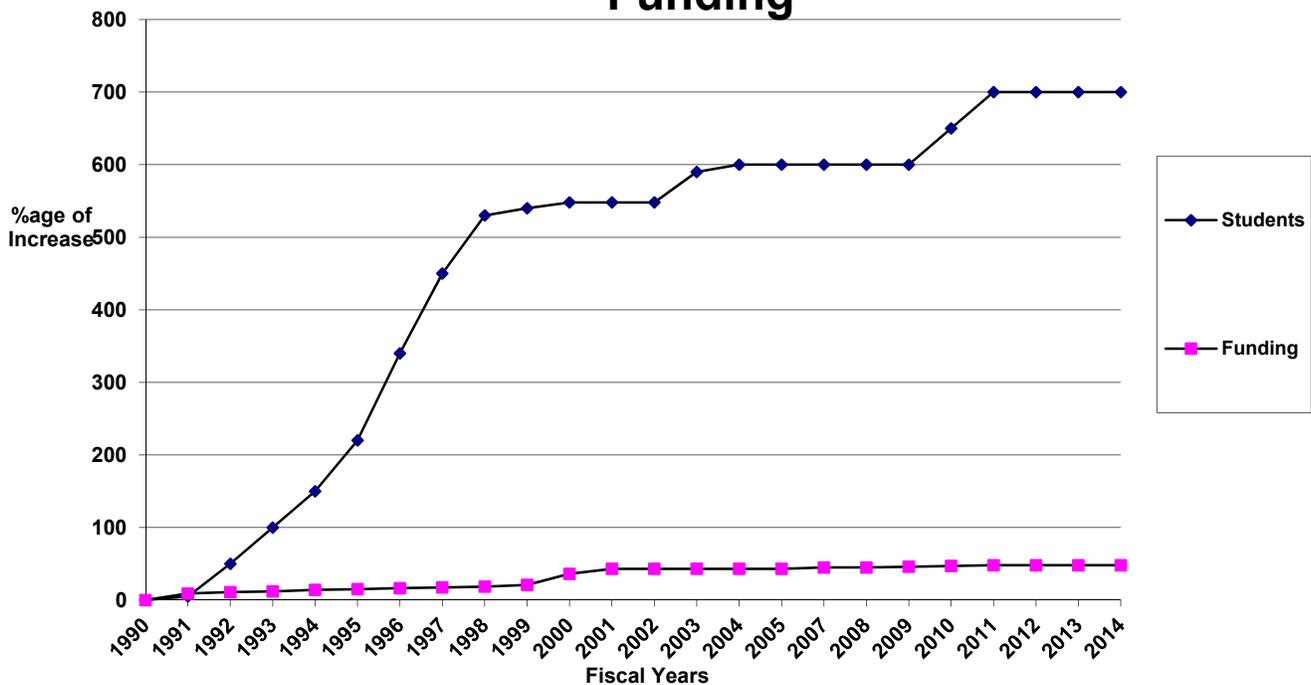
RCW 43,06A	Safety of Children (ADD as per SSB 6361)
RCW 72.40	" " " " " "
RCW 72.40.010	School Established - Purpose
RCW 72.40.022	Superintendent - Powers and Duties (AMD -SSB 6361)
RCW 72.40.024	Superintendent - Additional Powers and Duties
RCW 72.40.028	Teachers' Qualification - Salaries
RCW 72.40.031	School year - School term - Legal holidays Use of School
RCW 72.40.040	Admission (AMD - SSB 6361)
RCW 72.40.050	Admission of Non-residents (AMD-SSB - 6361)
RCW 72.40.090	Transportation
RCW 72.41.040	Safety of Children (AMD - SSB-6361)
RCW 72.41.070 "	" " " "

RCW 72.42.040 "	"	"	"	"
RCW 72.28.A.13	Special Education			
PL 100-297	Federal Education for all Handicapped Children (State Operated Programs)			
PL IDEA	Formerly PL 94-142			
PL 99-457	Federal Education of Handicapped Children (Birth - six)			

**Clientele Characteristics:**

As the population of our state continues to increase, so does the need for services to BVI children. The projected needs of students with visual disabilities from throughout the state/region have been analyzed and are consistent with national projections for this particular population of students. Approximately one tenth of one percent to two tenths of one percent of the population is considered visually impaired. Using these national percentages it is estimated that approximately 1,500–3,000 BVI children are enrolled in K-12 education and approximately 400-600 Birth to Three infant and toddlers. Current data for the state of Washington place this number at approximately 1,500 BVI children ages 0-12<sup>th</sup> grade. This discrepancy is dependent on the definition of visually impaired and is also directly tied to the shortage of TVI’s. We believe that realistically there is somewhere in the range of 2,500 BVI children (B-12+) in Washington. This number has dropped due to local districts failing to report children. This often happens when there is a teacher shortage and a TVI is not available to complete the registration process.

## Student Growth Compared to Growth in Funding



1990-2014 State Appropriated Funding has remained almost flat since 2000 with minimal growth from 1990–2000 while services have increased by over 700%. Most expansion in services has been possible through the addition of private local funds which are generated by grants, contracted services with local school districts, fee for services and out-of-state tuitions. Currently 37% of WSSB annual budget is represented by private local funds. This has been possible through the development of creative partnerships with other state agencies, public schools and the private sector (currently GFS 70% and Private Local Funding 30%). Not factored into this growth rate is the production of Braille materials for blind consumers in the state of Washington. Since 1993, the Braille Access Center has produced over 4 million pages of Braille. This chart also does not address 480



funding is currently flowing to each district through regular special education funds for the children we are serving under contracts. WSSB has done an excellent job of locating and utilizing existing resources, however as of the 2013-2014 school year, WSSB has also not been able to fill all of the positions that are being requested by LEAs and also on the WSSB campus. If we are going to continue to meet the needs of children throughout the state, additional staff and supervisory positions need to be added. These positions will help establish programs that will be self-supporting and assist WSSB in intensifying on-campus programs, developing partnerships with LEAs and private providers in the development of more cost effective and efficient regional service delivery models, which will result in improvement of state services. Long term savings will occur as a result of these partnerships due to the more efficient use of personnel, equipment and materials along with reduced litigation due to lack of appropriate services within various regions in our state. The development of expanded outreach services and a regional service delivery concept should also reduce the length of on campus programs for many children, which will result in increased number of children being able to access WSSB intensive on campus programs in a timely manner. Pulling all these pieces together will guarantee a steady flow of students onto the campus for intensive short-term services, where students can gain many of the blindness related skills in a fraction of the time it takes to develop these skills in the local districts. Note: It is not uncommon for WSSB to see from 1.5–5 years growth in blindness related skill development within a one year period. Once students gain these skills, the amount of support needed in the local districts may be less, therefore assisting students with transitional goals toward independence and success. WSSB has developed a partnership with the state of Oregon whereby allowing students from Oregon to access WSSB on-campus services through contractual arrangements, and have developed partnerships with numerous states throughout the U.S. for contracted Accessible Online Classes.

Currently, we believe there are approximately 2,500 BVI children at WSSB and in LEAs throughout our state, with an actual count of approximately 1,500 students. There are approximately 88 FTE trained TVI's providing services to these children. This is a ratio of 1:16 to 1:28 depending on which data set is utilized, however it is not factoring in the variable of geography and that many of these itinerants are traveling anywhere from 500-1,500 miles per month or that some services like Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services are provided on a one-to-one basis or that some situations require a 1:1, 1:4, etc. student to teacher ratios. Typical itinerant ratios range from 1:18 to 1:45. Creative solutions are needed in order to provide appropriate service. WSSB is helping fill this void through on-campus programs, outreach-direct services to students, staff training, and recruitment for LEAs and ESDs and cooperative partnerships. Technological advances will assist in helping to improve services to children in remote areas of the state. WSSB continues to provide accessible online classes in a number of subjects and continues to pilot new digital approaches in providing services with a goal of reducing driving time and increasing direct service where possible. WSSB would like to research this in more detail, however, in order to accomplish this, funding must be provided to hire trained personnel to carry out this mission.

#### **Service Needs:**

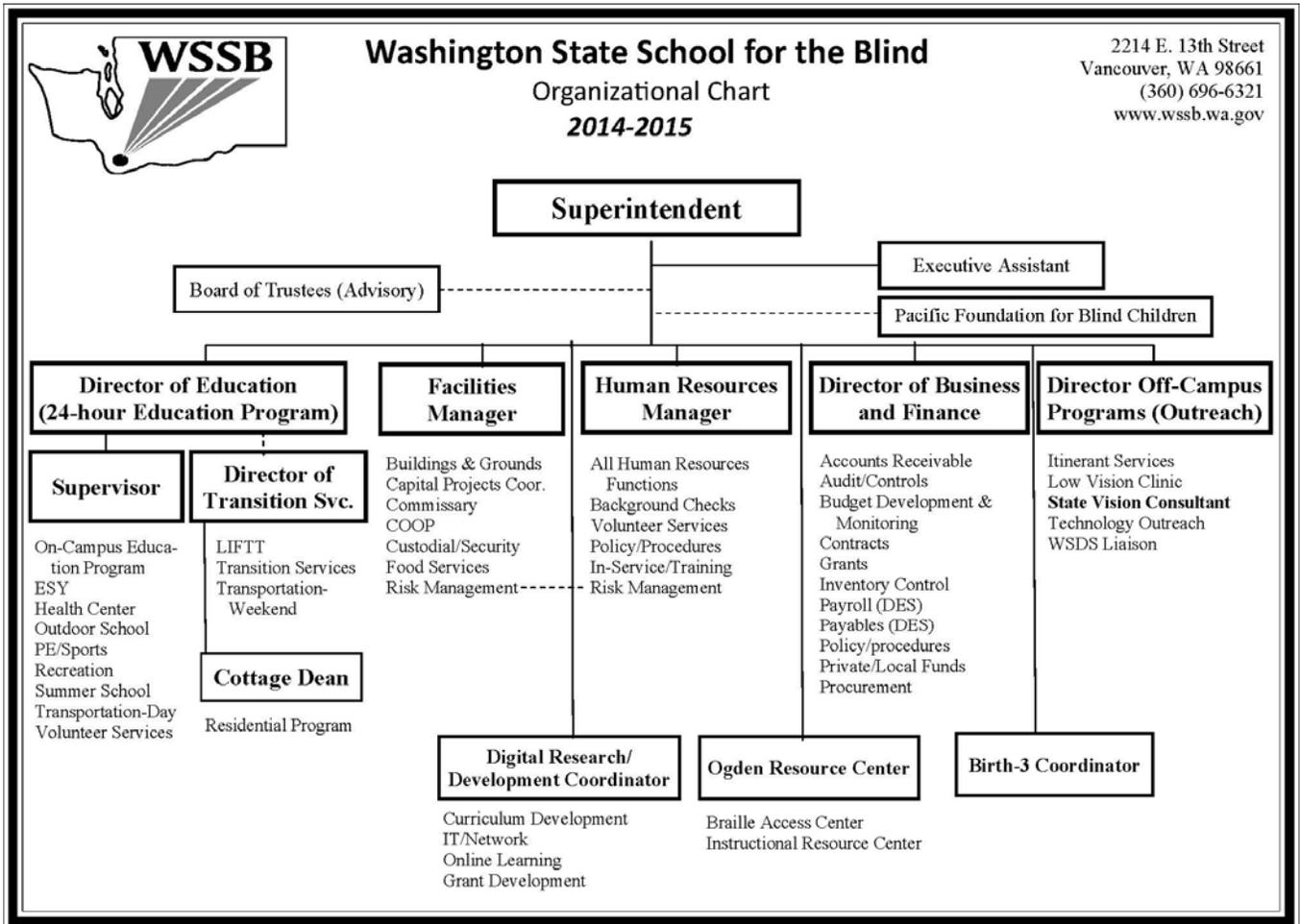
During the past 24 years we have made some major gains in service delivery to BVI students within our state, but this population of students is still receiving marginal services. This is mostly due to the low incidence of the disability with factors like geography, shortages of trained teachers to work with the blind, and a lack of cooperative resource sharing occurring, which could significantly improve services in an efficient and effective manner. BVI students are entitled, under RCW 72.A.13, to an equal educational opportunity. RCW 28A.150.200 states it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of **all children** within its borders. Research efforts in the use or partial use of digital itinerant teachers of the BVI may help solve part of this problem, but funding for research must be provided to demonstrate efficacy.

WSSB's ability to work with numerous partners in facilitating the wiser use of state resources and implementing new and creative approaches to old problems is the key to improved services both on campus and in the child's local community. WSSB has a reputation of making a difference for children throughout the state and helping to

develop creative approaches to problems. The goals, objectives and strategies stated within this document will help WSSB provide, in partnership with many, **"world-class educational services to the BVI"**.

*"No one school or agency can accomplish what these children need without the spirit of cooperation and sharing through creative partnerships."*

**Organizational Chart**



**Organizational Structure**

WSSB is a small state agency that provides statewide services from a base campus in Vancouver, WA. Most personnel are located in Vancouver; however, a number of WSSB itinerant TVI's are located in various communities throughout the state. As time goes on WSSB could be using trained personnel from throughout the world to help meet needs on a distance/digital basis. WSSB is basically a two tiered organizational structure with each manager/director/supervisor providing numerous services including direct services to children.

**Board of Trustees:**

- Ten Trustees representing their respective U.S. Congressional Districts are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. These individuals provide recommendation and advice to the Superintendent and Governor about services to BVI children within our state.

- Five ex-officio trustees representing two unions, (representing both certificated and non-certificated personnel), two blind consumer organizations, and a parent representative who provide direction to the board and Superintendent.

**Superintendent:**

- Provides leadership and direction for the school and services for BVI youth throughout the state in consultation with the board and other stakeholders.

**Director of On-Campus Programs:**

- Provides leadership, direction and direct supervision for the on-campus educational program. Also in charge of educational evaluations, curriculum development, inter-scholastics.

**Director of Off-Campus Programs (Outreach)/State Vision Consultant:**

- Responsible for off campus operations and services to BVI. As of 2014 school year also serves as the OSPI state recognized vision consultant.

**Digital Research/Development Coordinator:**

- Provide leadership and direction both on and off campus with the expansion of digital learning options including: research and development, distance learning, assistive technology options, workshop training options for adults working with children, etc.

**State Coordinator of Early Support for BVI Infants & Toddlers:**

- The Coordinator will help ensure that families of infants and toddlers with identified vision loss receive early intervention (EI) vision services, regardless of where they live in Washington State, by coordinating existing local, regional, and state resources, and making use of distance technologies where feasible.

**Central Office Operations:**

- **Director of Business and Finance:** Responsible for day-to-day efficient financial coordination of: payroll, contracts, procurement, budget development/monitoring, capital project tracking, and internal controls.
- **H.R. Manager:** Responsible for all H.R. functions including safety programs, training, volunteer services, policy and procedural development
- **Plant Manager:** Responsible for daily operation of the physical plant, including capital project supervision.

**2015 -2025 Goals**

- I. Leadership - Promote and provide leadership in the development and improvement of quality services to BVI children throughout the state of Washington (On-campus and Outreach services). Also, develop partnership with other states, countries, private and public agencies and businesses to assist in the development of better services.
- II. Academic Achievement - All students will be provided a stimulating and safe environment that will lead toward high student achievement, and strong self-confidence and self-esteem. BVI students will be provided an education that will prepare them with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. WSSB will work through the concept of innovative schools to help provide statewide students the opportunity to gain needed skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through digital learning options.
- III. Best Practice - Serve as a statewide center of best practice for information and services for BVI children in helping to eliminate the opportunity gap for BVI students.
- IV. Service Provider/Parent Training - Enhance pre-service and in-service training for all vision related personnel and parents. Also work in partnerships with various universities in reducing the TVI/O&M teacher shortage in our state.
- V. Public Awareness - Increase awareness and educate the general public about BVI.
- VI. Communications - Improve communication with families and service providers involved in the education of BVI children throughout the state.

- VII. Safe Environment - Provide safe, quality equipment and facilities for the education and training of children, parents and personnel.

***"We will provide world-class educational services to the blind and visually impaired."***

**GOAL: 1**

**Leadership** - Promote and provide leadership in the development and improvement of quality services to BVI children throughout the state of Washington/Region. (On-campus and Outreach services.)

**Objective: 1.1**

**Work with the Governor's office, legislature to guarantee that BVI children are provided protection under the "Basic Education Act" as per the McCleary Decision which applies to all children in the state of Washington.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Garner protection under the "Basic Education Act for BVI children based upon the Doran Decision.
- ◆ Guarantee that Expanded Core Competencies (ECC) are included in "Basic Education" under the provisions that for special education students the IEP helps determine "Basic Education".
- ◆ Protect "Basic Education" for BVI children from budget reductions.

**Performance Measures:**

- ◆ Students will gain a minimum of 1.5 years growth in the on-campus program under (ECC), therefore giving BVI children access to "Basic Education"
- ◆ Expand ECC services to on-campus students through the 24 hour IEP process. Many Expanded Core Competencies (ECC) are best learned in natural environments, which means before and after school programs are part of the IEP and are instrumental in student growth and success.

**Activity Inventory:** On-campus 24-hour program which helps students gain necessary skills for reintegration back to their local school systems with the necessary skills to access "Basic Education" and become successful, and/or graduate with successful transition to higher education and/or work.

**Objective: 1.2**

**Provide quality services that are cost effective and efficient in meeting BVI children's needs.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Continually survey customers to determine on-going needs.
- ◆ Survey customers for feedback on product and services being provided.
- ◆ Examine service delivery models in providing the most effective and efficient delivery of services to children, families and local school districts.

**Performance Measures:**

- ◆ Compile yearly customer feedback on future needs and direction for services.
- ◆ 80% of WSSB customers will rate services and products at 4.0 or higher (on a scale of 5.0 being the highest ).
- ◆ WSSB will report on at least one pilot service delivery project each year to determine effectiveness. Effectiveness to be determined by student outcomes and cost effectiveness.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Education Program [few examples below]

- ◆ Explore new ways of providing short-term program options. [on-campus followed up by digital communication to determine efficacy of short-term programs]

- ◆ Continue to develop partnerships outside of Washington to assist in cost effective and efficient ways of expanding service deliver to children, districts and families.
- ◆ Expand digital itinerant service delivery.
- ◆ Pilot itinerant – specialized classes provide in a digital itinerant manner.

**Objective: 1.3**

***Facilitate cooperative partnerships that promote improvements in efficient and effective quality services to BVI children.***

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Expand collaborative partnerships with local school districts and Educational Service Districts.
- ◆ Expand distance learning options “Accessible Online Learning”.
- ◆ Expand partnerships with other state agencies.
- ◆ Expand partnerships with private sector agencies and organizations.
- ◆ Increase involvement in professional organizations that assist with the deployment of this objective.
- ◆ Work with other state agencies and organizations to develop solid services to Birth-3 children/families.
- ◆ Work with Health Care Authority (HCA) for recognition of vision services as billable for Medicaid.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Measurement of expansion will be determined by new partnerships and expansion of those already in existence.
- ◆ Track number percentage increase in digital learning options/classes that have been developed. Collect data on satisfaction with services and outcome data.
- ◆ WSSB leadership staff will become more actively involved in professional organizations. Measurement to be determined by involvement and leadership within organizations.

**Activity Inventory:** Develop services for local districts in accessing online/digital resources and curriculum in areas where BVI students have often been eliminated from having access to appropriate curriculum and/or have had difficulty gaining needed knowledge based upon the approach used to teach various subjects.

**Objective: 1.4**

***Provide leadership in the development of quality, safe and secure state-of-the-art facilities that will meet the needs of children today and in the future.***

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Continue to develop the infrastructure to help facilitate expansion of digital (distance) learning programs.
- ◆ Gather information from WSSB safety committee in helping to maintain a safe state-of-the-art facility.
- ◆ Gather feedback from the Board of Trustees, consumer organizations and professionals in providing the type of services children need to be successful.
- ◆ Continue to be an active member of the safe school’s task force of S.W. Washington.
- ◆ Design and build new facilities that will meet current and future needs of BVI students.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Submit yearly reports on the progress of WSSB’s accreditation through NAAS.
- ◆ Track new digital (distance) learning program success rate.
- ◆ Provide feedback to the safety committee, staff and board on responsiveness on safety related issues.
- ◆ Track student progress in new programs to determine change effect.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Education Program (effective use of facilities on a 24-hour basis throughout the year including summer school options, teacher training, partnerships with various organizations

to assist in meeting targets, and better serving students, families and local school districts). This will all be tied to continued development of school security and safety systems to help to facility maximum usage of facilities while maintaining a safe school campus.

**Objective: 1.5**

***Provide children with a safe and stimulating learning environment that will encourage independence and success.***

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Continue to implement WSSB's 10 year capital plan.
- ◆ Continue to implement energy saving strategies designed to reduce operating costs; energy conservation and maximizing facility use and the collection of user fees.
- ◆ Utilize information from WSSB's Hazardous Mitigation Plan to reduce any safety related issues.
- ◆ Continue to implement curricular changes that meet children's/societies ever changing needs.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Collect data of maximizing facility use, while reducing operating cost therefore re-directing limited resources to programs for children and assisting in meeting high inflationary cost for utilities and fuel.
- ◆ Track more efficient use of limited financial resources with the passage of HB 2757 which allows WSSB to carry forward private local funds from one fiscal year to the next.
- ◆ Gather feedback from children, parents and districts about the quality of WSSB's programs.
- ◆ Measure the number of children that have gained independent travel skills while at WSSB.
- ◆ Measure the success rate of students that graduate from WSSB.
- ◆ Continue to expand community partnerships to maximize facility usage, which result in shared operating costs.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Education Program—tracked for energy consumption, facility use by WSSB and outside groups, and active program for energy conservation; all of this will have a focus on saving valuable resources with the intent of directing any saving into direct services for BVI children.

**Objective: 1.6**

***Secure private and other public funding sources to help meet the needs of BVI children throughout the state.***

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Expand Volunteer Coordinator role to assist with development of connections with community resources and a pool of volunteers and organizations.
- ◆ Work with the Pacific Foundation for Blind Children (PFBC) formerly Washington School for the Blind Foundation (WSBF) to assist with fundraising.
  - Expand partnership with PFBC to target Birth to Three statewide services with a goal of raising funds allowing for parent education, training and shared support for consultative services.
  - Expand grant writing opportunities to help facilitate state and national development of accessible online classes for BVI students and training to professionals and parents.
- ◆ Hire or re-assign staff to assist in public awareness/relations to continue to improve services for children throughout the state and assist in fund raising.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Increase volunteers on campus and within the IRC to provide services to children.
- ◆ Increase the number of private and public grants secured.
- ◆ List additional public awareness contacts that have been developed.
- ◆ Secure at least two major grants to help support B-3 and online learning.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Education Program.

**Objective: 1.7**

***Continue to expand accessibility options for all customers including blind children and adults.***

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Increase production through the BAC through additional partnerships.
- ◆ Increase WSSB developed software/products for public use through downloads from WSSB's website.
- ◆ Increase accessible information and links through the school's website.
- ◆ Increase digital learning options for consumers including web based resources.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Track production increases made possible through partnerships with WCCW, Correctional Industries, etc. Demonstrate cost savings through BAC production with the use of inmates as opposed to contracting for braille production.
- ◆ Track timely delivery of textbooks and materials to districts.
- ◆ Track web access to software and web based resources being utilized.
- ◆ Track use of parent Facebook system – "blindsided" (developed by a WSSB staff/parent)
- ◆ Track digital classes developed and accessed.

**Activity Inventory:** Digital Learning options and Braille Production and Distribution

**Objective: 1.8**

***Continue to explore additional service delivery models such as regional program development and expansion of Distance/Digital Learning options.***

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Explore partnerships for regional program development both within and outside of Washington.
- ◆ Provide funding for program operations in these areas.
- ◆ Expand accessible curricular offerings to BVI students from throughout the state. (Secure additional state and private funding to expand digital options for students/families.)
- ◆ Develop additional math and begin work on science digital learning curricula based upon the availability of private grants.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Track number of students (both K-12 and teachers in training) using digital learning options and measure success.
- ◆ Track the increase number of digital courses and web based information made available.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

**Appraisal of External Environment:**

Providing services to students not receiving services and being able to improve service delivery through the use of technology and effective partnerships has statewide impact. Program development in these areas is a result of input from consumers throughout the state who expressed the need for more service options to address filling the gaps when sparse service delivery is often the case with an itinerant model, especially in the area of CORE Competencies in education of the blind.

**Trends in Customer Characteristics:**

Due to increased information being provided by WSSB and the establishment of numerous partnerships, BVI children previously not identified and not served or under-served are in need of service. Parents are also becoming better educated about their rights and their children's rights to an appropriate education. The end result is a need to expand services and reexamine how services have been provided. The state of Washington has long under-estimated the needs of those who are BVI. If we are going to make a difference in the lives of these children, we need to provide appropriate services, which should result in a reduction of the high unemployment (70%) as adults. Student population within the state is approximately 1,500 BVI children, many who have multiple disabilities requiring more intensive services. We believe this number may be as high as 2,500 students. Effective service delivery on campus has proven to be very successful with between 70–87% success rate for graduates since 1998. Modification and increases in funding to implement various digital and regional initiatives should assist in increasing the outcomes for those students in the local districts.

#### **Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

WSSB continues to examine new ways of efficiently and effectively providing intensive services to children, parents and local districts throughout our state. WSSB sees a continued growth in service delivery over the years with major expansion in service delivery occurring through outreach programs, distance learning, major emphasis on five year program for children from local districts that do not have the skills to be independent, and expansion of short-term intensive programs. Flexibility needs to occur that will allow WSSB to expand outreach services (contractual with districts) in the area of acquisition of additional FTEs, authorization to expend additional contractual funds without being penalized for efficient and creative use of both state general fund dollars and contractual funding. Recent passage of HB 2757 will provide some needed flexibility in this important area. Technology will assist WSSB in reaching more students through distance learning, however additional funding is needed to effectively implement a program that will be one of the more effective ways of reaching unserved and underserved children within our state.

#### **Discussion of Major Partners:**

WSSB has also developed partners in the area of Digital Learning with the Dept. of Digital Learning (OSPI) is providing leadership and assisting in the development of a Digital Portal for the Blind (CANnect), which will facilitate on-line accessible learning for the blind, those working with the blind, and family members. Partners for this project, which is being privately funded come from: Boston and Vermont with expansion throughout the U.S. likely during the 2015-17 biennium. Another strong need in our state is in the area of Birth-3 services for families of BVI children. Beginning the fall of 2014, WSSB in partnership with Dept. of Early

#### **Financial Plan Assessment:**

Objectives and strategies under this goal will result in increased services to those who are BVI through expansion of cooperative partnerships with a variety of agencies and organizations. This will result in increased costs to the state, but at much less expense than expanding programs at Vancouver's WSSB campus to handle students that could be served through digital learning. Due to the low incidence of blindness (one tenth to two tenths of one percent), service delivery in Washington is very difficult. A more cost efficient and effective model of service delivery may be to supplement some learning through accessible/usable online learning options. Those students needing more intensive services attend WSSB for a short period of time, or for those students that have inadequate programs or no programs in their local area to return to once their skill levels are such that they should be able to compete in their local districts.

#### **GOAL: 2**

**Academic Achievement** - All students will be provided a stimulating, and safe environment that will lead toward high student achievement, and strong self-confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Objective: 2.1**

- ◆ Maximum student achievement of Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Provide intensive services to children both on campus and in the local community based upon the IEP.
- ◆ Set high expectation for student learning based upon realistic expectations.
- ◆ Examine new ways of providing services to children in order to maximize individual learning.
- ◆ Increase emphasis in the cottage programs on Expanded CORE Competencies (blindness skill training). Without ECC training, BVI children do not have access to “Basic Education”!

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ 80% of students will gain 1.5 years growth in one year in expanded CORE competencies –ECC (blindness related skill training).
- ◆ Number of students on campus each quarter (target – 65-75 students).
- ◆ Work with OSPI in developing a valid HSPE test for blind students. Graduation rate goal: 95% of all WSSB on-campus students will graduate from high school.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program

**Objective: 2.2**

- ◆ Students graduating from WSSB will be successful.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ One year after graduation students will be surveyed to determine outcome. (Students will be tracked for 6 years after graduation.) Trend data from year to year will be analyzed to assist in making curricular changes and program service delivery changes.
- ◆ Upon completion of high school, WSSB students will be surveyed to determine program satisfaction

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ 100% of WSSB graduates will be connected with transitional services.
- ◆ WSSB employment rates of graduates will be benchmarked against available national data (target goal is 80% success).
- ◆ Eighty percent of WSSB students will rate WSSB programs 4.0 or higher on a Likert scale with a high of 5.0)

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Intensive Training Opportunities

**Objective: 2.3**

- ◆ **Students will be competent in the use of technology that provides access for successful integration into our society.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Staff will be provided training on current technology in order to facilitate student learning.
- ◆ Students will be exposed to current technology and develop appropriate skills.
- ◆ WSSB will provide students with current access technology as part of “Best Practices”.
- ◆ WSSB will develop and maintain the infra-structure necessary to meet this objective.
- ◆ WSSB students returning to LEAs will be provided access equipment which will return to the LEA with the student as part of an active transition program.
- ◆ WSSB will work with the PFBC/Dept. of Services for the Blind (DSB) to provide technology to graduating seniors at WSSB. Would like to see this program expand throughout the state. NOTE: this is not to supplant DSB’s obligation of providing equipment needed for vocational goals, but to supplement this effort.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Staff will be surveyed on training needs and provided training.
- ◆ Students will be assessed on technology to determine competency. Increases in student competencies will be measured based upon a grade equivalent to the year's growth. Goal: over one year's growth in technology skills based upon pre and post-test during the students first year on campus.
- ◆ All academic students will be competent in the use of word processing, and excel software.
- ◆ Percentage of private funding will be tracked to provide access equipment for students upon return to their LEA.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

**Objective: 2.4**

- ◆ **Maximize student skills in the areas of daily and independent living to allow for successful integration into our society.** (Expanded CORE Competencies –ECC)

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Provide training to residential staff on various aspects of specialized training for BVI children in all aspects of daily/independent living skills.
- ◆ Expand residential training program of new hires.
- ◆ Expand cottage cooking program to include evening meal preparation.
- ◆ LIFTT (5<sup>th</sup> year program) will be expanded through increased awareness with LEAs, parents, and students; this will also require an additional cottage (living environment).
- ◆ Expand partnership with DSB to assist with the implementation of the 5<sup>th</sup> year program.
- ◆ Expand partnerships for LIFTT for out-of-state students (out-of-state tuition on a space available basis).

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Pre-test/post-test measures taken to determine student growth in one year period in the area of daily living skills. **Goal: First year students will show over one year growth in all aspects of daily living skills.**
- ◆ Student successful transition to work or post educational experiences will be gathered. (Target: 80% minimum).
- ◆ LIFTT program will average 5-8 students per quarter. Upon expansion of potential facilities this number will move to 8-12 students. (expansion is contingent on a new facility being constructed that would allow for expansion)

**Activity Inventory:** Intensive Training Opportunities – post secondary habilitation program to help increase adult outcomes of employment through direct instruction in skills of independent living and community access.

**Objective: 2.5**

- ◆ **Assist students in developing positive self-image and self-confidence.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Continued emphasis on the school's curriculum "Culture of Care".
- ◆ Students will be provided opportunities for recreation and leisure activity that build character.
- ◆ Students will be actively involved in volunteer programs and community based work experience and/or career awareness functions.
- ◆ Students will have the opportunity to actively participate in interscholastic activities.
- ◆ Mental Health counseling will be provided as needed.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Parent surveys will be conducted to determine changes in their child's self-image and self-confidence.
- ◆ Student surveys will be conducted to determine positive self-image.

- ◆ Data will be collected on the number of students involved in self-esteem building programs such as recreation, sports, music, speech club, etc.
- ◆ Number of students receiving mental health counseling will be tracked and feedback from counselors and staff will help determine program changes that need to be made to assist with overall student mental health issues.

**Activity Inventory:** Intensive Training Opportunities (tied to self-esteem and mental wellness)

**Objective: 2.6**

- ◆ **WSSB will work with local districts to increase academic achievement.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ WSSB will extend digital (distance) learning options to LEAs through outreach services.
- ◆ WSSB will develop new digital based courses and resources that are unique to the BVI students and those working with the blind.
- ◆ WSSB will provide intensive summer school training for students that haven't accessed the intensive on-campus programs during the school year.
- ◆ WSSB will increase short-course offerings – either on campus and/or through digital learning.
- ◆ Continue to increase materials, equipment and supplies through the IRC.
- ◆ Expand workshops for staff working with students to increase staffs skills. This will be partially done by using WSSB on-campus staff that meet NCLB (highly qualified) to provide additional training.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Survey information data collected from LEAs on quality and success of services provided. Goal: 85% of surveys rate services as 4.0 or higher on a scale of 1-5.
- ◆ Track number of students attending summer programs (increase 40-60 students per summer).
- ◆ Track number of teachers/paraprofessionals attending workshops.
- ◆ Increase online learning participants by 10% per year.

**Activity Inventory:** Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

**Objective: 2.7**

- ◆ **Expand short-term option programs for students at WSSB. [Contingent on financial support to implement this program]**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ WSSB will expand on campus short-term course offerings per year. **This will need to be a new program with dedicated staff in order to offer one week to one month long classes. Contingent on fiscal support.**
- ◆ WSSB will continue to meet the demands of all students, some of which are longer term, but the use of the one week – one month course will assist WSSB in meeting a larger number of student needs throughout the state. Many of these students can then be followed up with through digital services.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program

**Appraisal of external environment:**

Providing a safe environment where children feel secure to learn is a paramount duty of the state. WSSB, like other schools throughout the state, continue to raise the level of expectations being placed upon students and staff. In order for children's performance to improve, staff need to be provided the necessary tools to make this happen and a staffing ratio needs to be maintained based upon individual students needs that can provide for the safety of all children. Increasing short courses will assist the school in meeting a larger number of student's

needs. This is based upon feedback from stakeholders and the data that WSSB has gathered from other states that have develop this type of service.

**Trends in customer characteristics:**

Children attending WSSB on-campus program come from throughout the state and have been referred by parents, local districts, Children’s Protective Services, etc. These children are in need of intensive programs that will assist them in gaining the skills that will allow them to re-integrate into their local school system and be successful. Data gathered by WSSB over the past few years has shown that children that receive a holistic program can be successful and overcome great obstacles in our society. In order for this to occur all the basic needs of the child must be met, which includes providing a safe and stimulating environment for learning. We are finding that more children each year need more services in the area of counseling/mental health. This along with short course will become a larger emphasis for WSSB in years to come.

**Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

Continued emphasis will be placed on intensifying short-term placement options at WSSB. This will increase rotational on-campus enrollment and probably increase transportation costs

As on campus 5<sup>th</sup> year program options increase, an independent living center building needs to be constructed to meet the demand. This is in the 10-year plan and needs to move forward to facilitate this program.

Technology – distance/digital learning options will tremendously increase the number of off-campus students being served. Some of these services may be possible to provide on a contractual basis. However, a combination of start-up funding will be necessary to put in place a system that should be self-supporting in a number of years through tuition fees.

HSPE -WSSB and other partners are going to have to convince OSPI and its test publishers that removing visual bias or replacing visual bias questions with questions that measure the same concept in a non-visual way are imperative. Without these changes BVI children will continue to be discriminated against in our statewide high stakes assessments. The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has completed modification on the Woodcock-Johnson Assessment which has been validated for BVI. WSSB has begun training TVI’s and psychologists on this new instrument. This may be a good option to use for assessment purposes for BVI students.

**Financial Plan Assessment:**

In order to meet the increasing demands throughout the state, WSSB will be requesting a decision package in the area of short-course development and in the area of curriculum development for online/accessible-usable curriculum. The success of these program will mean that WSSB will be able to serve more children in a shorter period of time by shortening the on-campus program time while providing a safe and stimulating environment, and at the same time provide follow up through online learning once these students return to the LEA and/or provide one additional option for students that have not been able to access appropriate classes in the local school districts.

**GOAL: 3**

**Best Practices:** - Serve as a statewide center for best practice for information and services for BVI children.

**Objective 3.1**

◆ Provide leadership in the development of access technology/software for BVI children.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Provide technical support and training in the use of adaptive technology to all BVI children and staff working with children within Washington.
- ◆ Provide leadership and training in the use of accessible online learning software for distance education.
- ◆ Continue to field test equipment to determine best practice, reliable equipment, and software in relationship to accessibility and access.
- ◆ Continue to expand partnerships to help facilitate access to assistive technology for all BVI children.
- ◆ Expand online classes for BVI students. [contingent on financial assistance for this important program]
- ◆ Work on securing private and funding to supplemental state funds.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Feedback collected through customer satisfaction survey. **Goal: minimum of 4.0 out of 5.0**
- ◆ Track number of trainings provided to those working with the blind each year.
- ◆ Provide data on the success rate of children using assistive technology and the change (growth) in knowledge children acquire within one year through intensive training. Goal: new students gain a minimum of 1.5 years growth in one year
- ◆ Increase online learning classes by 10% per year. [contingent on decision package for online learning and/or private-public grants.]

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

**Objective: 3.2**

- ◆ **Provide textbooks, adaptive equipment, and materials in a timely manner to LEAs throughout the state.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Provide textbooks to students when needed, provided LEAs order material in a timely manner.
- ◆ Provide LEAs with adaptive equipment as available from WSSB/IRC.
- ◆ Continue to work with Correctional Industries in enhancing prison transcriber program to assist in timely delivery of textbooks

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Materials provided to district 97% on time when orders are placed in a timely manner by the districts.
- ◆ Collect data on the number of braille pages transcribed each quarter.

**Activity Inventory:** Braille Production and Distribution

**Objective: 3.3**

- ◆ **Develop a cost effective and efficient system for the sharing of resources (equipment, textbooks, and materials) for the state.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Expand partnerships with other agencies to efficiently meet this goal.
- ◆ Expand Volunteer services to assist with material development.
- ◆ Continue to gain efficiency through expansion of computerized database tracking systems that have been developed at WSSB.
- ◆ Expand program through partnership with Correctional Industries (C.I.)

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Survey clients on satisfaction on the delivery and quality of materials. Goal: 4.0 out of 5.0
- ◆ Track the expansion of public and private partnerships.

- ◆ Track inmate production and costs in comparison to public purchase price for materials. Provide comparative data on yearly savings.
- ◆ Track materials delivered on time. Target: 97% of students will receive brailled books on time.
- ◆ Track number of pages produced: Target: Average of 119,500 pages produced per quarter.

**Activity Inventory:** Braille Production and Distribution

**Objective: 3.4**

- ◆ **Assist in the facilitation of research to promote and improve services and service delivery models to BVI children.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Continue development of a digital distance learning model that can meet many of the needs of BVI children and TVI's with classes and appropriate training.
- ◆ Expand digital learning partnership through additional contacts with other service providers and private funding sources. [Work on development of national partnership]
- ◆ Work with other schools/agencies of the blind throughout the U.S. to replicate some of the classes that WSSB has developed to increase access by students.
- ◆ Bring on other national partners to develop new online classes that can also be accessed by WA.
- ◆ Expand partnership with DSB in the area of transition services for young adults.
- ◆ Expand the use of accessible online learning software (Moodle).
- ◆ Expand the use of online learning software/platforms for real time online classes.
- ◆ Develop at a minimum two additional online classes per year (based upon whether this is funded).
- ◆ Develop at a minimum 10 additional video clips on blindness tips (based upon availability of funding to develop these resources).

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Expand Lync online classes through partnership with other states. (Increase by 5 classes over the next two years)
- ◆ Field test the feasibility of various distance learning classes for BVI children and TVI's.
- ◆ Work with a minimum of two different research universities per year on online class development. Track the number students/teachers receiving digital learning each quarter (both students and those working with students that are receiving training).
- ◆ Track the number of individuals using WSSB developed digital learning resources.
- ◆ Provide a quality measure through data collection and the use of an appropriate survey instrument. Goal: 4.0 out of 5.0 on quality survey scale.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

**Objective: 3.5**

- ◆ **Assist in the development of appropriate assessment instruments to measure academic achievement of BVI children.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Work with OSPI and TVI's throughout the state to develop either a special version of the HSPE or help facilitate an alternative assessment instrument that more adequately assess blind children.
- ◆ Develop a rubric that will assist in the evaluation of various assessment data to provide a level of independence factor or score.
- ◆ Continue to WSSB involvement on the alternative assessment team at OSPI.

- ◆ Continue to develop and/or improve on measurement of Expanded CORE (Blindness Skill Development) in formats that make sense to the general public.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Determine effectiveness of the rubric used to compile assessment data into a unified factor or score.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

**Objective: 3.6**

- ◆ **Work in partnership with DSB, DEL, OSPI, WSDS, DOH, NICU, HCA and other agencies in the development of well-coordinated efficiency service delivery of both direct and indirect services to B-3 children and their families.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ As per recommendations from the statewide task force on B-3/BVI youth, hire a statewide coordinator for B-3 services.
- ◆ Work with HCA to gain approval for of vision related services for Medicaid funding approval.
- ◆ Develop a partnership with statewide service organizations to assist in the funding of B-3 services for BVI infant/toddlers and their families [partial funding to improve services].
- ◆ Increase the number of identified B-3 infant and toddlers.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Develop a statewide tracking system to accurately I.D. all BVI infants and toddlers.
- ◆ Increase the number of BVI infants and toddlers identified by 100%.
- ◆ Provide 4 training sessions for services providers per year.
- ◆ Gain approval through HCA for vision related services under Medicaid.
- ◆ Develop at least one statewide partnership to assist with funding parent workshops.

**Activity Inventory:** New service coordinated by WSSB. Start-up funding provided by private-local funds with a decision package request for state funding being submitted. 2015-2017 biennium.

**Appraisal of External Environment:**

Unequal statewide services exist to those who are BVI. We hypothesize that some of this lack of service is due to lack of information or the ability of the general public to easily access information and services; the other part of this is probably due to the lack of qualify/trained professionals. NOTE: There is a tremendous shortage of trained TVI's and O&M instructors. Through cooperative partnerships expansions of appropriate services can occur in the most cost effective manner. WSSB is in the process of establishing a residence on campus for student teachers in order to attract more University students to WSSB/WA to help reduce this shortage. This facility is being constructed with private funds.

**Trends in Customer Characteristics:**

Customers for services come from all areas of the state and need access to information in a timely and non-confusing manner. Customers are becoming better educated and not only deserve quality services but also expect these services. Staying current with technology can be very difficult and expensive. WSSB future plans and proven practices have demonstrated that through cooperative ventures, public/private partnerships and negotiating with vendors on a statewide basis for adaptive devices cost efficient service can be implemented. Likewise, textbooks in braille are very expensive (up to \$22,000 per book). Through resource sourcing and the use of volunteers WSSB/IRC assists districts throughout the state in locating and obtaining a large percentage of these expensive books at a minimal cost. Replacement and training of volunteers and expansion of partnerships is paramount if we are to insure literacy for BVI children throughout our state (i.e. WSSB works with WCCW in the development of a braille transcription service and recently has also partnered with Correctional Industries

(CI) in order to expand this service.) In order to meet the continued need for services, distance learning must be made available for low incidence populations such as BVI children in classes that are special to their needs. This same service needs to be made available to teachers working with these children and with parents.

**Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

Technology will not replace people in this important area, but will allow us to continue to expand services in an efficient and effective manner. Partnerships formed through the Corrections/CI, and Department of Information Services will allow WSSB to increase materials in accessible format for students and adults throughout our state. Civil Service Reform will allow us to expand the amount of contracted work in the production of these materials. WSSB continues to raise the bar on a national basis regarding the use of a digital environment in providing high quality services and access to BVI children. Additional funding in this important area would be one of the best investments the state could make. Results over the past eleven years have proven that students with excellent skills in a digital environment can be successful. WSSB's data is approximately a 180 degree positive from national unemployment results. Expansion of digital learning and regional program options will assist WSSB in increase outcome results for students off campus.

**Discussion of Major Partners:**

Effective partnerships with most of the organizations and agencies providing services to those who are BVI will help us in providing quality cost efficient and effective services to children throughout the state.

**Financial Plan Assessment:**

Strong partnerships will assist WSSB in being recognized as a hub of service delivery for those who are BVI within our state. Resource sourcing and sharing is the only way to make efficient use of the expensive equipment, and materials necessary to educate BVI children in our state. Additional dollars placed with WSSB in the development of a Center of Best Practice will reduce overall taxpayer expenditures by more efficiently using both human and material resources. The implementation of a distance learning program through WSSB will be much more cost effective and better for children than trying to expand services on campus to meet children's needs. The state has invested in the infra-structure at WSSB to facilitate distance learning, which needs to be followed with the operational funding. If WSSB is able to form a partnership with the state of Oregon in providing services to students in their state, cost sharing will not only assist WSSB in the development of new resources, but will also help improve services to students in both states, with additional sustainability built into the model.

**GOAL: 4**

**Service provider/parent training – Enhance pre-service and in-service training for all vision related personnel and parents.**

**OBJECTIVE: 4.1**

- ◆ **Assist in the development of a model that will provide a pool of highly qualified TVI and O&M specialists for our state.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Establish partnerships with University teacher training programs to meet the need for trained TVI's.
- ◆ Work with grassroots organization throughout the state to explore teacher certification within Washington and the establishment of a teacher training program or formalized partnership with another state to provide Washington with a pool of trained teachers.
- ◆ Increase salaries and/or support for additional days of pay for TVIs to align with LEAs for competitive salaries.
- ◆ Work with OSPI and Pacific Northwest states in collaborative efforts to train TVI's.
- ◆ Facilitate the use of WSSB's campus for practicum sites for student teachers and for university classes.

- ◆ Explore options of pay for practicum and providing living accommodations for out of state student teachers (practicum students). NOTE: Beginning the fall of 2014, WSSB will have in place an on-campus house to provide housing for practicum/student teachers on the WSSB Campus. This facility is being funded by private local funds.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Track expansion of new partnerships.
- ◆ Track number of newly trained TVI's O&M instructors within Washington.
- ◆ Increase salaries for TVI's and other certificated employee to align with LEAs. This is necessary for recruitment and retention. (This would amount to approximately 12% when examining total compensation with similar positions in LEAs.)
- ◆ Secure funding through university/WSSB/state of Washington partnerships to provide for additional trained TVI's of the blind/O&M specialist for our state.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts & Intensive Training Opportunities

**Objective: 4.2**

- ◆ **Expand training opportunities for parents of BVI children.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Work with DSB "Child and Family" division and other state agencies to expand opportunities for parent training.
- ◆ Expand partnerships for parent training to include individuals from the state of Oregon, and support from Lions Clubs in both Oregon and Washington.
- ◆ Work with blind consumer organizations to provide training personnel at their state conferences.
- ◆ Provide training through regional meetings and through distance learning.
- ◆ Collect data from parents on needed training.
- ◆ Host or co-host a parent/sibling weekend retreat.
- ◆ Develop parent course offerings in a digital environment.
- ◆ Continue to expand on digital resources such as "video clips on blindness tips, which are targeted toward parent training.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Track location and number of training sessions provided on a quarterly basis.
- ◆ Work with DSB to collect data on the quality of services being provided to parents/children (Birth-3).
- ◆ Increase workshops for parents and families. [Target – minimum three per year]
- ◆ Collect quality survey data on training provided. [Target – minimum of 4 out of 5 for quality rating of training provided]

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts & Intensive Training Opportunities

**Objective: 4.3**

- ◆ **Gather input from customers throughout the state on their in-service needs.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Use the IRC database to survey stakeholders (school districts/TVIs throughout the state) as to in-service needs.
- ◆ Gather requests for in-service from parents in cooperation with the DSB's Child and Family Services.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Report on the type of workshops being requested and the success rate of these programs.
- ◆ Report the number of teachers/paraprofessionals and parents receiving training each year.
- ◆ Report the number of individuals accessing online curricular materials each year.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts.

**Objective: 4.4**

- ◆ **Design Digital/Distance Learning classes/services for parents.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Survey parents to assist in determining parents training needs.
- ◆ Continue to develop web clips that can be easily utilized by parents in teaching various concepts to their children.
- ◆ Promote access and use of the parent list serve for use by parents only.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Track number of specialized curriculums developed along with specialized products each year.
- ◆ Support parent lead development of a Facebook designed to help better connect parents.
- ◆ Track the number of hits on video clips on blindness tips each quarter.

**Activity Inventory:** Intensive Training Opportunities

**Appraisal of External Environment:**

WSSB needs to serve as a revolving door in assisting to provide quality services. We realize that not all students can or should attend WSSB. Therefore, it is important that a coordinated effort be made to maximize all resources in the development of quality services statewide. This includes assisting in reducing the high vacancy rate for TVI's. In addition, districts are not being able to find trained teachers to work with BVI in numerous areas, especially in the area of math/sciences and therefore, development of online resources is becoming even a greater need both in Washington and throughout the country. Birth to Three services to BVI infants and toddlers and family members has been quite minimal. WSSB has taken on a new role of coordinating this important service beginning the fall of 2014. This is being supported by private local funds with the idea that these would be funded through state dollars for the 2015-2017 biennium. NOTE: Most online learning programs are not accessible to the BVI and continue to need attention on a national basis. WSSB has been one of the organizations on a national basis that is working on this initiative.

**Trends and Customer Characteristics:**

WSSB has built a very strong relationship with parents, LEAs, ESDs, OSPI and blind consumer organizations. Each of these groups feels it is important to maintain a strong continuum of services for those who are BVI. In order for this to happen, WSSB needs to continue to develop partnerships with various agencies and organizations in providing leadership and training.

**Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

Expansion of training opportunities for teachers, para-professionals, and parents will be increased due to the ability to contract out for services under the provisions of Civil Service Reform. Continued work on WSSB's capital facilities will assist in having facilities that can meet the needs of all stakeholders seven days a week, 12 months of the year. Technology, primarily through distance/digital learning will allow WSSB to reach more parents and educators for training purposes in a cost effective manner. Start-up funding needs to accompany the huge capital investment that the state has made in WSSB's facilities to efficiently actualize the investment. Ongoing financial support will be necessary in the area of curriculum and services delivery in order to reach a

larger percentage of non and underserved in our state. WSSB is working on curriculum development with some assistance of private funding, but additional state dollars are necessary to develop materials that do not exist anywhere in the U.S.

**Discussion of Major Partners:**

Major partners in providing quality statewide services are OSPI, Governor’s Office and OFM, the Legislature, parents, blind consumer organizations, LEAs, ESDs, and other organizations interested in promoting independence for blind children. Without the cooperation of all these agencies and organizations, this task becomes much more difficult. WSSB has developed partners throughout the US to help develop needed learning software that will be accessible for BVI. The PFBC including partners throughout the U.S., are trying to secure funding to solve the problem of accessibility.

**Financial Plan Assessment:**

The need for services to those who are BVI in our state outweighs our ability to provide services based upon human resources. We believe that WSSB provides quality services that should be short term with options being provided throughout the state in the child’s local community. In order for this to happen, resources need to be provided to facilitate this cost effective approach. We believe that some of this can be done through increased partnerships with university programs and establishment of distance education programs for teachers and students through the use of the K-20 system, and products such as Lync, etc. to enhance distance learning options.

As population of BVI children continues to increase we also need to be able to provide a supply of highly qualified TVI’s. Locating these teachers and recruiting them to Washington can be very difficult. Most university graduates already have jobs before they complete their programs.

**GOAL: 5**

**Public Awareness** – Increase awareness, and education of the general public about blindness and visual impairment.

**Objective: 5.1**

- ◆ Initiate agency name change through legislative action to better define the agency/school’s mission.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Submit a bill during the 2014 and or 2015 legislative session to change the agency/school’s name to better define the mission.
- ◆ Conduct statewide awareness campaign once name has been changed.

**Performance Measure:**

- ◆ Track public awareness after name change to determine agency/school statewide recognition.

**Objective: 5.2**

- ◆ Implement an awareness campaign designed to increase all consumer’s knowledge about WSSB and services to BVI children throughout our state. [See agency/school service provision chart page 8 of the Strategic Plan.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Hire or re-staff in the area of information officer to facilitate increase awareness about WSSB and its mission.

- ◆ Question – should WSSB move into the recruitment basis and/or produce more information about the successful outcomes that have been demonstrated over the years? A major factor is connecting with parents so parents have all the information they need to make solid decisions.
- ◆ Develop materials that will be made available on a statewide basis.
- ◆ Develop strategies to utilize public radio and television informing the public about the needs and abilities of the blind.
- ◆ Increase partnerships.
- ◆ Increase Board of Trustees involvement in public awareness in their respective congressional districts.
- ◆ Increase the PFBC's role in assisting with funding and public awareness.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Track number of presentations WSSB is conducting each month.
- ◆ Track increases in WSSB partnerships from year to year.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Intensive Training Opportunities

**Objective: 5.3**

- ◆ **Utilize state-of-the-art technology to facilitate improvements in awareness of services and programs.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Increase WSSB presence on the internet for increased awareness of the general public.
- ◆ Increase public awareness through statewide presentations.
- ◆ Increase the general public use of WSSB facilities.
- ◆ Increase partnerships with public and private agencies and organizations.
- ◆ Increase partnerships with University training programs in the area of curriculum development and product development.
- ◆ Increase research and development options through solid partnerships with Universities throughout the country and additional public and private partnerships.
- ◆ Increase awareness about WSSB and the needs of BVI children to our elected officials and other state agencies.
- ◆ Work with the PFBC to increase awareness and access to services by all BVI children and families throughout our state.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Conduct random survey of special education directors to test LEA awareness of WSSB services.
- ◆ Conduct random surveys to determine statewide parent awareness levels.
- ◆ Conduct awareness activities of other state agencies and elected officials.
- ◆ Provide a yearly tracking on outside user groups of facilities and percent of increase over the previous year.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Intensive Training Opportunities

**Appraisal of External Environment:**

Lack of awareness of appropriate services throughout the state has resulted in numerous children being provided limited to no specialized services. New ways of providing services to low incident populations such as BVI children need to be explored and new service models need to be field tested. WSSB has yet to figure out how to get information to all families.

**Trends in Customer Characteristics:**

Customer base is being better educated and aware of what are quality services. This will help all of us raise the measuring stick. Hopefully, Washington State will be willing to provide the resources to make this possible.

### **Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

WSSB will work in conjunction with the School's Private Foundation to increase awareness of WSSB's services throughout the state. This should result in increased numbers of students receiving services in numerous ways. WSSB does not see Civil Service Reform as impacting this area at this time. Technology will assist WSSB in its' awareness campaign. This is an area in which WSSB needs to place more emphasis. However, due to limited funding, the school has always directed most funds to direct services with children. WSSB believes this is the right thing to do, however if we don't provide enough public awareness it seems to effect the school's funding level (support) and therefore we are put into an awkward situation.

### **Discussion of Major Partners:**

The only way we will be able to raise the measuring stick for those who are BVI is through effective partnerships. The sharing of resources (both human and fiscal) will be a key to the success. WSSB needs additional support from DSB in reaching families with accurate information. More effort needs to be placed on this partnership.

### **Financial Plan Assessment:**

Increased public awareness means more individuals being made aware of services that children should be provided under both state and federal law. This will result in increased requests for services, which will mean a need for additional resources.

### **GOAL: 6**

**Communications – Improve communication with families and service providers involved in the education of BVI children throughout the state.**

#### **Objective: 6.1**

- ◆ **Gather input from customers throughout the state on ways of improving communications and provide increase information to all stakeholders to make wiser informed decisions.**

#### **Strategies:**

- ◆ Utilize LEAN Tools and train all WSSB staff in use of LEAN processes.
- ◆ Utilize online systems to facilitate improved communication.
- ◆ Develop B-3 communication systems to better facilitate communication with families and service providers.
- ◆ Expand Website.
- ◆ Expand distance learning options.
- ◆ Expansion of accessible survey information for input from stakeholders.
- ◆ Staff will communicate with parents of children on a regular basis.
- ◆ Establish a system to facilitate virtual visits by parents to classrooms.
- ◆ Work with the PFBC in facilitation of public relations information and awareness of services provided by WSSB/new state agency name.
- ◆ Establish a media (newspaper) clipping program at WSSB, whereby articles on WSSB students will be mailed to local newspapers, online media systems.

#### **Performance measures:**

- ◆ Gather feedback from various targeted groups on awareness of WSSB's programs and services.
- ◆ Provide classes in the area of distance learning that will improve services to children, districts and parents.
- ◆ Expand web access to services for parents and those providing services to the BVI.
- ◆ Track the number of informational items that make it into local newspapers and television and radio stations, online services.

## **Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program & Off-Campus Services to Students/Districts

### **Appraisal of External Environment:**

In order to provide a safe environment and one that is stimulating to students and staff, good communications must occur. As programs change and expand, staff on-campus and customers throughout the state must be aware of services and feel comfortable at communicating their needs. Developing communication links throughout the state with all stakeholders is a key to future improvements. Currently WSSB contracts and provides services to about one-fifth of the school districts in the state. This was not only done because we don't have room on campus for all these students, but also because we believe all children have the right to move freely from one environment (WSSB) to their home district and back when more intensive services are needed.

### **Trends in Customer Characteristics:**

Due to WSSB's novel approach at developing strong partnerships and eliminating artificial barriers, the school has been recognized on a national basis as a model program for other states to follow. This has been done with a fraction of the resources which many states utilize. Our goal is to continue to provide quality efficient services, which are customer based, menu driven (no one right and only one way to provide service) concept. Customer ratings of the school have been very high ranging in the area of 4.0 to 4.5 on external customer ratings with 5.0 being the highest rating.

### **Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

Technology will assist WSSB in gathering information to effectively address stakeholder's needs. This will not result in a reduction in the need for personnel to implement this service. Currently in our state, we believe that efficiencies could be gained and improved, communication could occur by having the state vision consultant assigned to WSSB. WSSB is already recognized at the hub of service delivery for the state and facility of Best Practices. Placing this position under WSSB would be a tremendous factor in helping to improve statewide services through OSPI advocacy in accomplishing needed task in a timely manner.

### **Discussion of Major Partners:**

Both public and private sector partners will play a vital role in the success of increasing communication. Increased communication usually results in increased requests for services, new ideas in providing and improving the quality of service, increased efficiency and raising the measuring stick in the performance of BVI children.

### **Financial Plan Assessment:**

The only way we have been able to expand services by over 600% since 1990 with limited new funding was through effective partnerships, collaborative agreements and contracts. We feel we have maximized existing resources for children. In order to meet the growing demand, WSSB will need to continue to partner with other organizations in order to meet the demand for service. While WSSB is expanding services through a fee for service basis, it will be important to adjust the FTE authorization to allow the school to continue to be an efficient service delivery model. Much of the service that WSSB provides is paid for through contracts. However, the school needs FTE authorization to move forward in the expansion of contracted services to districts.

## **GOAL: 7**

**Safe Environment** – Provide safe, quality equipment and secure facilities for the education and training of children, parents and personnel.

### **Objective: 7.1**

- ◆ Provide a state-of-the-art facility that allows for the safe, efficient and effective use of educational strategies in improving children and staff performance.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Implement WSSB's 10 year capital project plan, which is designed to provide for the safety of children and help met future program needs.
- ◆ Continue to examine each project for program efficacy and energy efficiency.
- ◆ Expand and/or continue to update electronic surveillance equipment and signage.
- ◆ Continue to implement issues on the school's Hazardous Mitigation Plan.
- ◆ Continue to implement issues on the school's Sustainability Plan.
- ◆ Provide a facility to expand on the LIFTT pilot program's success and demand for services.
- ◆ Continue to evaluate the WSSB facility for additional energy efficiencies
- ◆ Expand partnership through facility user groups to help share operating cost for campus facility

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Complete capital projects on time and within budget.
- ◆ Collect data on energy efficiencies gained.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program and Outreach Services

**Objective: 7.2**

- ◆ **Implement the school's ten year plan, which is based upon feedback from all stakeholders.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Implement WSSB's school technology portfolio plan.
- ◆ Complete 10 year capital plan with the addition of the Independent Living Skills Cottage (LIFTT Program).
- ◆ Continue to follow 10 year campus preservation plan to help maintain excellent facilities.
- ◆ Continue to implement creative solutions to energy management through campus preservation planning.

**Performance measures:**

- ◆ Implement plans on a yearly basis as identified in the technology portfolio plan and school wide technology plan, which also includes assistive technology services for children.
- ◆ Completion of the 5<sup>th</sup> year Independent Living Skills Cottage will complete any future major capital projects on campus. Goal is to complete this during the 2013-2015 biennium.

**Activity Inventory:** On-Campus 24-Hour Educational Program

**Objective: 7.3**

- ◆ **Implement COOP Plan.**

**Strategies:**

- ◆ **Implement all strategies identified in the agency/school's COOP Plan, to provide a systematic response to a wide variety of situations, while guaranteeing the highest level of safety for students, employees and customers.**

**Activity Inventory:** Full agency programs.

**Appraisal of External Environment:** WSSB capital projects are driven by safety, accessibility, and programs for children.

**Trends in Customer Characteristics:**

WSSB does not plan on any major expansion of on-campus residential students. Our energy and resources continue to be based upon wise use of existing resources by WSSB and approximately 50,000 others that use

our facilities each year. In order to help meet statewide expanding needs, WSSB plans to utilize new technology to provide more outreach through distance learning and year-round campus utilization for students, parent training, teacher and para-professional training. WSSB has provided lead in many ways on energy management in comparison to other state agencies. We hope that as initiatives are established in increase saving, WSSB is not penalized for putting many of these initiatives in place before state mandates were established. Operations over the years have utilized LEAN management process in examining all operations in gaining efficient, effective and sustainable services. This is evident when you explore the agencies over-all chart of operations to see how services have expanded over the years through effective partnerships which are not 100% dependent on state appropriations. Currently, approximately 63% of WSSB's operations is funded from GFS and 37% through private local funds.

**Strategy and Capacity Assessment:**

Capital facility work has been implemented based upon WSSB's 10 year plan, which has been designed to provide safe and efficient services to stakeholders throughout the state. Implementation of this plan will continue focus on information of the 10 year plan, with added information from the school's Hazardous Mitigation Plan, and Sustainability Plan. WSSB is nearing the end of the major capital project phase and should complete this in the 2015-2017 biennium. At this point in time the campus will be in excellent condition with design flexibility to allow for a variety of program modifications over the years without major capital changes being required. Campus preservation projects have been identified based upon life cycle analysis which is tied to the 10 year plan to maintain the facilities in excellent conditions. COOP plans were submitted to Olympia the summer of 2014 and will be operational the fall of 2014.

**Discussion of Partners:** WSSB has been interested in developing partnerships with any group that will assist in building stronger programs for those who are BVI.

**Financial Plan Assessment:**

The state has been very good at assisting WSSB in providing a safe environment for students and staff. WSSB has worked with OFM on capital projects, which will reduce our consumption of energy resources and assist WSSB in meeting state and federal laws for life, safety and accessibility. Additional capital projects will be requested (see capital projects) to assist in year-round programs and environmental control, distance education, and energy management.

**All strategies are connected to the statewide result "to improve student achievements in elementary, middle, and high schools."**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

WSSB receives support, concern and encouragement from parents, local community and a variety of state-wide organizations. Information in the revision of the school's strategic plan has also been gleaned from the 2010 National Accreditation Report, OSPI Monitoring, and through a stakeholder strategic planning meeting which was held in February of 2014.

**PROCESS:** Information for this plan is the result of a culmination of data from numerous stakeholders over many years, including the results from self-studies as part of National Accreditation through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

**"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"** Helen Keller

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