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ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

2173

2007 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2173

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2173

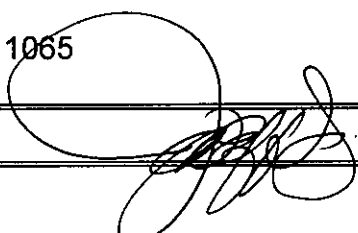
Senate Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 15, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 1064, 1065

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Freborg opened the hearing on SB 2173, an action to plan the merger of the North Dakota vision services – school for the blind with the North Dakota school for the deaf. All members were present.

Senator John Andrist introduced and testified in favor of the bill. (Written testimony attached)

Senator Flakoll asked if there are any collaborative efforts between the School for the Blind and UND. (Meter 7:06)

Senator Andrist said he is not aware of any but the director of the School for the Blind is here today and will testify. There is an extensive outreach program. He is impressed with their broadened scope.

Senator Gary Lee asked if there is some curriculum at UND that lends itself to the School for the Blind.

Senator Andrist said nothing was presented on his tour that would indicate a tie between the two institutions.

Senator Bakke asked how much renovation of the buildings at the School for the Deaf in Devils Lake would be necessary to accommodate blind students.

Senator Andrist said virtually nothing would be required other than modifications to assist them in moving around. He expects it would be very minimal.

Senator Taylor asked about the residential population in Grand Forks.

Senator Andrist said they do not have a residential program in Grand Forks. More people are served by services for the blind than by services for the deaf.

Senator Bakke asked if he envisions blind people needing residential services. If not, why would they need all the space that is available in Devils Lake.

Senator Andrist said more services could be offered in the consolidated schools. Montana has consolidated their schools for the blind and deaf. There could be more focus on the multi-handicapped. He said North Dakota will consolidate the two schools, the question is when.

Senator Aaron Krauter testified in favor of the bill. (Meter 11:43) He chaired the budget section on health care during the interim. When on a tour of the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind, he saw an opportunity for consolidation and decided to introduce the bill. The UND School of Medicine has a center for rural medicine and they are looking for space. If the space currently occupied by the school for the blind were available, the center for rural health could use it. The facility at Devils Lake is underutilized. Half of the space at the School for the Blind in Grand Forks is leased to a public school entity. With that much space, we could let UND use it. He will get maps and minutes from the tour to the committee before the hearing ends.

Senator Flakoll asked how the space in Grand Forks relates to the available space in Devils Lake. (Meter 15:03)

Senator Krauter said there is ample space available.

Senator Bakke asked if he has visited with the employees at the School for the Blind or the School for the Deaf to determine what impact this merger might have on staffing or services.

Senator Krauter said no, that is what the bill asks Department of Public Instruction to do. He is not looking at closing down or stopping any services. He wants to provide better services in a more economical environment.

Representative Dan Ruby testified in favor of the bill. Senator Andrist and Senator Krauter are on the right track. Our constituents expect us to look at these kinds efficiencies. (Meter 17:05)

Dr. Wayne Sanstead, Superintendent of Public Instruction, testified in favor of the bill. (Meter

18:04) Senator Andrist called and said there was a need to look at both facilities and a potential merger. He was pleased with the decision to have a study and they discussed whether it should be a legislative study. We all know many legislative studies never see legislative action. They decided it should be a detailed study complete with architectural

expertise. The School for the Deaf needs extensive renovation, they need an elevator. The governor did not include the renovations to the School for the Deaf in his budget. This would be a feasibility study, nothing would happen immediately. Chairman Freborg has mentioned the fiscal note. The fiscal impact would be considerable. Transportation enters in because of the residential students. There would be some economies in staffing; there are now two business managers and two superintendents. He does not want a merger to affect services. He supports the idea of a study but only if it is funded so it can be a complete study. There may be an expansive opportunity for services. There have been other studies for the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf. Dr. Worner did a report on the School for the Blind in 2003. While relevant, they are program services reports, they did not study joint occupancy of facilities. There was a blue ribbon task report for the School for the Deaf in July 2004. He recommends this move; the fiscal note does include \$15,000 for architectural expertise and \$35,000 for a consultant for the study and to draft a plan.

Senator Bakke said there is a difficulty maintaining staff at the School for the Deaf, there is a large turnover. If the School for the Blind is moved, will that become a problem for them?

Dr. Sanstead said the School for the Blind has taken on many outreach programs. It is the most highly regarded program in the country. Much of their staff is in the field. In the School for the Deaf, with their residential program, they have experienced such demise in numbers. Our school districts have taken on some of the expertise. He can't defend the per pupil costs. This needs to be done for efficiency and effectiveness.

Senator Bakke said if the School for the Blind is renting space to the alternative high school in Grand Forks, maybe there would be space for the School for the Deaf to move to Grand Forks.

Dr. Sandstead said both facilities rent out space. In Devils Lake, they have rented space to Head Start; it's a good fit with the shared food service operations. He has a real desire to see the facility used and it would be possible with extensive renovations.

Senator Flakoll asked if Minnesota residents use the services in Grand Forks and at what level.

Dr. Sandstead said he doesn't think so. At the School for the Deaf yes, services are used by Minnesota residents but the costs are paid by Minnesota.

Senator Flakoll asked if either study recommended the elements contained in this bill.

Dr. Sanstead said he thinks they will, also the business manager report will apply to this study.

Senator Flakoll asked if he has a rough estimate of the dollars involved in the possible merger.

Dr. Sanstead said there were 11 recommendations in the last blue ribbon analysis; several are fiscal and staffing recommendations.

Christina McComish, former student at the Underwood School District and now proudly attending Century High School, testified in favor of the bill. (Written testimony attached)

(Meter 30:52)

Senator Bakke asked if she would have preferred the services came to her rather than her going to the services.

Ms. McCornish said yes.

Senator Flakoll asked how old was she when she began attending the School for the Blind.

Ms. McCornish said eight or nine years old.

Representative Ole Aarsvold testified on the bill, not in opposition but to bring concerns. (Meter 41:21) He has a bias for the School for the Blind; he has had an opportunity to observe the school and their students. It is a wonderful experience for their young students. He is concerned that it is not wise to predispose the outcome of a study. This bill predetermines the merger to occur in Devils Lake. He hasn't been to the School for the Deaf in a year but there are real issues in maintenance and bringing the facility up to speed. Grand Forks offers partnership opportunities that are not available at the Devils Lake site. They have existing relationships with UND. The medical school is helpful. It is wise to look at opportunities for efficient government.

Senator Flakoll asked if an amendment opening the option of a Grand Forks location would be better.

Representative Aarsvold said it would feel better.

Senator Nick Hacker testified in opposition to the bill. The School for the Blind is in his district. It works well. The downtown setting is valuable in training students to get around in a city.

Devils Lake does not have a busy downtown. He knows our constituents want us to be fiscally responsible but they also want us to look out for their lives. The professional employees would have to relocate; some have spouses with businesses in Grand Forks. We are affecting their lives in a negative fashion.

Senator Bakke asked if recruiting would be difficult.

Senator Hacker said yes. Many studies don't look at the effect on lives and families.

Senator Judy Lee testified in opposition to the bill. (Meter 48:07) The Human Services committee has spent much time on the services offered by School for the Deaf and School for the Blind. It goes far beyond the classroom. With our aging population, more and more North Dakotans may need these services. The School for the Deaf is specifically geared as a residential facility. Most disabled students are mainstreamed. There is a need for services beyond those of school age children. Each facility has satellite offices, but we are not providing all the services we should.

Senator Gary Lee asked if we have studied this subject enough.

Senator Judy Lee said there was a task force, the director of the School for the Blind served on it; it was quite comprehensive and done about 2 or 3 years ago. This would be a good resource. We have never looked at blending the two facilities. Human Services covers more of the missions of these schools than education. We should not start at ground zero; we should work with the information we already have.

Beth Bakke Stenehjelm, President of the North Dakota School for the Blind Foundation, testified in opposition to the bill. (Written testimony attached)

Allan Peterson, Legislative Liaison for the North Dakota Association for the Blind, testified in opposition to the bill. (Written testimony attached) He also later distributed a petition of people opposed to the bill.

Carmen Grove Suminski, superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind testified in opposition to the bill. (Written testimony attached) (Meter 1:03:06) Senator Andrist, in an editorial, said we are serving poorly when we get stuck in ruts. The School for the Blind is definitely an agency that is not stuck in a rut. Regarding the question about serving Minnesota residents, they are served very minimally and always for a fee. There is

significant collaboration between the School for the Blind and UND. UND uses their facility for summer vision training. They have an intern from the counseling department at UND and a doctoral student from the psychology department. They have a teletherapy program through the UND psych department where clients can call in confidentially. One client said it saved her life. Occupational therapy students work with the School for the Blind. The move would not impact her personally but it would impact their staff and those they serve.

Senator Flakoll asked about the staff turnover rate.

Ms. Suminski said they have minimal turnover, it is usually a result of retirement.

Senator Flakoll asked if North Dakota produces enough graduates in the field to fill open positions.

Ms. Suminski said just a bare minimum.

Senator Flakoll asked if there are other places in higher education that train their professional staff other than UND.

Ms Suminski said no, the closest alternate program would be in Colorado.

Senator Flakoll asked about the number of students that are served.

Ms. Suminski provided a chart of the number of people served and a map showing the service areas. (Written testimony attached)

Gerald Balzer testified in opposition to the bill. (Meter 1:19:11) He has retired after 40 years with Job Service. His second son was born deaf and attended K – 12 in Devils Lake. He then attended Gallaudet University, the only liberal arts college for deaf kids in the world. He was an all conference basketball player and played football at Gallaudet. Is this bill Grand Forks vs. Devils Lake, blind vs. deaf? Both have their place. Someone has already made the decision to move and who made that decision? The North Dakota School for the Deaf has a high percentage of students who qualify for admission to Gallaudet, which is difficult to

achieve. The School for the Deaf is a 24 hour learning experience. We are putting the cart before the horse.

Paul Verlinde testified in opposition to the bill. (Meter 1:27:41) His wife is an outreach consultant for the School for the Blind. The quality of their programs is excellent.

Chairman Freborg closed the hearing on SB 2173.

Senator Flakoll asked Ms. Suminski to return to the podium for a question. He asked about people who require the services of both the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind. How are they served?

Ms. Suminski said North Dakota has a coordinator of the deaf blind project that is federally funded and is based in Devils Lake. There is strong collaboration between the two schools; they work together and like each other.

Chairman Freborg again closed the hearing on SB 2173.

Senator Bakke said from a professional standpoint, more outreach is the way to go. She is concerned about putting dollars into a facility we may not eventually be using. What would happen to the quality of vision services if the school moved away from UND? She is not sure she can support the bill.

Senator Taylor said he would like to see a copy of the Blue Ribbon Study before acting on the bill.

Senator Gary Lee agrees. We should see what has been done. The ties between the School for the Blind and UND are significant.

Senator Flakoll said he would like to discuss the issue to see if anything better can be offered. A bill such as this is usually in Human Services rather than Education. Changes are long away. He is more inclined to support in interim study hosted by Human Services. He would like to save the fiscal note at this point and allow for other delivery options.

Chairman Freborg asked if he would prefer to put the study in the hands of the legislature rather than Department of Public Instruction.

Senator Flakoll said the bill as it now stands give Department of Public Instruction a specific charge and the study is how to accomplish it. A study resolution would look at the merger option.

Chairman Freborg agreed a merger is dictated in the bill. There is no need for action today.

Chairman Freborg closed the discussion on SB 2173.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2173

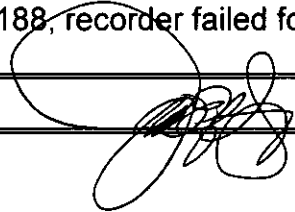
Senate Education Committee

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Hearing Date: January 16, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 1188, recorder failed for afternoon session

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Freborg opened the discussion of SB 2173. All members were present.

Senator Flakoll said there has been some discussion of what the North Dakota constitution says regarding the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind. (Copies attached) The constitution does specify the School for the Deaf will be in Devils Lake. The School for the Blind is not constitutionally required to be in Grand Forks.

Senator Gary Lee said the bill is correct in that the School for the Blind could move to Devils Lake but the School for the Deaf could not move to Grand Forks. The clerk has distributed two studies that contain several recommendations. He would like some time to look over the studies and see where we are at in terms of the recommendations, particularly those for the School for the Deaf. It seems the School for the Blind has done a yeoman's job of meeting their missions and the changes recommended for them. The School for the Deaf is facing declining enrollments and this makes it a cost inefficient program but they are meeting a badly needed service. He is not sure what to do with the bill.

Senator Flakoll asked the intern to see if the provisions of the bill have been studied before.

Senator Gary Lee said he has already asked the intern to do the research.

In the afternoon session, Senator Flakoll said the intern found SCR 4044 from 1999; it was a study resolution for the School for the Blind.

Senator Bakke said she is not as concerned about the School for the Blind as she is about the School for the Deaf. Are there any studies of the School for the Deaf?

Senator Flakoll said he asked the intern to look for studies of both schools and this is what he found.

Senator Gary Lee asked the result of the study resolution. The name was changed in 2001 that probably came from the study.

Senator Taylor said it looks like the study resulted in bringing adult and children's services together.

Chairman Freborg closed the discussion of SB 2173.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2173

Senate Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 17, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 1309

Committee Clerk Signature

Minutes:

Chairman Freborg opened the discussion on SB 2173. All members were present.

Chairman Freborg said he has handed out to the committee a report from Senator Krauter from the tour he and Senator Andrist took of the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf and regarding the proposed addition to the School for the Blind.

Senator Flakoll asked what portions of the School for the Blind are being rented out.

Chairman Freborg described the area, using the map in Senator Krauter's report.

Senator Bakke said the space is rented to the alternative high school and the adult learning department of the Grand Forks schools. It would have to be extensively remodeled to meet the same needs as the proposed addition.

Chairman Freborg asked what the space was used for before it was rented out.

Senator Bakke said it was the residential area. Now the School for the Blind no longer has a residential program.

Senator Flakoll asked if there is a bill before appropriations relating to remodeling of the School for the Blind.

Chairman Freborg said he doesn't know. The intern has distributed a copy of the report that came from the study resolution from the 1999 session on the School for the Blind.

Senator Bakke said she is inclined to vote do not pass on the bill.

Chairman Freborg said we may need more discussion.

Senator Gary Lee said if you look at the studies, there are issues that need to be dealt with.

This bill gives us an opportunity to encourage the recommendation from the studies are followed, that the needs of the people they serve are being met and their institutions are running efficiently. He has considered a study resolution but it shouldn't drag on for 5 years. If we do nothing, they will limp along.

Chairman Freborg said he has spoken with the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and they are hearing the budgets tomorrow for the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf. He is aware of the problem. He said he would pay special attention.

Senator Taylor said moving vision to Devils Lake is the wrong idea. The sponsors are looking for a positive future for the school in Devils Lake and that is admirable. Maybe we can use this bill to encourage the school in Devils Lake to make them more successful and to perhaps make use of that space.

Chairman Freborg said there are some things we cannot do because it is constitutional.

Senator Bakke said she doesn't see how we can turn this into a bill we could support.

Chairman Freborg explained a hog house amendment.

Senator Flakoll said there has been a fair amount of discussion and interim studies. Part of the problem is what we might recommend is prohibited by the constitution. He thinks others might be better candidates to change the constitution; the sponsors may not want this bill to do that.

Chairman Freborg said any changes along those lines would be better made by

Appropriations. We are up against a wall.

Senator Bakke moved a Do Not Pass on SB 2173. Senator Flakoll seconded the motion.

Senator Flakoll said he fully understands the intent of the sponsors of the bill and it is admirable. Appropriations has the authority and ability to do more good than this bill will be able to do.

The motion passed 3-2-0. Senator Bakke will carry the bill.

FISCAL NOTE
Requested by Legislative Council
01/11/2007

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 2173

1A. State fiscal effect: *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	2005-2007 Biennium		2007-2009 Biennium		2009-2011 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Appropriations	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0

1B. County, city, and school district fiscal effect: *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

2005-2007 Biennium			2007-2009 Biennium			2009-2011 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

2A. Bill and fiscal impact summary: *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

SB 2173 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a plan to outline the merging of North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind onto the premises of the North Dakota School for the Deaf in Devils Lake.

B. Fiscal impact sections: *Identify and provide a brief description of the sections of the measure which have fiscal impact. Include any assumptions and comments relevant to the analysis.*

The plan must address the effective and efficient delivery of services, transportation, staffing, administration, governance, the short and long-term utilization of facilities, the cost of merging the institutions, and any other matters necessary to effect the merger.

3. State fiscal effect detail: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1A, please:*

A. Revenues: *Explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*

\$15,000 - Architectural fee

\$35,000 - Consulting firm to conduct study and draft plan.

These dollar amounts are not included in any agency budget or in the executive budget.

B. Expenditures: *Explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*

All work would be contracted through the procurement process. No FTE would be needed.

C. Appropriations: *Explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency and fund affected. Explain the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations. Indicate whether the appropriation is also included in the executive budget or relates to a continuing appropriation.*

See answer under A. Revenue.

Name:	Dr. Gary Gronberg	Agency:	Public Instruction
Phone Number:	328-1240	Date Prepared:	01/12/2007

Date: 1/17/07
Roll Call Vote #:

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2173

Senate Education Committee

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Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Not Pass

Motion Made By Senator Bakke Seconded By Senator Flakoll

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Freborg	✓		Senator Taylor		✓
Senator Flakoll	✓		Senator Bakke	✓	
Senator Gary Lee		✓			

Total Yes 3 No 2

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Bakke

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2173: Education Committee (Sen. Freborg, Chairman) recommends DO NOT PASS
(3 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2173 was placed on the
Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 TESTIMONY

SB 2173

ND Legislative Assembly

John M. Andrist
State Senator - District 2
P.O. Box E
Crosby, ND 58730

Phone: 701-965-6798
Office: 701-965-6088
Fax: 701-965-6089

January 15, 2007

RE: SB 2173

TO: Members Senate Education Committee

FROM: Sen. John Andrist, District 2

Many blind students and most deaf students are main streamed today, so the mission of the School for the Blind and School for the Deaf has changed dramatically.

Enrollment at Devils Lake over the last quarter century has dwindled from 130 a quarter century ago to 26 resident students. So it now voluminous unused space and an extremely high budget for the numbers it serves.

When we did a budget section tour of the facilities a year ago it became apparent to Senator Krauter and me, and I'm sure to other committee members, as well, that it is time we find more productive use for this property, and that merging with the school for the blind, as Montana (and probably other states, as well) has done would be a good beginning..

Consider for the moment some of these numbers:

- The proposed budget for the School for the Deaf is \$6.8 million. That's a per pupil cost of \$119,000.
- Granted they provide many nonresidential hearing assistance services, But just the cost of education and transportation will be \$47,000 per student, not counting administrative and operating expenses.
- The budget for housing alone is \$837,000. That's almost \$30,000 per resident -- very high priced rent.
- There are about 50 full-time positions, more than one FTE for every student.

There are three reasons why this bill proposes combining the services at Devils Lake, rather than Grand Forks.

The first is that the Devils Lake school is constitutional. The school for the blind isn't. Therefore, co-locating at Devils Lake would not require a constitutional change.

The second is the facility itself. The Devils Lake school is immense in square footage. It has better recreational facilities, including an indoor swimming pool.

A third consideration is that the Grand Forks school is squeezed into the University complex. It is my belief that the University could make effective use of the buildings and grounds, with little impact on the community, other than to those on the staff who might have to relocate. Loss of the school at Devils Lake would seriously impact the local economy and we would be left with the problem of looking for a way to utilize the real estate.

When we talked about this bill we discussed whether there should be a study or whether we should just move to consolidate right away. We took the middle ground, which in essence says "do it", but gives DPI and the next legislative session an opportunity to review any plan put forward by DPI.

Combining the two will most certainly accomplish significant savings in administrative expense. It would likely provide even greater benefits to those with multiple handicaps, because of the broadened mission.

We hope you will support the bill. It does provide an escape at the next session if DPI finds serious problems. But if we roll this proposal we could accomplish the task in perhaps 3 years.

Converting it to a study resolution, which might be better than nothing, at the least would delay the inevitable. We hope you will agree.



MONTANA SCHOOL for the Deaf&Blind

giving kids the building blocks to independence



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School Tour

Welcome to the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind website. As a state special purpose school, and part of the Montana public education system, MSDB mission is to provide quality early intervention, outreach and school-based educational services to the State's deaf and blind children from birth through age twenty-one.

MSDB serves two primary functions. First, using specialized instruction and resources, MSDB provides an education for deaf and blind children that is appropriate for their needs and commensurate with the education provided to their hearing and sighted peers in the local school districts. This education enables children being served by the school to become independent and self-supporting members of their communities. Second, MSDB serves as a consultative resource for parents of deaf and blind infants and toddlers and for school districts where deaf and blind children are enrolled. Upon request, MSDB assists school districts assuring that services and programs for their deaf and blind students are appropriate.



MSDB maintains a staff of highly qualified and experienced teachers and specialists trained to meet the specific educational needs of deaf and blind children. Regardless of where they are enrolled, their local districts or at the school in Great Falls, our staff is committed to technical expertise and quality services to all students.

I invite you to tour our website where you will find general information about our programs and answers to frequently asked questions from parents and educators. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the School.

Sincerely,

Steve Gettel, Superintendent

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MONTANA SCHOOL for the Deaf&Blind

giving kids the building blocks to independence



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Department for the Visually Impaired

Computer technology for the blind, instruction in Braille, the use of low vision orientation and mobility are unique educational needs for blind and partially sighted students. At the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, students are taught in these areas by staff who are specifically trained and certified. Literacy, indepe



and the use of technology are critical to the academic and vocational success of partially sighted persons. Staff members conduct assessments in these areas to determine individual student needs.

Blind and partially sighted students are provided an individualized education as outlined in the Montana Accreditation Standards and Manual, to address the standard including college prep, as well as the "Curriculum for Visually Impaired".

addressed are orientation and mobility, Braille (Literary and Nemeth codes), vocational skills, communication, abacus and other math accommodation learning and technology. Students receive daily instruction in language arts, science, math, social studies and health enhancement. Art, music, and vocational courses are taught as appropriate for age level and placement in school.

Blind and Low Vision Services and/or the Department of Developmental Disabilities assist students with transitioning to post-secondary education, technical training, or employment. MSDB coordinates the collaborative planning for transition that occurs with the agencies, students, parents, MSDB faculty, and the students' districts of residence. Work experience is provided for high school students in accordance with their IEP's. Local training is available through the Montana State University - College of Technology.



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Good morning Senator Freborg and committee members. My name is Christina McComish. I am a former student of the Underwood School District now living independently in Bismarck and proudly attending Century High School.

I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 2173 with the following comments.

In combining the two facilities, the name should reflect that there is no school for the blind in North Dakota. There has not been a separate accredited school for the blind since 1993.

For school age students, it is mainly a vision out reach program and a facility that offers specific skills weeks and summer fun camps. Usually four to six individual specific skills week programs are held during the normal school year.

I would suggest the new facility being called The North Dakota Vision Outreach Center and School for the Deaf. This name would reflect the actual services provided by combining these two facilities.

For students to get the most effective and efficient use of the services, I would encourage the new facility not to have specific skills weeks during the normal school year.

Having been on an academic track, I found it extremely difficult missing so many weeks from my 36 week school year. According to IDEA, shouldn't the services come to the student instead of the student having to travel to the service? What I did find very interesting was that there were very few students from the larger school systems at these specific skills weeks.

I truly believe that my old school district sent me to these specific skills weeks so they would not have me for up to one sixth of the school year. I felt that it was a case of out sight out of mind. How many students miss that much of their school year?

I had two vision outreach teachers who came one day each to my school. I feel that these two teachers could have and should have easily been able to teach me specific skills in my own school setting.

I should not have had to travel 500 miles round trip to Grand Forks and miss that much valuable regular education class time. There were two days of travel and four regular length schools days of specific skills teaching.

In closing, I would like to state that I did attend many specific skills weeks during the school year in Grand Forks. I really enjoyed the break they gave me from being in a school that didn't want me. However, I can not say that I learned very many skills. These are skills that my own district could have easily taught me if they had wanted to.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions, I will try to answer them.

Testimony in OPPOSITION to the relocation of the ND School for the Blind

Beth Bakke Stenehjem

701-471-5004 (cell)

January 15, 2007

Good morning, Chairman Freeborg and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Beth Bakke Stenehjem. I am a former employee of ND Vision Services/School for the Blind and am currently the President of the ND School for the Blind Foundation.

I urge a Do Not Pass on SB 2173.

ND Vision Services/School for the Blind was going through a major renovation in 1995 when I began working there. They were in the process of changing from a residential school to primarily an outreach program based facility. This renovation was very extensive and resulted in a beautiful and very functional facility. If you've ever been to the school, you've seen some of the vision specific architectural features that make it so functional.

In the long hallways, there are carpeted floors with special tiling. This tiling allows a person traveling with a cane to know when they've come to a doorway or special area of the school. The receptionist can just tell the person who is blind, "Go down 3 tiles and then turn left for the computer center." There is such a sense of independence when a client can easily navigate the facility.

There is also specialized lighting and colors particular for those with low vision. There are railings in hallways and specialized signage everywhere. The physical setting is an exemplary model for clients who are visually impaired and blind.

Another reason not to move the location of the school is the specialized staff who work in Grand Forks. This staff is conscientious and believes in doing the best for those who are visually impaired and blind in the state. They are the best! There are eight vision professionals at the school, and I worry that many of these professionals would not make the move. Vision teachers and vision professionals are scarce. In fact, there are only 2 certified braillists in the state, both of them living in Grand Forks and one, Crystal Roy, works at the school. Crystal brailles homework assignments for those students who have specialized training at the school; she also brailles books and other projects. Several of the staff would not make the move and the services to the clients of the state would suffer.

Paul Olson, who works at the school, is an orientation and mobility teacher. When students or adults come to the school for specialized training, Paul often takes them out of the school to use the bus system. It is extremely important for people with visual impairments to use a bus system to allow them as much independence as possible. Often students will come to Grand Forks or Fargo or Bismarck to school and need to learn how to navigate through a bus system. Paul also works with cane travelers or those with dogs in busy intersections of the city. Grand Forks is a perfect location to learn the art of orientation and mobility.

ND Vision Services/School for the Blind is recognized nationally for its many successes. A move would create setbacks to a program that makes significant changes in people's lives.

Testimony for Hearing on ND Senate Bill 2173

Senate Education Committee, Layton Freborg, Chair

By: Allan Peterson, Legislative Liaison, (1/152007)
North Dakota Association of the Blind.
Home Address: 7009 Horseshoe Bend, Fargo, ND 58104

This testimony is offered in opposition to the bill and requests that the Committee recommend a "do not pass" vote.

Reasons for opposition:

1. The vision education program at the University of North Dakota works jointly with the School for the Blind; the proximity of the two programs on the UND campus has greatly facilitated this partnership. Over a period of years, the UND / School partnership has proven to be one that is mutually beneficial. Only a few training programs for vision rehabilitation teachers exist in the entire nation. Graduates from the UND vision program are a vital source for teachers that have the certification necessary to provide rehabilitation training to children and adults of North Dakota who experience blindness and sight loss. The School also benefits from ties with other programs on the UND campus such as psychology, engineering and the Medical School plus the Occupational Rehabilitation Center In Grand Forks.

2. The primary motivation for this proposal appears to be for the benefit of entities other than the School for the Blind and children and adults of North Dakota who are blind and visually impaired. No one, (that the author is aware of, in the leadership of people who are blind was consulted about the proposal to move the School and merge it with the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

3. There has been a long history of attempts to combine programs for populations of people who are blind with those who are deaf. History is replete with many cases where this hasn't proven to work. Administrators, unfamiliar with the unique needs of the two sub-populations, haven't seemed to have learned the lesson that the needs of the two populations are quite different.

4. In 1961, the ND School for the Blind was moved from Bathgate to Grand Forks. The Lions clubs of North Dakota, as well as North Dakota Association of the Blind, staunchly and persistently advocated for this move. One of the primary reasons for moving the School to Grand Forks, was that because Bathgate was so isolated, there wasn't access to public transportation. Moving the School for the Blind to Devils Lake means that access to public transportation will again be significantly downgraded - both on the intra city level as well as transportation within the city itself.

5. ND Vision Services / School for the Blind has been constructed and equipped to meet the needs of children and adults who are blind and visually impaired. Moving the facility and staff will cost much both from a financial and staff perspective.

PETITION

We the undersigned are in opposition to North Dakota Senate Bill 2173 the intent of which is to move North Dakota Vision Services / School for the Blind from its present location in Grand Forks to Devils Lake. This proposed move would combine the operations of the North Dakota School for the Deaf in Devils Lake with the School for the Blind. It is our firm & strong belief that this action would be very detrimental to provision of services for children and adults of North Dakota who experience blindness and sight loss.

Name

Address

Phone No.

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John A. New N.D.	2519 S. 9th St. Fargo ND	58104 388-9898
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Dorothy Solberg	11395 66th NW	Ray, N. Dak 58849
Sylvia M. Melroe	525 24th Ave S. Fargo	ND 232-2602
Lindy Burch	3702 River Dr	Fargo ND 232-3800
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John Gier	330 So. 8 Ave.	Fargo ND 58103 232-6882
Virginia T. Duval	807 Park Dr.	Fargo ND 58103
John Olson	3308th Ave	Fargo ND
Judy Peterson	7004 Horseshoe Bend	Fargo ND 58104

Distributed by Allen Peterson

Senator Layton Freborg and Member of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Carmen Grove Suminski. I am the current superintendent of North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB), and I do not support Senate Bill No. 2173.

The attached History documents the significant transition that the NDVS/SB has experienced.

The complete Organizational Status Study by Dr. Roger Worner is available. I quote from page 65 . . 3.2 Alternatives:

“The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is an effective, efficient, and cost/effective organization. Its conversion from a center-based to an outreach-based/center-based (combination) model in the mid- 1990’s was a brilliant decision, largely responsible for increasing the school’s cost/effectiveness and its staggering increase in clients (unduplicated or duplicated) served. The organization is **perfectly suited to its current market niche.**

It is the Project Consultant’s assessment, however, that The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind’s growth in clientele (both individuals and organizations requiring services) will outstrip the capabilities of the staff to continue to provide quality programs and services and likely, will result in greater staff turnover and emerging morale issues in the future. If this scenario were to unfold, the State of North Dakota – through under-funding and understaffing the organization – will have weakened a superlative organization of its own making. That would be tragic.”

For your information:

- Educational programming for students who are blind or visually impaired is totally different than for those who are deaf or hard of hearing

- NDVS/SB serves persons of all ages. The North Dakota Association of the Blind is supporting legislation to increase funds for services to adults
- Recruitment of staff and teachers who are certified in visual impairment is difficult in Grand Forks and would be even more difficult in Devils Lake. As reported by the State Human Resource Manager to the Legislature on January 4, "North Dakota state employees had a turnover rate of 10.6 in 2006, the highest rate of the past 6 years. Among agencies with more than 25 employees, the School for the Deaf in Devils Lake had the highest, 20 percent."
- Relocation would result in a huge staff turnover, as the majority of the staff would be unable to relocate because of spouse's employment in the Grand Forks area
- Collaboration between the University of North Dakota and NDVS/SB is high; i.e., the Departments of Education, Psychology, Counseling, and Occupational Therapy
- Vision courses are taught at NDVS/SB, and resources at the school are utilized for the students
- Presentations are made by staff at the NDVS/SB; plus, some of the classes are taught by NDVS/SB staff (i.e., Orientation and Mobility, Assistive Technology)

Carmen Grove Suminski
csuminsk@nd.gov
701-795-2708



A Division of the Department of Public

HISTORY

North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has followed an interesting path to the dynamic outreach/center-based programming format followed today. Below are some highlights from that varied history.

- 1908 North Dakota School for the Blind opens in Bathgate with 25 residential students
- 1961 Modern facility opens, with relocation to Grand Forks
- 1967 NDSB Band performs at the Multi-District Lions Convention in Regina, Saskatchewan; they end their visit with a "Command Performance" for Princess Alexandra, cousin of the Queen
- 1974 The school obtains its first piece of adaptive equipment--a talking calculator
- 1980 NDSB Pop Singers ... accompanying themselves with electric guitars, bass, drums and keyboard ... perform at the opening session of the Helen Keller Congress held in Boston on her 100th birthday
- 1980 NDSB begins an annual tradition of sending students to Close Up in Washington, D.C.
- 1991 NDSB becomes a division of the ND Department of Public Instruction
- 1994 State legislature changes programming focus to outreach model
- 1996 Major renovation converts former residence facility into instructional centers and offices
- 1997 State legislation enables operation of The Store to provide a convenient source of low-vision aids
- 1998 Major renovation converts former pool building to accommodate center-based programming needs
- 1999 Braille Access Center begins operation
- 2001 State legislature officially changes name to North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind
- 2001 Legislature clarifies mandate for NDVS/SB to serve persons of all ages

NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS STUDY

**Prepared for
Carmen Grove Suminski
Superintendent
North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind
and
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
State Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction**

**By
Dr. Roger B. Worner
Project Consultant
Roger Worner Associates, Inc.
Sartell, Minnesota**

June, 2003

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CHAPTER I

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.0 Purpose of the Study

Carmen Suminski, Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, Grand Forks, North Dakota – in conjunction with Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck, North Dakota – commissioned the conduct of an **Organizational Status Study** of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind in April, 2003. The purpose of the study was to establish a 2002-03 status profile of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind which could be used as bases for future strategic planning, organizational self-improvement, and, indeed, longitudinal organization self-evaluation. The strategic goal for conducting the **Organizational Status Study** was to provide external third-party neutral assistance to the leadership of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind in order to enhance organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness in the delivery of programs and services to the State's blind and visually impaired pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind engaged the consultative services of Dr. Roger B. Worner, President, Roger Worner Associates, Inc., Sartell, Minnesota to serve as the Project Consultant and independent third party

neutral in conducting the status study. The timetable for the completion of the **Organizational Status Study** was approximately three months, commencing on or about May 1, 2003 and concluding on or about August 1, 2003.

Superintendent Carmen Suminski served as the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind liaison to the Project Consultant throughout the process of conducting the **Organizational Status Study**.

1.1 Need for the Study

The primary needs for conducting the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's **Organizational Status Study** included the following:

- ◆ The Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind believed there was merit in commissioning the 2002-03 **Organizational Status Study** in light of the organization's significant change in program and service delivery from a center-based to an outreach-focused model during the mid 1990's.
- ◆ The State Superintendent of Public Instruction believed there was merit in commissioning the 2002-03 **Organizational Status Study** of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind in light of his substantial responsibility to provide oversight of that organization's programs and services on behalf of the citizens of the State of North Dakota.

- ◆ The State Superintendent of Public Instruction believed there was merit in ascertaining the degree to which the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind had or had not successfully transitioned from a center-based model to an outreach-based model during the previous decade.
- ◆ The Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind believed it was essential to investigate the service levels of the organization.
- ◆ The Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind believed it was essential to investigate the organization's fiscal condition and cost/effectiveness.
- ◆ The Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind believed it was essential to investigate the quality of the organization's organizational structure, program and service delivery model, staffing, and facilities.
- ◆ The Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind believed it was essential to prepare documentary evidence that would justify continued or expanded funding for the organization through the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and members of the North Dakota State Legislature.

1.2 Methodology

Roger Worner Associates, Inc., prepared the methodological procedures for conducting the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's **Organizational Status Study**.

As conceived by the Project Consultant and approved by the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, the component's of the study's methodology included the following:

- ◆ Meet with and discuss the project with the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.
- ◆ Meet and discuss with the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind the content of the study.
- ◆ Interview the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind.
- ◆ Meet with and interview the Superintendent's administrative and/or supervisory staff members.
- ◆ Meet with and interview (nearly) all of the staff members of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind.

- ◆ Examine past and current demographic trends, including enrollment, consultations, evaluations, and the like.
- ◆ Examine past and current financial trends.
- ◆ Examine organizational staffing.
- ◆ Examine organizational programs and services.
- ◆ Examine staff members' responsibilities.
- ◆ Review collaborative relationships with other organizations.
- ◆ Tour organizational facilities.
- ◆ Gather and analyze organizationally-produced documents (e.g. strategic plan).
- ◆ Review the organization's chart of organization.
- ◆ Assess organizational satisfaction/dissatisfaction.
- ◆ Review historical biennial reports.
- ◆ Confer with key North Dakota Department of Public Instruction personnel.
- ◆ Employ additional methodologies and gather additional data as was

determined advisable or desirable.

- ◆ Prepare findings.
- ◆ Identify alternatives.
- ◆ Prepare recommendations.
- ◆ Create a final **Organizational Status Study** report for the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind.
- ◆ Present the **Organizational Status Study** to the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and key staff members of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

1.3 Geographic Setting

Carmen Grove Suminski is the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind. She is entrusted by the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction to manage the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind in a qualitative fashion.

As a division of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's role is to "provide services to

infants through adults throughout the State of North Dakota. Comprehensive services are provided in vision-specific areas (i.e. orientation and mobility, Braille, Braille music, daily living skills, technology, vocational, and recreation/leisure) for persons of all ages. The collaboration between Vision Services/School for the Blind, private and public schools, and the Department of Human Services, are positive factors in providing quality services."

The mission of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is as follows:

"To function as a state-wide comprehensive resource and to work cooperatively with related agencies in providing a full range of services to all persons who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple handicaps."

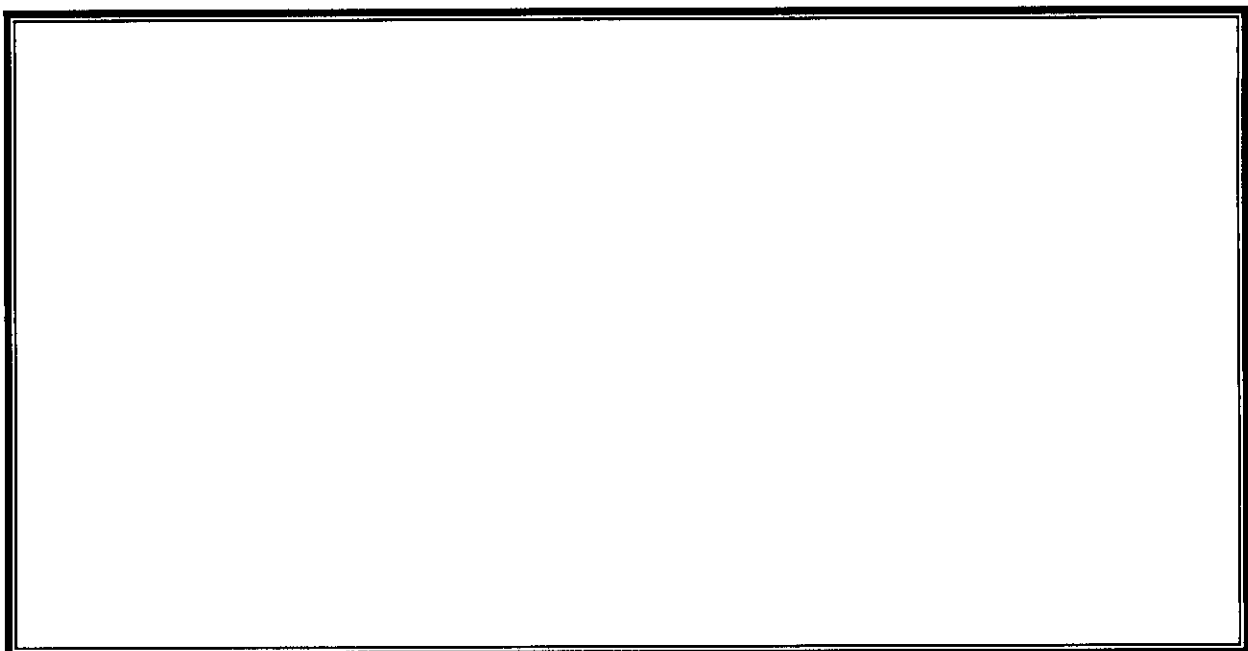
The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind campus is located in northwestern Grand Forks, adjacent to the University of North Dakota.

The mailing address of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is 500 Sanford Road, Grand Forks, North Dakota 58203. The office of the Superintendent, as well as the organization's instructional classrooms, housing, support services' space, and staff offices – including school-owned rental space – is located at this address.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is located in the City of Grand Forks, a northeastern North Dakota community, located in the famed Red River Valley. The city could boast a 2000 census population of 49,321 residents. Grand Forks is a commercial hub for northeastern North Dakota, northwestern Minnesota, and southern Manitoba. The most prevalent forms of entrepreneurial activity in the Grand Forks region include education, government, healthcare, agriculture/agri-business, light and heavy industry, and retail trade.

Grand Forks is situated on the intersection of Highway 2 and Interstate 29, some 80 miles north of Fargo along Interstate 29, 250 miles east and north of Bismarck along Interstate 94 and Interstate 29, and immediately adjacent to East Grand Forks, Minnesota along Highway 2.

Detailed below is a map insert to furnish the reader with a visual perspective of the location of Grand Forks in relationship to the region.



1.4 Questions of the Study

The Project Consultant and the Superintendent of North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind prepared specific questions that should be addressed through the conduct of the **Organizational Status Study**.

The questions of the study provided guidance to the Project Consultant in gathering data, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, identifying alternatives (if any), and tendering recommendations to the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. Detailed below are questions which were developed to provide direction for the Project Consultant during the conduct of the study:

- ◆ What is the current status of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's enrollment/clients, finances, programs and services, staffing, facilities, and other organizational characteristics?
- ◆ What are the Project Consultant's conclusions about the current status of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind?
- ◆ What are the Project Consultant's alternatives to increase the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness in the future?

- ◆ What recommendations does the Project Consultant tender to the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction as preferred, cost/effective, qualitative directions for the organization to pursue in order to maintain or enhance the delivery of quality programs and services for the pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind?

1.5 Assumptions

Prior to conducting the 2002-03 **Organizational Status Study** for the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, the Project Consultant identified a number of operating assumptions that could assist in formulating the study design, gathering and analyzing data, determining findings, drawing conclusions, identifying and weighing alternatives, and tendering recommendations. The assumptions prepared by the Project Consultant at the onset of the study are as follows:

- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has successfully transitioned from a center-based to an outreach-based service model.
- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has continuously expanded its client base as a result of its transition from a center-based to

an outreach-based delivery model.

- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind provides quality educational programs and services for blind and visually-impaired youngsters and adults in North Dakota.
- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is a highly collaborative organization.
- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has received continuing financial and philosophical support from the North Dakota State Legislature.
- ◆ The State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction is supportive of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and the organization's programs and services dispensed by that organization.
- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has successfully functioned as a division of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.
- ◆ The State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has demonstrated commitment to providing qualitative oversight of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind to enhance the

organization's capacities for planning, program and service delivery, cost/effective operation, and accountability to the parents, patrons, and taxpayers of the State of North Dakota.

- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's client base and program/service demands will, over time, outstrip the organization's staffing capacity to furnish continuously high levels of service.
- ◆ The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is viewed as a valued economic asset in the City of Grand Forks.

1.6 Role of Independent Third Party Neutral

The Project Consultant's role in the conduct of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's **Organizational Status Study** was to furnish the organization with a knowledgeable, unbiased, uncompromised, neutral assessment of the questions presented and tender best recommendations to the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, clients, patrons, and staff of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind.

The independent third party neutral for the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's **Organizational Status Study** was Dr. Roger B. Worner, President of Roger Worner Associates, Inc., Sartell, Minnesota.

Roger Worner served for 23 years as an executive-level school administrator (assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, executive director, and Superintendent) in medium- to large-sized school districts in the States of North Dakota, West Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. He authored two books and numerous articles on curriculum design and delivery and was twice named to **Executive Educator** magazine's "Top 100 Superintendents in America."

For the past 13 years, Worner has conducted some 300 studies for state departments (including the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the Minnesota Department of Education), intermediate school districts, consortia districts, education districts, school districts, professional educational organizations, and other governmental entities.

1.7 Organization of the Study Report

The Project Consultant created the **Organizational Status Study** in a three-chapter format. Chapter I was intended to include the study's design, purpose, need, methodology, geographic setting, questions, assumptions, role of the independent third-party neutral, and organization of the study. Chapter II contains information about the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's enrollment, finances, programs and services, staffing, facilities, collaborative and cooperative relationships, and other data. Chapter III provides conclusions, alternatives, and recommendations by the Project Consultant for

deliberation and future action by the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

2.0 Introduction

In order to prepare findings, conclusions, alternatives, and recommendations for the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's **Organizational Status Study**, the Project Consultant gathered and analyzed data on the organization's enrollment/clients, finances, programs and services, staffing, facilities, collaboration and cooperation, and other data. Carmen Suminski, Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and Tami Purcell, Business Manager, furnished invaluable assistance to the Project Consultant by providing a wealth of data, documents, and access to the organization's personnel and facilities throughout the duration of the study.

Select findings on the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind are presented below.

2.1 Historical References

In 1908, the State of North Dakota created the original precursor to the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind – known as the Blind Asylum. Located in Bathgate, North Dakota, the Blind Asylum initially enrolled 18 students. Construction of the Bathgate facility was completed in January 1908,

and the first school year began in mid-February of that year. In the fall of 1908, the organization enrolled 25 students. The average enrollment of the school from 1908 to 1995 was 32 students.

In 1961, the North Dakota School for the Blind was relocated to its current location in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

According to documentation provided by the Superintendent and Business Manager of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, the organization's primary focus from 1908 to the mid-1970's was to educate students with blindness and vision impairments. In the main, students with additional disabilities were not served. In the mid to late 1970's, students with multiple disabilities began to be served by the school. With the passage of Public Law 94-142, increasing numbers of blind and visually impaired students began to be served in their local school districts (least restrictive environment). The transition resulted in continuously dwindling residential enrollment and, hence, an increasing shift in the organization's focus to outreach and support services for public school districts. Ultimately, the school established a regional (8) system to furnish state-wide services to pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations and their serving organizations, including public school districts, special education cooperatives, other State and local governmental service-provider organizations, and families.

In 1994, the North Dakota State Legislature acted to discontinue the North Dakota School for the Blind's residential services, effective at the conclusion of the 1994-95 organizational year. Only five day students (and zero residents) were served by the North Dakota School for the Blind, on-site, in 1994-95.

In 1990, the North Dakota State Legislature transferred the responsibility for oversight of the North Dakota School for the Blind from the Superintendent of Institutions to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 2001, the North Dakota School for the Blind was formally changed by the North Dakota State Legislature to the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind.

2.2 Enrollment/Clients

Table 1 provides an eight-year overview of the unduplicated numbers of clients served by grade by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind. Unduplicated client data from 1991-92 through 1994-95 illustrate service to clients in the 0-21 and adult categories during the last four years in which the organization provided residential (center-based) programming. Unduplicated client data from 1999-00 through 2002-03 illustrate the numbers of clients served in the 0-21 and adult categories during the four most recent years of the organization's operation.

The casual observer can note that the unduplicated number of clients served in the 0-21 category declined from 22 to 5 students between 1992-93 and 1994-95, a decrease of -17 students or -87.3%. The unduplicated adult clients served during the same span of time increased from 4 to 13 adults, a net gain of +9 students or +225%. In total, the unduplicated clients served during the four school years decreased from 26 (1991-92) to 18 (1994-95), a net decrease of -8 clients or -30.8%.

Between 1999-00 and 2002-03 (from July 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003), the unduplicated clients in the 0-21 category increased from 211 to 286 clients, a gain of +75 clients or +35.5%. Similarly, the unduplicated adult clients increased from 92 (1999-00) to 120 clients (2002-03), a net gain of +28 clients or +30.4%. In total, the unduplicated clients served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind between 1999-00 and 2002-03 increased from 303 to 406 clients, a net gain of +103 clients or +34.0%.

When comparing unduplicated clients served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind as a center-based/residential model (1991-92 through 1994-95) and an outreach-based model (1999-00 through 2002-03), the Project Consultant observed that the data revealed a 13-fold increase in the unduplicated clients served in the 0-21 age category (comparing highest client figures in the 1991-92/1994-95 and 1999-00/2002-03 time spans), an 8-fold increase in adult clients served, and a 12-fold increase in the total number of

clients served by the organization.

The Project Consultant concluded that, while Table 1 data admittedly compare unduplicated clients served under two entirely different programmatic models, the number of pre-school, school-aged, and adult clients served (unduplicated) during the 1999-00/2002-03 span **staggeringly exceeded** the number of clients served during the 1991-92/1994-95 time span.

TABLE 1			
NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND			
CLIENTS SERVED (UNDUPLICATED)			
1991-92/1994-95 AND 1999-00/2002-03			
<u>Year</u>	<u>0-21</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Total</u>
1991-92*	22	4	26
1992-93*	18	15	33
1993-94*	12	12	24
1994-95*	5	13	18
1999-00	211	92	303
2000-01	256	102	358
2001-02	285	109	394
2002-03**	286	120	406
* Residential and day students		** July 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003 data.	

If it was the North Dakota State Legislature's intent to expand the number of blind and vision-impaired North Dakotans served by the North Dakota Vision

Services/School for the Blind staff, programs, and services through altering the organization's delivery model, it is abundantly clear that the Legislature's intentions and desires have been fulfilled.

Table 2 furnishes an eight-year overview of the clients served (duplicated) by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind between 1994-95 and 2002-03. (1994-95 was the organization's final year of operating a residential program). In addition to the total number of clients served (duplicated) for each year from 1994-95 through 2002-03, data are provided on the number of consultations, evaluations, and instructions delivered in each of the eight years.

In 1994-95, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind served 136 clients (duplicated), including 499 consultations, 189 evaluations, and 348 instructions. In 1995-96, 837 clients (duplicated) were served. During that year, 386 consultations, 190 evaluations, and 261 instructions were delivered. Over the eight-year span of time, only in 1995-96 was the total number of clients (duplicated) served less than in the previous year (decline of -199 duplicated clients or -19.2%).

In each of the subsequent (to 1995-96) school years, the clients (duplicated) served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind increased. Using the 837 total clients served (duplicated) in 1995-96 as a base figure, the organization's total clients served (duplicated) increased to 6,688 in 2002-03, a

net gain of +5,851 clients served (duplicated) or +699%.

In a similar manner, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's consultations increased from 386 in 1995-96 to 2,391 in 2002-03, a net gain of +2,005 or +519.4%, while evaluations increased from 190 in 1995-96 to 396 in 2002-03, a net gain of +206 evaluations or +108.4%. Instructions (duplicated) during the same time span increased from 261 in 1995-96 to 3,901 in 2002-03, a net gain of +3,640 instructions or +1394.6%.

TABLE 2 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND CLIENTS SERVED (DUPLICATED) 1994-95/2002-03				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Consultations</u>	<u>Evaluations</u>	<u>Instructions</u>	<u>Total</u>
1994-95*	499	189	348	1,036
1995-96	386	190	261	837
1996-97	554	193	405	1,152
1997-98	658	172	407	1,237
1998-99	830	177	1,459	2,466
1999-00	1,211	211	2,269	3,691
2000-01	1,384	251	2,264	3,899
2001-02	1,493	185	2,230	3,908
2002-03**	2,391	396	3,901	6,688
* Residential program discontinued effective July 1, 1994 ** July 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003				

As in the case of unduplicated clients served, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's duplicated clients served over either the eight year span of time from 1994-95 through 2002-03 or the seven year span of time from 1995-96 through 2002-03 revealed **staggering increases in the total number of clients served (duplicated) and the total number of consultations (duplicated), evaluations (duplicated), and instructions (duplicated) delivered to pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations which presented blindness and vision impairments.**

The Project Consultant concluded that the growth in the numbers of clients served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind – both unduplicated and duplicated counts – is truly remarkable and worthy of the highest level of commendation.

2.3 Finances

Following an examination of enrollments/clients served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, the Project Consultant undertook an analysis of the organization's finances over a multi-year time frame. Particularly, the Project Consultant focused on expenditure budget and salary/wage/benefit trends over the course of six biennia from 1991-93 through 2001-03.

Table 3 presents the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's expenditure budgets from 1991-93 through 2001-03.

In 1991-93, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind expended a total of \$3,031,291, including \$2,272,358 in General Fund appropriations, \$345,926 in Federal funds, and \$413,007 in Special funds. By 2001-03, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's total expenditure budget amounted to \$3,460,080, including \$2,102,259 in General Fund appropriation, \$53,812 in Federal funds, and \$1,304,009 in Special funds.

The Project Consultant concluded that over the five biennia or ten fiscal years from 1991-93 through 2001-03, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's total expenditures increased by +\$428,789 or +14.1%.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's average annual increase in expenditures amounted to a diminutive 1.41%/year. The average annual increase in organizational expenditure over the ten year span of time is particularly significant when considered in light of the dramatic increase in the number of clients served during the same span of time.

Table 3 further reveals that, between 1991-93 and 2001-03, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's General Fund appropriations actually **decreased** from \$2,272,358 (1991-93) to \$2,102,259 (2001-03), a net decrease of -\$170,099 or -7.5%. During the same time span, Federal expenditures were reduced by -\$292,114 or -84.4% from \$345,926 (1991-93) to \$53,812 (2001-03). While both General Fund appropriations and Federal funded expenditures

decreased between 1991-93 and 2001-03, Special funding expenditures increased substantially – +\$891,002 or +215.7% – from \$413,007 (1991-93) to \$1,304,009 (2001-03).

TABLE 3 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND EXPENDITURE BUDGETS 1991-93/2001-03				
<u>Biennium</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Special</u>	<u>Total</u>
1991-93	\$2,272,358	\$345,926	\$413,007	\$3,031,291
1993-95	2,315,708	7,856	192,470	2,516,034
1995-97	2,482,747	88,349	249,684	2,820,780
1997-99	2,343,318	73,204	628,277	3,044,799
1999-01	2,190,817	50,525	679,657	2,920,999
2001-03	2,102,259	53,812	1,304,009	3,460,080
Change	-\$170,099	-\$292,144	+\$891,002	+\$428,789
% Change	-7.5%	-84.4%	+215.7%	+14.1%

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has demonstrated prudent and accountable fiscal management over the five biennia from 1991-93 through 2001-03. Despite **less than inflationary increases in the organization's expenditure budget**, programs and services have been maintained (in fact, increased), and clients served have substantially (and continuously) grown to record levels. The Project Consultant commends

the efforts made by the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and the organization's fiscal management for their observable attention to both maintaining/improving service levels and insuring fiscal integrity and accountability.

Table 4 depicts the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's salaries/wages/benefits over the five-year biennia from 1991-93 (base biennia) through 2001-03.

Table data yield that, in 1991-93, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind expended \$1,942,944 for salaries/wages/benefits. By 2001-03, salaries/wages/benefits amounted to \$2,712,426, a ten year increase of +\$769,482 or +39.6%.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's salaries/wages/benefits increased at an average annual rate of 3.96%/year, a figure that was within reasonable cost parameters during a period of nearly historic growth in the nation's economy.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has demonstrated prudence and accountability in maintaining salary/wage/benefit cost containment over the five biennia from 1991-93 (base biennia) through 2001-03. Again, the Project Consultant commends the leadership of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind for their

prudent fiscal management.

TABLE 4 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND SALARIES/WAGES/BENEFITS 1991-93/2001-03	
<u>Biennium</u>	<u>Salaries/Wages/Benefits</u>
1991-93	\$1,942,944
1993-95	1,819,486
1995-97	1,542,032
1997-99	1,919,327
1999-01	2,162,719
2001-03	2,712,426
Change	+\$769,482
% Change	+39.6%

Table 5 details the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's wages as a function of expenditure budget from the 1991-93 biennium (base) through the 2001-03 biennium.

The reader will note that over the ten year span of time, salaries/wages increased by +\$769,482 or +39.6%, while the organization's expenditure budget increased by +\$428,789 or +14.1%. As a consequence of the slower growth in the organization's expenditure budget – largely as a result of State of North Dakota's budgetary reductions – salaries/wages as a function of the North Dakota

Vision Services/School for the Blind's expenditure budget increased from 64.1% in 1991-93 to 78.4% in 2001-03, a ten year gain of +14.3%. The Project Consultant viewed the salary/wage trend (as a function of expenditure budget) as indicative of an organization which is simultaneously (a) attempting to maintain its personnel resources to serve a continuously expanding clientele, while (b) being forced – as a result of budgetary reductions – to “strip away” non-personnel expenditures.

TABLE 5 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND WAGES AS A FUNCTION OF EXPENDITURE BUDGET 1991-93/2001-03			
<u>Biennium</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Expenditure Budget</u>	<u>Wages/Budget</u>
1991-93	\$1,942,944	\$3,031,291	64.1%
1993-95	1,819,486	2,516,034	72.3
1995-97	1,542,032	2,820,780	54.7
1997-99	1,919,327	3,044,799	63.0
1999-01	2,162,719	2,920,999	74.0
2001-03	\$2,712,426	\$3,460,080	78.4%
Change	+\$769,482	+\$428,789	+14.3%
%Change	+39.6%	+14.1%	

The Project Consultant concluded that, if the cost-cutting trends of the State of North Dakota continue, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind will be forced – of necessity – to reduce personnel (having already “stripped away”

non-personnel expenditures), despite the fact that the organization's clients continue to expand, and responsibilities of current organizational personnel are high.

Table 6 illustrates General Fund revenue trends for the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind from the 1991-93 through the 2001-03 biennium.

As the table data relate, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's General Fund revenue/appropriation declined from \$2,272,358 in the 1991-93 biennium (base biennium) to \$2,102,259 in the 2001-03 biennium, a decrease of -\$170,099 or -7.5%. During the ten year span of time, the organization's General Fund revenue increased by +\$43,350 or +1.9% between the 1991-93 and the 1993-95 biennia and increased, again, by \$167,039 or +7.2% between the 1993-95 biennium to the 1995-97 biennium. Thereafter, General Fund revenue to the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind decreased over the next three biennia, respectively, by -\$139,429 or -5.6% between 1995-97 and 1997-99, -\$152,501 or -6.5% between 1997-99 and 1999-00, and -\$88,558 or -4.0% between 1999-01 and 2001-03.

Near the completion of the study, the Project Consultant learned that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's 2003-05 General Fund revenue appropriation would be \$2,089,805, a further decline of -\$12,434 or -.6% from the 2001-03 General Fund revenue figure.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind General Fund revenue appropriation from the State of North Dakota has **decreased in four successive biennia or eight successive years**, a trend which has resulted in the loss of full-time equivalent staff members and a succession of cost-cutting measures. Despite fiscal and personnel losses by the organization, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's clients served has continued to increase, a trend which the Project Consultant believes is stretching and will continue to stretch the capabilities and energies of the staff (and, in fact, may ultimately result in greater staff turnover in the future).

TABLE 6 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND GENERAL FUND REVENUE TRENDS 1991-93/2001-03			
<u>Biennium</u>	<u>General Fund Appropriation</u>	<u>Change from Previous Biennium</u>	<u>% Change from Previous Biennium</u>
1991-93	\$2,272,358	N/A	N/A
1993-95	2,315,708	+43,350	+1.9
1995-97	2,482,747	+167,039	+7.2
1997-99	2,343,318	-139,429	-5.6
1999-01	2,190,817	-152,501	-6.5
2001-03	2,102,259	-88,558	-4.0
Change	-\$170,099	N/A	N/A
% Change	-7.5%		

2.4 Organizational Configuration

The Project Consultant examined the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's organizational configuration in 2002-03. A copy of the organizational chart follows.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind operates under the jurisdiction, direction, control, and management of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and its State Superintendent, Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead. Funding for the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is derived from biennial appropriations of the North Dakota State Legislature.

Carmen Grove Suminski serves in the capacity of Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, having been appointed to that post in January, 1995. Superintendent Suminski served in the capacity of Acting Superintendent from August, 1994 through January, 1995, prior to assuming the organization's chief executive officer position.

A review of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's organizational chart reveals that the organization's hierarchical structure is "comparatively flat," according staff members ease of access to the Superintendent through a well-defined line and staff configuration. According to the organizational chart, the Superintendent directly supervises five mid-level administrators/quasi-administrators, including the following: Business Manager,

Supervisor of Maintenance, Outreach Coordinator, Director of Vision Resource Center, and Network Administrator.

The Outreach Division is the largest programmatic and personnel component of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, allocating 16 full-time staff members – in the main – to instructional, assessment, assessment/evaluation, consultation, in-service training/staff development, technical assistance, instructional technology, vocational preparedness, orientation and mobility, and related functions (among others).

The Vision Resource Center is the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's second largest division with five employees. The functions of the Vision Resource Center include, among others, NDVS/SB staff support, the entry point for clients coming to the organization through the 1-800 number, administration of the American Printing House for the Blind quota funds, maintenance of the National Library Service, Talking Book Machine Lending Agency, the depository for large print and Braille textbooks, the lending library for toys/adaptive devices, the depository for descriptive and professional videos which may be loaned, management of the professional library, management of the consumer library for fiction and non-fiction books in Braille and large print, depository for brochures, handbooks, and booklets relating to visual impairment, management of the Store to provide blind/vision impaired consumers with faster/easier access to items that may be required for independent living, and maintenance of the Braille Access

Center.

The three remaining divisions – Business, Buildings and Grounds/Maintenance, and Network Administration – are the smallest of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's components, employing, respectively, three, four, and one staff members.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's Superintendent has a reasonable "span of control" (number of individuals supervised) and, due – in part – to the diminutive size of the organization, has frequent contact/communication with each staff member. Similarly, the individuals responsible for divisional oversight have reasonable "spans of control" and communicate regularly with subordinate staff members.

The staff size (number of personnel) of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind lends itself to rapid, unfiltered, direct communication from superordinate to subordinate and subordinate to superordinate staff members, creating an "open organization" that is largely devoid of rumoring.

During the course of interviewing nearly all members of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's staff, the Project Consultant found that virtually all have excellent grasps of their own job responsibilities and, as well, the job responsibilities of others. Job responsibilities (through State-required PIQ's) are well-defined, known, and exceedingly accurate, eliminating excessive bickering

among staff members about each others' responsibilities or work assignments.

The structure of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's organization and programming – including, particularly, a combination of center-based and outreach-based programs and services – requires that administrators and staff members display extraordinary levels of organization, time management, self-initiation, and productivity. With staff members nearly constantly on the move between the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's center in Grand Forks and distant locations throughout the State of North Dakota, this is an organization that cannot and will not succeed if even a small number of staff members require constant administrative oversight. Fortunately, the Project Consultant found substantial evidence that the organization's staff members are highly goal-oriented, self-starting, and responsive to expectations placed upon them by the Superintendent and division heads. In turn, the Superintendent and division heads – within a well planned organizational framework – provide reasonable (though not excessive) latitude for staff members to perform their responsibilities.

The Project Consultant concluded that the organizational configuration/structure of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind functions successfully with high levels of productivity and accountability.

2.5 Staffing

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's 2002-03 staffing is delineated in Table 7. The table data reveal that the organization employed 30 staff members or 28.3 full-time equivalent members during the 2002-03 organizational year.

As depicted in the table, the largest cadre of North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's staff is found in the teaching ranks with 12 employees or 11.8 full-time equivalent staff members employed.

Functioning in administrative or quasi-administrative capacities of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind are the Superintendent of Schools (1), Business Manager (1), Coordinators (2), Network Administrator (1), and Maintenance Supervisor (1).

The organization's Maintenance Department includes the (aforementioned) Maintenance Supervisor and full-time custodians (3.0) who are responsible for cleaning, repairing, and overseeing the management of the organization's physical plant and grounds.

Additional organizational personnel include the Vision Outreach Specialist (1), Brailist (1), Administrative Assistants (3 or 2.8 FTE), Office Assistants (2 or 1.5 FTE), Orientation and Mobility Assistant (1), and ODIN Facilitator (1 or .2 FTE).

While most of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's professional staff (as opposed to support staff) is center-based in Grand Forks and travel with a high degree of regularity to the far reaches of the State of North Dakota, the organization regionally bases two teachers in Jamestown (1 specializing the multiply handicapped and one specializing in vision curriculum); one teacher in Fargo (specializing in infants and orientation and mobility); one teacher in Minot (specializing in low vision, rehabilitation, and teaching); and one Vision Outreach Specialist in Bismarck (specializing in technology, infants, and Braille). The aforementioned personnel – in addition to center-based coordinators and teachers – interface with school districts, private schools, special education cooperatives, other governmental service-providing agencies/organizations, and families in dispensing the NDVS/SB programs and services.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's staff has sufficiently diversified background, experience, training, and expertise to deliver the array of programs and services necessary to fulfill its statutory mandates and, further, furnish assistance to service-providing organizations (including school districts and private schools) and families that is unduplicated by other organizations and, indeed, would be unavailable if the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind were not to exist.

TABLE 7 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND PERSONNEL 2002-03		
<u>Position</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>FTE's</u>
Superintendent	1	1.0
Business Manager	1	1.0
Coordinators	2	2.0
Network Administrator	1	1.0
Maintenance Supervisor	1	1.0
Teachers	12	11.8
Vision Outreach Specialist	1	1.0
Brailist	1	1.0
Maintenance	3	3.0
Administrative Assistants	3	2.8
Office Assistants	2	1.5
O and M Assistant	1	1.0
ODIN Facilitator	1	.2
Total	30	28.3

Table 8 details the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's change in personnel over the ten year span of time from 1992-93 through 2002-03.

According to information provided in the table, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind employed 35.0 full-time equivalent staff members

or 45.0 full-time and part-time staff members during the 1992-93 organizational year.

By 2002-03, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind employed 28.3 full-time equivalent staff members or 30.0 full-time and part-time staff members

Between 1992-93 and 2002-03, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's full-time equivalent staff members decreased by -6.7 members or -19.1%. During that same span of time, the organization's full-time and part-time staff members decreased by -15.0 members or -33.3%.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has experienced substantial personnel reductions between 1992-93 and 2002-03. Indeed, while the organization was mandated by the North Dakota State Legislature to discontinue its center-based/residential programming in Grand Forks during that span of time, the organization has, nonetheless, continuously and significantly increased the number of unduplicated and duplicated clients served and, indeed, substantially increased the breadth and scope of its program/service focus from (largely) the confines of Grand Forks to the entirety of the State of North Dakota.

As suggested earlier, the Project Consultant concluded that the breadth, scope, and increasing geographic span of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for

the Blind's programs and services will – it is believed in time – outstrip the personnel and budgetary resources of the organization to furnish qualitative services for pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations who are blind, visually impaired, and, increasingly, multiply handicapped. Furthermore, the Project Consultant assesses that there is not “a qualified back-up system to carry on the work of North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind if that organization were to fail.” To be sure, only a miniscule number of public school districts (and no non-public schools) in the State of North Dakota would be in a position to provide programs, services, and technical expertise that would even remotely rival those attributes found in the staff of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind organization.

TABLE 8 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLLIND CHANGE IN PERSONNEL 1992-93/2002-03		
<u>Year</u>	<u>F.T.E.</u>	<u>FT/PT Staff</u>
1992-93	35.0	45.0
2002-03	28.3	30.0
Change	-6.7	-15.0
% Change	-19.1%	-33.3%

2.6 Programs and Services

Table 9 divulges the programs/services/activities offered by the North Dakota

Vision Services/School for the Blind during the 2002-03 organizational year.

In the mid-1990's, the organization – in response to the North Dakota State Legislature – divested itself of its residential program and modified its mission and focuses from largely a center-based instructional model to a combination outreach-based/center-based model, aimed more broadly on instruction, consultation, evaluation/assessment, staff development, and the provision of a phenomenal array of resources (largely through the Vision Resource Center). The organization's expenditures by program would suggest that outreach (age 6-21), technology, Vision Resource Center, outreach (age 0-5), and Braille Access Center constitute the program/service areas which receive the greatest focus by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind staff.

The outreach-based or field-based model in the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind requires that nearly 75% of the organization's professional staff spend considerable time in the field, working with school districts, non-public schools, special education cooperatives, other service-providing governmental agencies, and families in consultative, evaluative, and/or training roles. The purposes of such activities, of course, are to strengthen the early identification of blind or visually impaired students, assist in programming for those youngsters, furnish training to professional and support staffs involved in delivering instructional programs and services to those youngsters, provide referrals to other service-providing organizations/agencies, and conduct

assessments. An outgrowth of the outreach-based activities is the identification of students who may further benefit through intensive center-based programming in Grand Forks. The Compensatory Skills, Specific Skills, Summer Adventure, and Life Experiences Advance People (LEAP) Program are specifically intended to enhance some or all of the following vision-specific skills: daily living skills; Braille; Braille music; orientation and mobility; technology; career education; and recreation/leisure.

The Specific Skills Program is described in the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's brochure as "a short-term program featuring one-week training sessions in vision specific areas such as daily living skills, Braille, Braille music, orientation and mobility, technology, career education, and recreation/leisure for students who are blind or visually impaired. The program allows students to spend time periodically at NDVS/SB to enhance skills and receive one-on-one instruction in the expanded core curriculum areas."

The Learning Experiences Advance People Program is described as "a short-term program designed to help students who are visually impaired or blind develop vision-specific skills that will enable them to grow as individuals through experiential learning. The program was created for students who are developmentally disabled and who function near or at grade level." It is preferred that the students involved in this program are at the junior high school or high school level. "Vision specific areas offered in the LEAP Program include daily

living skills, orientation and mobility, recreation/leisure, adaptive technology, Braille, and vocational skills.”

The Compensatory Skills Program was “designed for students who need concentrated instruction in expanded core curricular areas, including – but not limited to – Braille and technology.”

The Summer Adventure Program is designed to provide a social, emotional, and recreational experience for blind and visually impaired students. The Summer Adventure Program offers opportunities for visually impaired students to share their experiences with other visually impaired students and provides them with opportunities for the following types of learning experiences: career awareness; communications skills; music awareness; orientation and mobility; daily living skills; recreation; technology; and drama.

Located in the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind facility in Grand Forks, the Vision Resource Center is an all-purpose, multi-functional resource asset that serves the organization’s professional staff, field-based outreach staff, public school district and non-public school staffs, special education cooperative staff, families, collaborative service-providing organizations, and blind and vision impaired clients/students – whether pre-school, school-aged, or adult. The Vision Resource Center mans the organization’s 1-800 number and dispenses brochures, fiction and non-fiction books, professional videos, descriptive videos,

and professional library contents to families and teachers seeking additional information about and/or programming for blind and visually impaired students and adults. The Vision Resource Center also operates the Braille Access Center to furnish select materials in Braille, large print, electronic media, and audio recording formats to persons who are blind or visually impaired. The center serves as the large print and Braille textbook depository, a resource for locating, obtaining, and loaning materials to local vision teachers and/or special education directors for their usage in delivering instructional programming to blind and visually impaired students. Additionally, the center operates a Talking Book Machine Lending Agency, dispensing equipment for those who are unable to read or use standard print materials and manages, as well, the Toy/Adaptive Device Lending Library, available to teachers and parents for children's usage of tactile, auditory, and large print items.

The Vision Resource Center administers the American Printing House for the Blind quota funds for blind students in the state and manages The Store, a component of the Center focused on providing blind and visually impaired clients in North Dakota with easy access to items necessary or desired for enhanced independent living, including writing supplies, protective eyewear, clocks, magnifiers, games, calendars, kitchen devices, sewing aids, and the like.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind operates a comprehensive Technology Center. As stated in the organization's biennial

report, "The goal of the Technology Center is to provide assistance and information to those who are visually impaired and who wish to use technology to meet their needs at school, work, or home." The collection of technology in the Technology Center includes – among others – closed circuit television systems for enlarging print; talking calculators; computers with large print, Braille, or synthetic speech output; and computerized reading machines.

TABLE 9 NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND MAJOR PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES 2002-03	
κ	Outreach
κ	Vision Resource Center*
κ	Technology Center
κ	Evaluations/Consultations
κ	Adult Services
κ	Summer Adventure
κ	Specific Skills
κ	Compensatory Skills
κ	In-service Training
κ	L.E.A.P.
κ	Post-Secondary
κ	Speakers' Bureau
* (Includes American Printing House for the Blind quota funds; talking book machine lending agency; large print and Braille textbook depository; toy/adaptive device lending library; descriptive videos; professional videos; professional library; fiction and non-fiction books; access to information; store; Braille Access Center)	

The Technology Center's equipment is frequently updated, adapted, and loaned for blind or visually impaired clients to use at home, school, or work.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind furnishes a qualitative array of programs and services for the blind and visually impaired population in the State of North Dakota and, further, augments those efforts made by other service-providing organizations. The organization's mission, focuses, programs, and services do not duplicate those of other organizations in the State of North Dakota and are not matched in kind or quality by any other State agency, organization, or entity, either private or public.

2.7 Facilities

Table 10 reveals the building components of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's physical plant.

The six building components include the 15,900 square foot west wing; 7,008 square foot south wing (first floor); 7,008 square foot south wing (second floor); 2,870 square foot connecting/classroom; 6,240 square foot gymnasium; and 5,920 square foot east wing.

The west wing, south wing (first floor), and south wing (second floor) were constructed in 1959. The connecting classroom and gymnasium were constructed in 1975, and the east wing was constructed in 1977.

The entire North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind complex is comprised of 44,946 square feet of teaching/learning, support, office, residence, and rental/lease spaces.

External to the school is the organization's garage (1,296 square feet) and garage addition (3,696 square feet) which were constructed, respectively, in 1959 and 1981.

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is a multi-story facility which complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities' Act.

Substantial space at the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is leased to three external entities, including the Grand Forks School District, the University of North Dakota, and the North Dakota University System, higher education computer network, student information system. During the 2003-04 organizational year, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind anticipates deriving \$143,362 from the Grand Forks School District for the lease of 16,660 square feet of teaching/learning, support, and office space; \$31,799 from the North Dakota University System for the lease of 3,741 square feet of office and support space; and \$2,900 from the University of North Dakota for the lease of a 46,826 square foot parking lot. The lease/rental building space yields the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind over \$178,000 in revenue each year. The organization's lease/rental rate was \$8.50/square foot, effective

July 1, 2003.

The Project Consultant found that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's buildings and grounds are well maintained, and the maintenance staff displays obvious and justified pride in the cleanliness and order of the organization's facilities.

TABLE 10		
NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND		
FACILITY		
2002-03		
<u>Building Component</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Area (Sq. Ft.)</u>
West Wing	1959	15,900
South Wing (1st Floor)	1959	7,008
South Wing (2nd Floor)	1959	7,008
Connecting/Classroom	1975	2,870
Gymnasium	1975	6,240
East Wing	1977	5,920
Total*		44,946
* Garage (1959; 1,296 square feet) and garage addition (1981; 3,696 square feet) not included.		

2.8 Collaboration/Cooperation

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is a highly collaborative educational organization, maintaining quality relationships with State

agencies/organizations, school districts, non-public schools, special education cooperatives, universities, civic organizations, and, of course, families and students. Among literally dozens of such collaborative/cooperative relationships, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind works most closely with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, North Dakota School for the Deaf, North Dakota State Library, North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Lions' Club. The organization's Outreach Program institutes and, then, maintains close, continuous working relationships with public school districts, non-public schools, and special education cooperatives involved in direct program and service delivery to school-aged blind and visually impaired students.

The Project Consultant commends the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind for the number and quality of collaborative/cooperative relationships it has established and maintained on behalf of blind and visually impaired pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations.

2.9 Marketing

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind extensively markets its programs and services to North Dakota organizations which provide service to blind and vision-impaired students/clients throughout the State of North Dakota. Primary vehicles for marketing include the preparation and dissemination of

brochures; the delivery of public and private presentations; effective usage of the media; usage of public service announcements; manning booths at state, regional, and national conferences and conventions; surveying clients or prospective clients; responding to 1-800 number telephone inquiries; delivering in-service training and staff development programs to public school districts, non-public schools and their representatives, and special education cooperatives; and a host of others.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has instituted numerous, effective vehicles for marketing the organization and increasing general awareness of the organization's programs and services.

2.10 Strategic Planning

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind has developed a comprehensive strategic plan, including objectives and strategies.

The Superintendent and staff of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind regularly updates the organization's strategic plan. The five strategic plan objectives of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind are as follows:

- ◆ Design, refine, and implement technology systems.

- ◆ Design and implement methodologies for enhancing public understanding, acceptance, and awareness.
- ◆ Define and, as necessary and feasible, expand programs, services, staffing, and opportunities.
- ◆ Evaluate programs/services (efficiency, accountability, follow-up).
- ◆ Develop systems to address lack of job/work skills among graduates and adults AND implement alternative vehicles/collaborative relationships for service delivery.

The Project Consultant found that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind regularly monitors the organization's strategic plan through the efforts of four broadly-based teams: Visions/Programming; Technology (in collaboration with Jobs/Work Skills); Public Awareness; and Evaluation.

The Project Consultant further found that the organization has substantially used the strategic planning process to institute improvements in its programs, services, and operations.

2.11 Accreditation

An on-site review of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind was conducted on April 7-10, 2002 as a part of the organization's continuous self-

improvement and accreditation processes. The **Report of On-site Review** was a comprehensive and fair assessment of the status of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind. The report was justifiably highly complimentary of the organization, its leadership, staff, and programs and services. Likewise, the major recommendations were justified and fair though, in truth, the Project Consultant viewed all of the major recommendations as "minor fine-tuning" for/to a high quality organization.

Already, the Superintendent, staff, and teams at the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind have internalized the on-site review recommendations and begun instituting (fine-tuning) changes.

2.12 Internal Organizational Ratings

As a part of the **Organizational Status Study**, the Project Consultant interviewed virtually all of the staff members of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind. One component of the evaluations was a request by the Project Consultant that staff members' rate on a scale of 1 (poorest possible) to 10 (highest possible) the following questions:

- ◆ What is the quality of the organization?
- ◆ What is the quality of the organization's administration?
- ◆ What is the quality of the organization's staff?

- ◆ What is the quality of the organization's programs and services?
- ◆ What is the quality of the organization's communication with itself?
- ◆ How well planned is the organization?
- ◆ How goal-oriented is the organization?
- ◆ How close is the organization's staff?

Each interviewed employee provided the Project Consultant with rating on each of the aforementioned questions. All individual ratings were totaled, and an average rating was computed. Then, the Project Consultant classified the average ratings within the following ranges: 7.0 - 10.0 = good/excellent; 3.5 - 7.0 = average; 0 - 3.5 = fair/poor.

Based on ratings provided by the organization's staff members, the following rating outcomes were secured: organizational quality: good/excellent; administration quality: good/excellent; staff quality: good/excellent; program and service quality: good/excellent; internal communication: (low) good/excellent; organizational planning: good/excellent; goal orientation: (low) good/excellent; closeness of staff: (low) good/excellent.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's staff overwhelmingly rated the organization and its component

features (e.g. staff, programs and services, other) at a high (good to excellent) qualitative level.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS, ALTERNATIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.0 Introduction

The **Organizational Status Study** was conducted to establish a 2002-03 status profile of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind organization which could be used as a basis for further strategic planning, organizational self-improvement, and longitudinal organizational self-evaluation.

The strategic goal for conducting the **Organizational Status Study** was to provide external third-party neutral assistance to the leadership of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind in order to enhance organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness in the delivery of programs and services to the State's blind and visually impaired pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations.

The 2002-03 study was conducted to gather data, provide for its analysis, draw conclusions, identify alternatives (very limited), and tender recommendations to the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind. The questions specified below provided direction to the Project Consultant during the conduct of the study and were intended to be addressed by the study:

- ◆ What is the current status of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's enrollment/clients, finances, programs and services, staffing, facilities, and other organizational characteristics?
- ◆ What are the Project Consultant's conclusions about the current status of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind?
- ◆ What are the Project Consultant's alternatives to increase the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness in the future?
- ◆ What recommendations does the Project Consultant tender to the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind and the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction as preferred, cost/effective, qualitative directions for the organization to pursue to maintain or enhance the delivery of quality programs and services for the pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations served by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind?

3.1 Conclusions

The Project Consultant derived the following conclusions through the conduct of the **Organizational Status Study**:

- ◆ The organization's unduplicated clients in the 0-21 age category increased from 211 to 286 clients, a gain of +75 clients or +35.5%, between 1999-00 and 2002-03.
- ◆ The organization's unduplicated adult clients increased from 92 (1999-00) to 120 clients (2002-03), a net gain of +28 clients or +30.4%.
- ◆ The organization's unduplicated clients served between 1999-00 and 2002-03 increased from 303 to 388 clients, a net gain of +85 clients or +28.1%.
- ◆ From 1991-92 through 2002-03, the organization realized a 13-fold increase in unduplicated clients served in the 0-21 age category, an 8-fold increase in adult clients served, and a 12-fold increase in the total number of clients served.
- ◆ The number of pre-school, school-aged, and adult clients served (unduplicated) by the organization during the 1999-00/2002-03 span staggeringly exceeded the number of clients served during the 1991-92/1994-95 time span.
- ◆ The North Dakota State Legislature's intent to expand the number of blind and vision impaired North Dakotans served by the organization's staff, programs, and services through altering the organization's delivery model

has been clearly fulfilled.

- ◆ The organization's total clients served (duplicated) increased from 837 in 1995-96 to 6,688 in 2002-03, a net gain of +5,851 clients served (duplicated) or +699%.
- ◆ The organization's consultations (duplicated) increased from 386 in 1995-96 to 2,391 in 2002-03, a net gain of +2,005 or +519.4%.
- ◆ The organization's evaluations (duplicated) increased from 190 in 1995-96 to 396 in 2002-03, a net gain of +206 evaluations or +108.4%.
- ◆ The organization's instructions (duplicated) increased from 261 in 1995-96 to 3,901 in 2002-03, a net gain of +3,640 instructions or +1,394.6%.
- ◆ The growth in the number of clients served by the organization – both unduplicated and duplicated counts – is truly remarkable and worthy of the highest level of commendation.
- ◆ Over the five biennia or ten fiscal years from 1991-93 through 2001-03, the organization's total expenditures increased by +\$428,789 or +14.1%.
- ◆ The organization's average annual increase in expenditures amounted to a diminutive 1.41%/year between 1991-93 and 2001-03.

- ◆ The average annual increase in organizational expenditure over the ten year span of time from 1991-93 (base) through 2001-03 is particularly significant when considered in light of the dramatic increase in the number of clients served during the same span of time.
- ◆ The organization has demonstrated prudent and accountable fiscal management over the five biennia from 1991-93 through 2001-03.
- ◆ Despite less than inflationary increases in the organization's expenditure budget, programs and services have been maintained (in fact, increased), and clients served has substantially (and continuously) grown to record levels.
- ◆ In 1991-93, the organization expended \$1,942,944 for salaries/wages/benefits. By 2001-03, salaries/wages/benefits amounted to \$2,712,426, a ten year increase of +\$769,482 or +39.6%.
- ◆ The organization's salaries/wages/benefits increased by an average annual rate of 3.96%/year, a figure that was within reasonable cost parameters during the period of nearly historic growth in the nation's economy.
- ◆ The organization has demonstrated prudence in accountability in maintaining salary/wage/benefit cost containment over the five biennia

from 1991-93 (base biennia) through 2001-03.

- ◆ The leadership of the organization is commended for its prudent fiscal management.
- ◆ The organization's General Fund revenue/appropriations declined from \$2,272,358 in the 1991-93 biennium to \$2,102,259 in the 2001-03 biennium, a decrease of -\$170,099 or -7.5%.
- ◆ The organization's General Fund revenue appropriation from the State of North Dakota during the 2003-05 biennium will further decline by - \$12,434 or -.6% from the 2001-03 General Fund revenue appropriation figure.
- ◆ The organization's General Fund revenue appropriation from the State of North Dakota has decreased in four successive biennia or eight successive years.
- ◆ The organization operates under the jurisdiction, direction, control, and management of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and its State Superintendent.
- ◆ The organization's hierarchical structure is comparatively flat.
- ◆ The organization's structure is well defined and understandable,

enhancing the flow of internal communication.

- ◆ The organization's Outreach Division is the largest programmatic and personnel component, allocating 16 full-time staff members to instruction, assessment, assessment/evaluation, consultation, in-service training/staff development, technical assistance, instructional technology, vocational preparedness, orientation and mobility, and related functions.
- ◆ The organization's Vision Resource Center is the second largest division with five employees.
- ◆ The organization's Superintendent has a reasonable "span of control" (number of individuals supervised).
- ◆ The organization's staff members have excellent grasps of their own job responsibilities and, as well, the job responsibilities of others.
- ◆ There is substantial evidence that the organization's staff members are highly goal-oriented, self-starting, and responsible to expectations placed on them by the Superintendent and division heads.
- ◆ The organizational configuration/structure functions successfully with high levels of productivity and accountability.
- ◆ The organization employed 30 staff members or 28.3 full-time equivalent

members during the 2002-03 organizational year.

- ◆ The largest cadre of organizational staff members is found in the teaching ranks with 12 employees or 11.8 full-time equivalent staff members employed.
- ◆ The organization's staff has sufficiently diversified background, experience, training, and expertise to deliver the array of programs and services necessary to fulfill its statutory mandates and furnish assistance to service-providing organizations and families that is unduplicated by other organizations and, indeed, would be unavailable if the organization were not to exist.
- ◆ The organization's staff decreased from 35.0 full-time equivalents in 1992-93 to 28.3 full-time equivalents in 2002-03, a decline of -6.7 staff members or a -19.1%.
- ◆ The organization has experienced substantial personnel reductions between 1992-93 and 2002-03. The staff losses have occurred despite the fact that the organization's clientele and the breadth and scope of organizational programs and services have dramatically increased over the same span of time.
- ◆ It is predicted by the Project Consultant that the breadth, scope, and

geographic span of the organization's programs, services, and clientele will outstrip the staff allocation and budgetary resources necessary for the organization to furnish qualitative services in the future.

- ◆ The organization provides a comprehensive array of programs and services.
- ◆ Center-based instructional programs and services include Compensatory Skills, Specific Skills, Summer Adventure, and Life Experiences Advance People (LEAP) Program.
- ◆ The organization operates the comprehensive Vision Resource Center, an all-purpose, multi-functional resource asset that serves the organization's professional staff, field-based outreach staff, public school district and non-public school staffs, special education cooperative staff, families, collaborative service-providing organizations, and blind and vision impaired clients/students.
- ◆ The organization operates a comprehensive Technology Center to provide assistance and information to those who are visually impaired and who wish to use technology to meet their needs at school, work, or home.
- ◆ The organization's mission, focuses, programs, and services do not

duplicate those of other organizations in the State of North Dakota and are not matched in kind or quality by any other State agency, organization, or entity, either private or public.

- ◆ The organization's facility is comprised of 44,946 square feet of teaching/learning, support, office, residence, and rental/lease spaces.
- ◆ The organization's facility was constructed in 1959 and received subsequent additions in 1975 and 1977.
- ◆ The organization leases/rents building space to the Grand Forks School District, University of North Dakota, and the North Dakota University System, Higher Education Computer Network, Student Information System. Substantial revenue is generated by the organization through rental of its excess teaching/learning, support, and office spaces to the aforementioned entities.
- ◆ The organization's lease/rental rate is \$8.50/square foot, effective July 1, 2003.
- ◆ The organization is a highly collaborative educational organization.
- ◆ The organization extensively markets its programs and services to North Dakota organizations which provide service to blind and vision-impaired students/clients throughout the State of North Dakota.

- ◆ The organization has developed (and maintains) a comprehensive strategic plan, including objectives and strategies.
- ◆ The organization has instituted continuous self-improvement processes and in April, 2002 underwent an extensive (and successful) accreditation process.
- ◆ The organization's staff rates the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind as a highly effective and qualitative organization.
- ◆ The State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and his executive level administrative staff are highly supportive of the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, her staff, and the organization's programs and services. The State Superintendent and his executive level staff meet with the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind on a quarterly basis, formally, and on numerous other occasions, informally, to discuss organizational progress, new organizational initiatives, organizational improvement efforts, legislative initiatives, and other matters of mutual interest to the Department and School.

3.2 Alternatives

The North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind is an effective, efficient, and cost/effective organization. Its conversion from a center-based to an outreach-based/center-based (combination) model in the mid-1990's was a brilliant decision, largely responsible for increasing the school's cost/effectiveness and its staggering increase in clients (unduplicated or duplicated) served. The organization is **perfectly suited to its current market niche**.

It is the Project Consultant's assessment, however, that the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's growth in clientele (both individuals and organizations requiring services) will outstrip the capabilities of the staff to continue to provide quality programs and services and, likely, will result in greater staff turnover and emerging morale issues in the future. If this scenario were to unfold, the State of North Dakota – through under-funding and under-staffing the organization – will have weakened a superlative organization of its own making. That would be tragic.

3.3 Recommendations

The Project Consultant tenders the following recommendations to the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the Superintendent of the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind:

- ◆ That increased funding be sought from the State of North Dakota Legislature to expand staffing, programs, and services to serve an increasing number of blind and visually impaired clients and related service-providing organizations.
- ◆ That the organization allocate additional time and resources for the entire staff (center-based and outreach-based) to engage in strategic and curricular planning.
- ◆ That the organization expand its marketing endeavors to increase general awareness of the quality programs and services delivered by the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind.
- ◆ That the organization increase its exploration, adoption, and generalized usage of technology as a vehicle for enhancing learning and improving the quality of life of the blind and visually impaired.
- ◆ That the organization expand the breadth and scope of its efforts to further refine evaluations of its programs and services and, hence, increase organizational quality.

ND Vision Services School for the Blind

Services Provided

2001-2003
Biennium

2003-2005
Biennium

7/1/05-12/31/06
18 Months

Clients Served (Unduplicated):

Infants/Students

Adults

Total

403

174

577

328

189

517

274

134

408

Vision Resource Center:

Items Circulated

Talking Book Machines (quarterly)

"Reaching Out" Newsletter (circulated quarterly)

APH Federal Registry

Store Sales

Braille Access Center (pages)

26,867

2,056

1,300

260

448

23,150

31,141

1,932

1,450

263

426

25,220

24,243

1,748

1,425

244

395

22,700

Short-term Center Based Programs (Attendees):

Specific Skills

Compensatory Skills

Adult Week

Summer Camps

71

36

24

60

45

64

20

56

45

41

29

23

Evaluations, Consultations and Instructions (Duplicated):

Consultations

Evaluations

Instruction

3,171

442

4,529

1,979

305

4,688

1,031

242

4,537

In-Service Training

669

826



Region 6

Region 6

Region 7

Region 7

Region 8

Region 8

Relocated/Out of State

Relocated/Out of State

Total Infants/Students Served: 274

Total Adults Served: 134

Total Persons Served: 408

NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE REPORT

TO

DR. WAYNE G. SANSTEAD

STATE SUPERINTENDENT

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

IRISH LINNERTZ

FACILITATOR

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DR. ROGER B. WORNER

PROJECT CONSULTANT

ROGER WORNER ASSOCIATES

July, 2004

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CHAPTER 1

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.0 Purpose of the Study

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, and head of all state systems of P-K-12 public education, commissioned the formation of a Blue Ribbon Task Force to study the status of the North Dakota School for the Deaf and tender advisory recommendations to the State Superintendent for further consideration, deliberation, and action. This study document was prepared to provide an historical background of the two studies which were conducted prior to and led to the formation of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, to furnish an overview of the methodological process employed by the Blue Ribbon Task Force to study the North Dakota School for the Deaf and deliberate advisory recommendations, and, finally, to detail and transmit final advisory recommendations to the State Superintendent.

State Superintendent Sanstead stated the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Task Force study was as follows:

“Achieve consensus from the deaf community, Devils Lake Community, and the NDSD (North Dakota School for the Deaf) staff on how to provide

legislatively or constitutionally mandated services in a cost effective manner.

Identify expanded services and propose legislation.”

1.1 Need for the Study

School districts and other school organizations in the State of North Dakota have experienced weakening/declining student enrollment in recent years, paralleling the general population decline throughout the State. The North Dakota School for the Deaf's student enrollment trends have plummeted, as well, in recent years due to general population decline, improved prenatal care, retention of deaf and hard of hearing youngsters in their home communities/school districts, technological advancements, and, perhaps, indeed, increased availability of outreach services to schools and families of deaf and hard of hearing children, offered by North Dakota School for the Deaf staff members.

Accompanying the loss of critical student mass, the North Dakota School for the Deaf has realized increasing cost/student expenditures in recent years, a factor which could – over time – threaten the organization's long-term viability and/or its capability to provide both residential and outreach services to a unique population of North Dakota's students.

Given the North Dakota School for the Deaf's changing demographics and cost/effectiveness, the primary need for and value of the Blue Ribbon Task Force was to undertake an examination of alternatives, options, and opportunities in order to (a) expand the breadth and scope of services to North Dakota's deaf and hard of hearing population and (b) in so doing, increase the organization's level of cost/effectiveness. Both approaches are focused on maintaining the long-term viability of the North Dakota School for the Deaf and providing increasingly higher quality and expanded programs and services to a broader audience of deaf and hard of hearing pre-school, school-aged, and adult populations.

1.2 Leadership, Facilitation, and Consultation

Mr. Rocklyn Cofer, Superintendent of the North Dakota School for the Deaf, located in Devils Lake, North Dakota, served as the lead representative of the North Dakota School for the Deaf on the Blue Ribbon Task Force and was the responsible party for creating the membership of and issuing invitations to representatives of the following organizations to serve on the Task Force: City of Devils Lake, North Dakota State Legislature, Ramsey County, Devils Lake School District, Lake Region State College, Lake Region Special Education Unit, North Dakota School for the Deaf, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Lake Area Career and Technology Center, North Dakota School for the

Blind/Vision Services, and numerous other public governmental, profit, and non-profit organizations.

Irish Linnertz, Director of Human Resources, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck, North Dakota, served as State Superintendent Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead's lead representative to and Facilitator of the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Dr. Roger Worner, President of Roger Worner Associates, Inc., Sartell, Minnesota, an educational systems' consulting firm, served as Project Consultant to the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

1.3 Membership of the Blue Ribbon Task Force

The North Dakota State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, requested that Mr. Rocklyn Cofer, Superintendent of the North Dakota School for the Deaf, solicit interest in and, subsequently, appoint members to the North Dakota School for the Deaf's Blue Ribbon Task Force. Dr. Sanstead requested that Task Force members be advocates for and/or stakeholders in the provision of quality programs and services for North Dakota's deaf and hard of hearing population.

Superintendent Cofer requested the following individuals serve as members of the North Dakota School for the Deaf Blue Ribbon Task Force.

- Senator Jack Traynor, District 15
- Representative Gene Nicholas, District 15
- Representative Dennis Johnson, District 15
- Dr. Wayne Sanstead, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Dr. Richard Kunkel, President, N.D. Board of Higher Education
- Dr. Sharon Etemad, President, Lake Region State College
- Mayor Fred Bott, Devils Lake City Commission
- Joe Belford, Ramsey County Commission
- Steve Swiontek, Superintendent, Devils Lake Public Schools
- Connie Hovendick, Director, Lake Region Special Education Unit
- Nancy Skorheim, Regional Coordinator, D.P.I. Special Education and Liaison for N.D. School for the Deaf
- Denise Wolf, Director, Lake Area Career and Technology Center
- Nancy Lundon, Regional Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Mark Hill, Community Service Specialist, CSD of North Dakota, and, Member of the Board of Directors for the N.D. Association for the Deaf
- Terry Wallace, Director, Devils Lake Park Board
- Greg Otis, Executive Director of Devils Lake Area Chamber of Commerce

- Mike Beck, Program Administrator of Vision and Deaf Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Julius Saylor, NDSD Parent, President of Devils Lake Outdoor Club for the Deaf, Board of Directors for the N.D. Friends of Deaf Children Foundation
- Carmen Suminski, Superintendent, N.D. Vision Services/School for the Blind
- Rocklyn Cofer, Superintendent, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Eric Lysne, Business Manager, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Carol Lybeck, Coordinator, Outreach/Parent Infant Program, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Dwight Keck, Director of Facilities, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Barbara Duncan, Coordinator of Administrative Services, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Scott Craven, Director of Student Life, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Charles Hawkins, Director of Food Service/Housekeeping, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Lilia Bakken, Coordinator of Communications Services and N.C.A. Steering Committee Co-Chair, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Darlene Schoenfish, Director of Health Services, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Kerry Olson-Rysavy, Technology Coordinator, N.D. School for the Deaf

- Colleen Sanford, Coordinator, N.D. Deafblind Services Project
- Mary Rutten, Instructor and N.C.A. Co-Chair, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Diane Rice, Instructor and Counselor, N.D. School for the Deaf
- Duane Knutson, NDSD Parent, Member of the Board of Directors of the N.D. Association for the Deaf, and NDSD Staff
- Eileen Gray, Coordinator, Sign Language Interpreter Program, Lake Region State College

1.4 Meetings of the Task Force

The North Dakota School for the Deaf Blue Ribbon Task Force met in formal session on the following four occasions:

- December 3, 2003
- January 20, 2004
- March 16, 2004
- May 6, 2004

1.5

Methodology of the Study

The Blue Ribbon Task Force study employed a methodological procedure which incorporated the following components:

- Creation of the Blue Ribbon Task Force.
- Presentation of the Task Force mission and goals.
- Presentation of the Task Force study process.
- Presentation of two studies of the North Dakota School for the Deaf, prepared by Project Consultant Roger Worner.
- Presentation by the North Dakota School for the Deaf staff on the status of the organization.
- Presentation by the North Dakota School for the Deaf staff on the status of the organization's strategic plan and updates to that strategic plan.
- Large group dialogue and discussion.

- Small group discussion and dialogue.
- Identification of alternatives to strengthen the North Dakota School for the Deaf's status/condition, including revenue generation, budgetary reduction, collaboration/cooperation, public relations/marketing, expansion of programs/ services, and legislative changes.
- Identification of priorities among alternatives.
- Preparation of a draft Blue Ribbon Task Force report for consideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Review of the Blue Ribbon Task Force report.
- Finalization of the Blue Ribbon Task Force final report for submission to and consideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

At the onset of the Blue Ribbon Task Force study, the following assumptions prevailed in conversations with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction:

- The Blue Ribbon Task Force study and process were initiated to identify priority alternatives which would enhance the cost/effectiveness and long-term viability of the North Dakota School for the Deaf.
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force study and process were **not** intended to entertain the notion of closing or otherwise disbanding the North Dakota School for the Deaf.
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force study and process were intended to involve a broad base of stakeholder organizations that were affiliated with and committed to serving North Dakota's deaf and hard of hearing population.
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force study and process were expected to furnish the North Dakota State Superintendent of Public Instruction with advisory recommendations which – with or without modification – would lead to the formulation of plans of action to enhance the cost/effectiveness and ensure the long-term viability of the North Dakota School for the Deaf and, further, lead to the formulation of future legislation for consideration by the North Dakota State Legislature.

The final study report of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's Blue Ribbon Task Force was designed in a three chapter format. Chapter 1 was planned to specify the purpose of the study; need for the study; leadership, facilitation, and consultation; methodology of the study; membership of the Blue Ribbon Task Force; meeting dates; assumptions of the study; and final report design.

Chapter 2 of the study detailed the status of the North Dakota School for the Deaf over a multi-year time frame as reported by an independent third party neutral – appointed by North Dakota State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Wayne Sanstead – Dr. Roger B. Worner, Project Consultant, Roger Worner Associates, Sartell, Minnesota. Select findings, conclusions, and recommendations (one of which was the formation of a Blue Ribbon Task Force) – contained in two studies of the North Dakota School for the Deaf – were to be reported as a backdrop for the study and process work undertaken by the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Chapter 3 was intended to divulge Blue Ribbon Task Force alternatives, priorities, and recommendations for consideration by the North Dakota State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Wayne Sanstead.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS STUDIES

2.0 Commissioned Studies

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, commissioned two studies of the North Dakota School for the Deaf over a five year span of time, including the July, 1998 **Organizational Status Study** and the May, 2003 **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**.

The purpose of the **Organizational Status Study** "was to create a profile of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's status in order to enhance the organization's effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness in the delivery of programs and services to the State's deaf and hard of hearing student population." The purpose of the **Organizational Status Follow-up Study** "was to create a 2002-03 status profile of the North Dakota School for the Deaf and compare it to a 1997-98 status profile reported in the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's **Organizational Status Study**."

In both 1997-98 and 2002-03, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction engaged the consultative services of Dr. Roger B. Worner, President, Roger Worner Associates, Inc., Sartell, Minnesota to serve as the Project Consultant

and **independent third party neutral** in conducting the status studies of the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

The need for the original North Dakota School for the Deaf **Organizational Status Study** was precipitated by a number of factors which occurred in the 1997-98 organizational year and/or were to emerge in the organization's near future. Clearly, the primary factors driving the need for the study included (a) the departure of the North Dakota School for the Deaf Superintendent of Schools; (b) the retirement of the North Dakota School for the Deaf Director of Administrative Services; (c) graduation of seven North Dakota School for the Deaf students in the class of 1998; (d) projected stable or declining student enrollment at the North Dakota School for the Deaf; (e) a pervasive focus – nationally and at the state level – to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness of public organizations and the programs and services they dispense; (f) a continued commitment by the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction to provide quality oversight of and accountability for all programs and services operated under the auspices of the Department; and (g) other factors.

The primary needs for conducting the North Dakota School for the Deaf's **Organizational Status Follow-up Study** included – among others – the following: (a) belief there was merit in 2002-03 in ascertaining the degree to

which status conditions in the North Dakota School for the Deaf had changed over the previous five years and, if so, determining whether or not those changes would appear to strengthen or jeopardize the long-term viability of the organization; (b) realization that the organization's student enrollment had continued to decline; (c) realization that this organization's cost/student had continued to increase; (d) realization that the State's general and student population had continued to decline in the past and that the trend was projected to continue in the future; (e) loss of North Dakota School for the Deaf personnel through retirement; (f) a pervasive, continuing focus at the national and state level to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and cost/effectiveness of public organizations and the programs and services they dispense; (g) continued commitment by the State Superintendent to provide quality oversight and accountability for all programs and services operated under the auspices of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction; and (h) other needs/factors.

2.1 Findings of the Organizational Status Studies

Both the North Dakota School for the Deaf's July, 1998 **Organizational Status Study**, and the May, 2003 **Organizational Status Follow-up Study** examined data, documents, conditions, and physical assets of the organization over a multi-year timeframe in formulating study findings, conclusions, alternatives, and recommendations.

The primary focal points for the studies – resulting in the delineation of findings – were the organization's enrollment and enrollment trends; finances; staffing; programs and services; and facilities. To be sure, the status of many other organizational attributes were examined by the Project Consultant in both 1997-98 and 2002-03, but – for the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Task Force Report – the review of findings in the earlier studies has been intentionally condensed. Thus, for additional information, the casual reader may wish to examine the full texts of both the **Organizational Status Study** and **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**.

2.2 Findings: Enrollment

Both the 1997-98 and 2002-03 studies of the North Dakota School for the Deaf illustrate the organization enrolled a small critical mass of K-12 students when

compared to conventional North Dakota public school districts. The school's student enrollment in 1997-98 was 49, and that figure had declined in 2002-03 to 33.

Table 1 divulges the North Dakota School for the Deaf's enrollment by grade level for 1997-98 and 2002-03. Table data yield that, in 1997-98, 5 students were enrolled in P-K and K, 13 students were enrolled in grades 1-5, 14 students were enrolled in grades 6-8, and 17 students were enrolled in grades 9-12. By 2002-03, 2 students were enrolled in P-K and K, 9 students were enrolled in grades 1-5, 8 students were enrolled in grades 6-8, and 14 students were enrolled in grades 9-12.

The Project Consultant concluded that the North Dakota School for the Deaf had experienced significant enrollment decline over the five year span of time (between the two organizational studies) from 1997-98 to 2002-03. Not only had the North Dakota School for the Deaf's enrollment declined in total, but that decline had proven to be pervasive at all organizational levels (P-K and K; elementary; junior high school; and senior high school).

**TABLE 1
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL
1997-98/2002-03**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>1997-98</u>	<u>2002-03</u>	<u>Change</u>
P-K	4	1	-3
K	1	1	0
Elementary (1-5)	13	9	-4
6	5	2	-3
7	4	5	+1
8	5	1	-4
9	1	3	+2
10	4	5	+1
11	5	1	-4
12	7	5	-2
Total	49	33	-16

2.3 Findings: Enrollment Trends

Over the past quarter century, the State of North Dakota's population demographics have been in decline. To be sure, that negative trend has similarly impacted K-12 student enrollment in virtually all (with a few exceptions) public school districts in North Dakota. Both organizational status studies confirmed that the North Dakota School for the Deaf's student demographic trends paralleled those of the State of North Dakota (general population) and North Dakota public

school districts (K-12 students). Unfortunately, with an initial small critical mass of students, a trend of declining student demographics poses, potentially, a much greater short-term and long-term threat to the organizational viability of the North Dakota School for the Deaf than other, larger critical student mass, educational organizations in the State.

Detailed below in Table 2 are the actual student enrollment changes in the North Dakota School for the Deaf from 1987-88 (base year) through 2002-03 as documented in the organization's fall enrollment reports. The table data reveal enrollment changes over a 15 year time span and assist the reader in projecting changes that have or have not occurred in funding, staffing, and program and service delivery in the school during that 15 year period of time.

The North Dakota School for the Deaf's average daily membership decreased from 47 students in 1987-88 to 33 students in 2002-03, a drop of -14 students or -29.8%, according to information provided in the 2002-03 **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**. The low enrollment for the organization between 1987-88 and 2002-03 was in 2002-03 when 33 students were enrolled in the organization's programs. The high enrollment mark for the organization during the same 15 year span of time was in 1997-98 when 49 students were enrolled.

Between 1987-88 and 2002-03, the North Dakota School for the Deaf's student enrollment declined on 8 occasions, increased on 4 occasions, and remained stable on 3 occasions.

It is to be noted in Table 2, that the North Dakota School for the Deaf experienced 5 consecutive years of enrollment decline. (Since completion of the 2002-03 **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**, the North Dakota School for the Deaf experienced a sixth consecutive year of enrollment decline in 2003-04. In that year, the school enrolled 30 students.)

The Project Consultant classified the North Dakota School for the Deaf's student demographic trend as threatening to the organization's long-term viability.

TABLE 2 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF ACTAL PAST ENROLLMENT 1997-98/2002-03								
	<u>87-88</u>	<u>88-89</u>	<u>89-90</u>	<u>90-91</u>	<u>91-92</u>	<u>92-93</u>	<u>93-94</u>	<u>94-95</u>
K-12	47	43	43	38	42	42	44	45
	<u>95-96</u>	<u>96-97</u>	<u>97-98</u>	<u>98-99</u>	<u>99-00</u>	<u>00-01</u>	<u>01-02</u>	<u>02-03</u>
K-12	43	43	49	44	41	37	35	33

Table 3 presents the North Dakota School for the Deaf's projected enrollment for the five year span of time from 2002-03 through 2007-08. Assuming the enrollment projections prove to be accurate, the North Dakota School for the Deaf could anticipate five years of continuous enrollment decline from 2002-03 (33) to 2007-08 (26), yielding a net loss of -7 students or -22.2%. In fact, enrollment projections for the 2003-04 school year proved to be optimistic (actual enrollment of 30 students rather than projected enrollment of 32 students), suggesting an even greater erosion of the organization's on-site critical student mass.

The Project Consultant viewed the declining student demographic trend as detrimental to the long-term viability of the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

TABLE 3 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 2002-03/2007-08						
	<u>02-03</u>	<u>03-04</u>	<u>04-05</u>	<u>05-06</u>	<u>06-07</u>	<u>07-08</u>
Students	33	32	31	29	28	26

The North Dakota School for the Deaf's student enrollment trends between 1987-88 and 2007-08 are reported in Table 4. Over the 20 year span of time, table

data yield that the organization's student enrollment – actual and projected – were anticipated to decrease by -21 students or -44.7% from the base enrollment year (1987-88) figure of 47 students. (In fact, at the conclusion of the 2003-04 school year, the North Dakota School for the Deaf had lost -17 or -36.2% over the 16 year span of time from 1987-88 through 2003-04.)

In the Project Consultant's 2002-03 **Organizational Analysis Follow-up Study**, it was concluded that "there is substantial reason for the Project Consultant to conclude that the enrollment and cost/effectiveness of the North Dakota School for the Deaf will continue to decline in the future **unless** measures are conceived and implemented to reverse current trends."

TABLE 4 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF ENROLLMENT CHANGES 1987-88/2007-08			
	<u>1987-88/2003-04</u>	<u>2003-04/2007-08</u>	<u>Total</u>
Student Change	-15	-6	-21
% Change	-31.9%	-18.7%	-44.7%

The Project Consultant wishes to acknowledge that, during the course of conducting the North Dakota School for the Deaf's two organizational status studies in 1997-98 and 2002-03, data were gathered and analyzed on the

school's Outreach/Parent Infant Program. In fact, the Project Consultant commended the quality of the organization's outreach component and recommended expansion of this facet of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's program and service focus. Conversely, the Project Consultant does not share the opinion of select staff members that individual contacts made by North Dakota School for the Deaf staff through the Outreach/Parent Infant Program component should be treated/counted in a manner even remotely similar to residential students served in/at the organization's "flagship" program in Devils Lake. Clearly, an overwhelming percentage of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's administrative time, staffing, facilities, and expenditures are dedicated to delivery of programs and services to students residing in Devils Lake and receiving formal schooling at the North Dakota School for the Deaf. If costs associated with the Outreach/Parent Infant Program were disaggregated from the North Dakota School for the Deaf's general fund budget, not a single conclusion, alternative, or recommendation tendered in either the **Organizational Status Study** or **Organizational Status Follow-up Study** would have been (or would be) altered from their original form.

The Project Consultant believed (and continues to believe) that expansion and diversification of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's Outreach/Parent Infant Program may well be one (of a few) of the most significant vehicles for expanding program and service delivery for deaf and hard of hearing youngsters and adults

in the State of North Dakota, improving the organization's cost/effectiveness and insuring the organization's short-term and long-term viability.

2.4 Findings: Finances

The North Dakota School for the Deaf's organizational status studies revealed – at minimum – two organizational finance trends: (a) the organization's expenditure budgets have continued to increase on a biennial basis and (b) the organization's cost/student continues to increase on either an annual or biennial basis.

**TABLE 5
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BIENNIAL (ADJUSTED) EXPENDITURE BUDGETS
1991-93/2001-03**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget Amount</u>	<u>\$ Change from Previous Biennium</u>	<u>% Change from Previous Biennium</u>
1991-93	\$4,384,384	N/A	N/A
1993-95	\$4,423,560	+\$39,176	.9%
1995-97	\$4,715,022	+\$291,462	6.6%
1997-99	\$5,240,014	+\$524,992	11.1%
1999-01	\$5,585,035	+\$345,021	6.6%
2001-03	\$6,174,887	+\$589,852	10.6%
Change	+\$1,790,503	N/A	N/A
% Change	40.8%		

Table 5 delineates that, from the 1991-93 biennium (base), the North Dakota School for the Deaf received a biennial appropriation of \$4,384,384. By 2001-03, the biennial expenditure budget for the North Dakota School for the Deaf was \$6,174,887, a 10 year (5 biennia) increase of +\$1,790,503 or +40.8%. While the 10 year expenditure budget increase of +40.8% was not in itself significant (4.1% average annual increase in expenditures), the fact that the North Dakota School for the Deaf realized a loss of -11 students or -25% of its resident student population between 1993-94 (44 students) and 2002-03 (33 students) compounded the impact of rising organizational expenditures.

Presented in Table 6 are biennial expenditure budgets, student enrollments, and cost/ student for the North Dakota School for the Deaf for the six biennia from 1991-93 (base) through 2001-03. Table data depict that the North Dakota School for the Deaf's biennial budget increased by +\$1,790,503 or +40.8% between 1991-93 and 2001-03. During that time span, the organization's student enrollment decreased from 84 (1991-93 **two** year figure) to 68 (2001-03 **two** year figure), a net decline of -16 students or -19.0%.

Cost/student during the 1991-93 biennium was \$52,195/student **each year**. That figure remained comparatively constant through 1997-99 (\$55,745/student **each**

year) but, with budgetary inflation and erosion of student enrollment, the 1999-01 cost/ student escalated by +28.4% (from the 1997-99 figure) to \$71,603/student **each year**. In 2001-03, the cost/student – further impacted by budgetary inflation and student enrollment decline – was elevated by an additional +26.8% to \$90,807/student **each year**.

Over the 10 year span of time from 1991-93 (base) through 2001-03, the North Dakota School for the Deaf's cost/student increased by +\$38,612/student or +74.0% (from \$52,195/student **each year** to \$90,870/student **each year**).

Based on the Project Consultant's assessment that the North Dakota School for the Deaf's expenditure budget continued to increase between the 1991-93 (base) and 2001-03 biennia while the organization's cost/student increased +\$38,612/student or +74.0% (to \$90,807/student **each year**), it was projected the organization's cost/ ineffectiveness would continue to worsen in the future **unless drastic, countervailing measures were instituted**. (Those countervailing measures were proposed to be identified by the administration and staff of the North Dakota School for the Deaf and a Blue Ribbon Task Force, appointed by Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.)

TABLE 6
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
COST/STUDENT (BIENNIUM)
1991-93/2001-03

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget Amount</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Cost/Student</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
1991-93	\$4,384,384	84	\$52,195	N/A
1993-95	\$4,423,560	89	\$49,703	-4.8%
1995-97	\$4,715,022	86	\$54,826	+10.3%
1997-99	\$5,240,014	94	\$55,745	+1.7%
1999-01	\$5,585,035	78	\$71,603	+28.4%
2001-03	\$6,174,887	68	\$90,807	+26.8%
Change	\$1,790,503	-16	\$38,612	N/A
% Change	+40.8%	-19.0%	+74.0%	N/A

2.5 Findings: Staffing

Between the 1997-98 and 2002-03 organizational status studies, the staff of the North Dakota School for the Deaf has changed only minimally. As reported in the **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**, 62 full-time and 9 part-time staff members were employed in 2002-03, including the following: "Superintendent (1); administrative support (2); technology (1); educational (24); resident living (dormitories) (10); health service (2); outreach/PIP (4); business administration (3); food service/housekeeping (9); buildings/grounds (4); and blind/deaf project (2)."

**TABLE 7
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
STAFF
2002-03**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-time</u>
Superintendent	1	0
Administrative Support	2	0
Technology	1	0
Educational	24	3
Resident Living	10	6
Health Service	2	0
Outreach/PIP	4	0
Business Administration	3	0
Food Service/Housekeeping	9	0
Buildings/Grounds	4	0
Blind/Deaf Project	2	0
Total	62	9

Over the five year span of time between the two organizational status studies, the North Dakota School for the Deaf continued to experience difficulty in filling select, additional, State-allocated full-time equivalent staff members. Some of the functions (unfilled positions) were secured through limited purchase of contract

services and/or relationships with local collaborating organizations (e.g. Devils Lake Public Schools).

The Project Consultant concluded in both of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's organizational status studies that measures would need to be instituted in the future to cost economize with staff reductions **through attrition** to improve organizational cost/effectiveness.

2.6 Findings: Facilities

The North Dakota School for the Deaf maintains several facilities for the delivery of instructional programs and services, housing students, offering recreational activities, dispensing food service, and providing offices for school personnel (administrative, teaching, and support), including the following: school; gymnasium; resource room; activities building; vocational building; kitchen area; dormitories; apartment house; Superintendent's house; and administrative and staff offices. These facets of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's facility holdings amount to 139,812 square feet or 4,236.7 square feet/student. (The aforementioned figure does not include square footage allocated to the school's infirmary, laundry, tunnels, power house, garages, and fields.)

In 1997-98, the North Dakota School for the Deaf provided 2,975.0 square feet/student, a figure that was substantially smaller than the 4,236.7 square feet/student allocation in 2002-03 – a direct resultant of continuing student enrollment decline in the school.

The Project Consultant noted that, in 1997-98 the second floor of the vocational building was being leased to the Christian Academy, a Devils Lake-based private school. By 2002-03, however, the private school had vacated the school's space. Only small quantities of the school's facilities were being leased or otherwise used on a full-time basis by any external entities at the conclusion of the 2002-03 school year.

Revenue was generated by the North Dakota School for the Deaf for rental of the school's apartment house to two staff members (\$220/month/staff member); the Superintendent's house (\$600/month, including utilities); and basement office space to a State agency (Protection and Adequacy) (\$150/month) during the 2002-03 school year.

The Project Consultant concluded that, with continuing declining enrollment, the school's facility inefficiencies – despite the best staff efforts – would continue to spiral cost/ineffectively higher with the passage of time **unless** mechanisms were instituted to market space to external agencies. (Recently, the school's

administration appears to have identified prospective lessees which will occupy substantial facility square footage and, as well, use the school's food service program, resulting in excellent new sources of revenue for the organization and increased organizational cost/effectiveness).

**TABLE 8
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
FACILITIES/SQUARE FOOTAGE
2002-03**

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Square Footage</u>
School	20,013
Gymnasium	14,580
Resource Room	6,011
Activities Building	8,642
Vocational Building	19,485
Kitchen Area	10,158
Middle School Dormitory	20,058
Boys' Dormitory	8,681
Apartment House	4,343
Superintendent House	2,425
Administration	25,416
Infirmery, Laundry, Tunnels, Power House, Garages, Fields	N/I*
Total	139,812
* N/I = Not included	
* Essentials space/student = $139,812/33 = 4,236.7$ square feet/student	

Detailed above in Table 8 is the North Dakota School for the Deaf's facilities/square footage for the 2002-03 (and 2003-04) school years as reported in the **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**.

2.7 Findings: Programs and Services

Both of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's organizational status studies examined in considerable detail the status/condition of organizational programs and services. The quality of organizational programs and services is above reproach.

The Project Consultant found that the North Dakota School for the Deaf maintained outstanding class/course section sizes, well-defined curricula, and outstanding breadth and scope of secondary school course offerings (in collaboration with the Devils Lake Public Schools and the Lake Area Career and Technology Center), quality resource personnel (e.g. interpreter, health service, and the like), safe/secure residences, clean physical facilities, attractive grounds, quality food service, and, with a high degree of consistency, a warm, nurturing environment. The Project Consultant did not observe a single facet of the North Dakota School for the Deaf operation (other than, perhaps, select aging facilities)

that would not be the envy of any public school district in the State of North Dakota.

The North Dakota School for the Deaf's programs and services (and all other organizational support components) have consistently been focused on service to the client/child/student. From the school's Superintendent of Schools to part-time personnel, a quality experience for the school's youngsters is "job one."

The Project Consultant believes the administration and staff of the North Dakota School for the Deaf must not allow itself to become "super sensitized" to maintaining a constant (sized) cadre of teaching staff as student enrollment continues to decline or stabilize. In fact, the school's teaching/learning staff members have virtually escaped reduction-in-force over a time span in which substantial student enrollment has occurred, resulting in infinitesimally small pupil/staff ratios, while other service/support areas of the organization have experienced (and will continue to experience) personnel reductions. The Project Consultant cautions that a "hands-off" attitude in the reduction of teaching/learning staff members can ultimately be detrimental to the organization's morale and, additionally, provide minimal to no additional (academic/achievement) gains in the classroom. In this regard, the Project Consultant recommends the administration and staff of the North Dakota School

for the Deaf investigate alternative models and configurations for staffing in the classroom environment.

2.8 Findings: Recommendations

The Project Consultant tendered 11 recommendations in the North Dakota School for the Deaf **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**. Those recommendations treated the following subjects:

Recommendation 1: That the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction commission a Blue Ribbon Task Force... to examine the contents of the **Organizational Status Follow-up Study** and prepare recommendations on methodologies for increasing the cost/effectiveness of the North Dakota School for the Deaf...

Recommendation 2: That the Blue Ribbon Task Force identify means and methodologies for increasing the level of collaboration and cooperation...

Recommendation 3: That the Blue Ribbon Task Force and North Dakota School for the Deaf examine means and methodologies for expanding the outreach/parent-infant program...

Recommendation 4: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf institute measures to reduce staff **through attrition.**

Recommendation 5: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf explore collaboration and cooperation ventures with other public entities to reduce expenditures for administration; buildings and grounds; maintenance; food service; resident living; and instructional program and service delivery.

Recommendation 6: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf reduce its instructional staff **through attrition.**

Recommendation 7: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf restructure its administrative staff...

Recommendation 8: That the student life dormitories be consolidated to achieve increased cost/effectiveness.

Recommendation 9: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf institute measures to lease excess facilities...

Recommendation 10: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf encourage expanded usage by school students of the programs and services available at and offered by the Devils Lake Public Schools and Lake Region State College.

Recommendation 11: That the North Dakota School for the Deaf expand staff development and training opportunities...

CHAPTER 3

ALTERNATIVES, PRIORITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.0 Blue Ribbon Task Force Process

Irish Linnertz, Director of Human Resources, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, was appointed by State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, as the Facilitator of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's Blue Ribbon Task Force process and study.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force met on four occasions: December 3, 2003; January 20, 2004; March 16, 2004; and May 6, 2004.

Major methodological components of the Blue Ribbon Task Force included the following: presentation of the Task Force mission and goals; presentation of the Task Force study process; presentation of two studies of the North Dakota School for the Deaf, prepared by Project Consultant Dr. Roger Worner; presentation by the North Dakota School for the Deaf staff on the status of the organization; presentation by the North Dakota School for the Deaf staff on the status of the organization's strategic plan and updates to that strategic plan; large group dialogue and discussion; small group discussion and dialogue; identification of alternatives to strengthen the North Dakota School for the Deaf's

status/condition; identification of priorities among alternatives; development of advisory recommendations for consideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction; and preparation of a draft Blue Ribbon Task Force report for consideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

3.1 Blue Ribbon Task Force Alternatives

Following considerable discussion and deliberation in both large group and small group settings, the members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force identified four preferred alternatives for achieving the stated purpose of the Blue Ribbon Task Force process and study:

“Achieve consensus from the deaf community, Devils Lake community, and the NDSD (North Dakota School for the Deaf) staff on how to provide legislatively or constitutionally mandated services in a cost/effective manner.

Identify expanded services and propose legislation.”

The North Dakota School for the Deaf Blue Ribbon Task Force is four preferred alternatives were as follows:

- **Revenue generation**
- **Expenditure reduction**
- **Collaboration**
- **Outreach/marketing**

Revenue generation or revenue enhancement was viewed by the Blue Ribbon Task Force as a quality vehicle (alternative) for increasing the North Dakota School for the Deaf's cost/effectiveness through capitalizing on existing organizational assets (personnel, training, facilities, services, and the like). It was envisioned that, if the North Dakota School for the Deaf were to sell reasonable quantities of organizational assets to other organizations – without compromising the primary mission and/or service levels of the North Dakota School for the Deaf – organizational revenues could be substantially enhanced while incurring minimal additional expenditures. New revenue to the organization could, in turn, be directed toward instituting new or expanded ventures and/or offsetting future revenue losses that may occur if State of North Dakota funding were to diminish.

Examples of revenue generation included – among others – marketing classroom, support, and office space and food service to the Devils Lake Head

Start and Early Head Start Programs; joint programming with Lake Region State College; joint programming with Devils Lake High School; direct service providing; marketing closed caption services; offering video conferencing; offering swimming pool access; offering interpreter service; and establishing an abundance of other potential fee for service ventures.

Expenditure reduction was viewed by the Blue Ribbon Task Force, as well, as a sound alternative for increasing the North Dakota School for the Deaf's cost/effectiveness. A more conventional but, nonetheless, effective mechanism for achieving revenue/expenditure balance during a time period when student enrollment decline appears certain, the Blue Ribbon Task Force – aided particularly by insights offered by the North Dakota School for the Deaf's administration and staff – identified a number of cost reduction/saving vehicles which could likely be implemented over a multi-year timeframe without either compromising the organization's mission or weakening programs and services delivered to students.

Expenditure reduction suggestions included general staff reduction **through attrition** or retirement incentives/buyouts; reducing business office staff/services; reducing select art, custodial, houseparent; and other select staff; reducing psychological services; reducing library services; reducing usage of the pool.

It is to be emphasized that the Blue Ribbon Task Force and North Dakota School for the Deaf staff envisioned that, if current, vacant, organizational positions were to be eliminated, those positions would, in fact, be reclassified to provide other organizational functions, programs, and/or services which, in turn, could/would generate "new" organizational revenue.

Collaboration was identified by the Blue Ribbon Task Force as an alternative which would most likely result in short-term revenue generation and, potentially, foster new and expanded relationships which, long-term, would result in "spin-off endeavors" with further revenue generation and/or expenditure reduction possibilities.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force envisioned "high prospect" collaborative relationships with the Devils Lake Head Start and Early Head Start Programs; Devils Lake Public Schools; Lake Area Career and Technology Center; Lake Region State College; and combinations of the aforementioned organizations.

Outreach/marketing was viewed by the Blue Ribbon Task Force as an alternative which would/could increase organizational cost/effectiveness through organizational mission expansion, resulting in a substantially increased incidence of clients (students and adults) served. While the alternative does not necessarily result in substantially increased revenue or reduced expenditures, it would

presumably modify (lower) the organization's expenditures/client or cost/student through increasing clients served (while, simultaneously, holding expenditures constant). Indeed the outreach/marketing methodology – if successful – would address (positively) the organization's cost/effectiveness over time.

The outreach/marketing alternative entailed converting existing (sometimes unfilled) staff positions into newly reclassified positions which could/would focus services on adult populations not currently served by the North Dakota School for the Deaf. In several instances, new legislation would be required by the State of North Dakota to allow the North Dakota School for the Deaf to furnish such services.

Included among outreach/marketing concepts were the provision of operating expenses for marketing and public relations functions; the addition of outreach staff; improved/expanded reporting of outreach data; provision of select direct services; provision of post-secondary transition programming in conjunction with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (requiring legislation); developing and offering graduate level courses for teachers; and developing and providing late deafened programming (requiring legislation).

3.2 Priorities Among Alternatives

Having formulated a range of methods for achieving revenue generation, expenditure reduction, collaboration, and outreach/marketing, the Blue Ribbon Task Force rated preferred methods/concepts within each of the four alternatives (identified to achieve greater organizational cost/effectiveness).

Blue Ribbon Task Force members were provided the opportunity to rate a single method/concept that was preferred for achieving each of the stated alternatives (revenue generation; expenditure reduction; collaboration; and outreach/marketing). This rating scheme provided an opportunity for members of the Task Force and the casual reader to assess the single method/concept that would be most effective in generating revenue (for example) for the North Dakota School for the Deaf. Each singular vote by Task Force members was given a value of +4. Subsequently, members of the Task Force were afforded an opportunity (if they chose) to cast an additional three votes for preferred methods/concepts under each alternative category. Task Force members' second through fourth votes were each given a value of +2. Subsequently, the total (vote) value of each method/concept was tallied and recorded in each of Tables 9-12 to provide the reader with a comparative ranking of methods/concepts.

As depicted in Table 9, Blue Ribbon Task Force members identified the following methods/concepts as most promising for achieving future **revenue generation** at the North Dakota School for the Deaf: Devils Lake Head Start Program space rental and food service sales (100); joint programming with Lake Region Community College (26); provision/sale of direct services (22); and sale of closed captioning services and rental fees for the use of the swimming pool (20 each).

TABLE 9 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF REVENUE GENERATION	
Devils Lake Head Start Program Meals and Rental	100
Lake Region State College	26
Direct Services	22
Swimming Pool (Fees)	20
Closed Caption	20
High School (Joint Powers)	8
Video Conferencing (Fees)	8
Establish Fee for Services (Direct Service; Video Conference; Closed Caption; Internet Service)	

As depicted in Table 10, Blue Ribbon Task Force members identified the following methods/concepts as most promising for achieving future **expenditure reduction** at the North Dakota School for the Deaf: reducing staff through attrition and retirement incentives (buyouts) (88); staff reductions and economizations of business office services (46); eliminating contracted psychological services (30).

TABLE 10 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF EXPENDITURE REDUCTION	
Staff Attrition/Buyouts	88
Business Office Services	46
Cut Psychological Services	30
Cut Art, Custodial, House Parent, DC	20
Library (Shared Services or Half Time)	10
Pool (Fees or Eliminate)	4

As depicted in Table 11, Blue Ribbon Task Force members identified the following methods/concepts as most promising for achieving future **collaboration** at the North Dakota School for the Deaf: Devils Lake Head Start Program future collaboration (100); Lake Region State College collaboration (34); Devils Lake Public School/Lake Area Career and Technology Center collaboration (34).

TABLE 11 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF COLLABORATION	
Devils Lake Head Start Program	100
Lake Region State College	34
Grounds Devils Lake Public Schools Lake Region State College	34
Devils Lake Public School/Lake Area Career Technology Center	22

As depicted in Table 12, Blue Ribbon Task Force members identified the following methods/concepts as most promising for achieving future

TABLE 12 NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF OUTREACH/MARKETING	
Marketing (Public Relations) Operating Expenses	84
Add Outreach	56
Direct Services	42
Report Accurate (Complete) Data, Including Outreach	30
Graduate Level Courses for Teachers	4
Post-Secondary Transition (Initiated by Lake Region State College)	2
Late Deafened Programming (Requires Legislation)	0

outreach/marketing at the North Dakota School for the Deaf: marketing/public relations operating expenses (84); add outreach staff (56); promote/market direct services (42).

3.3 Blue Ribbon Task Force Suggested Legislative Changes

The North Dakota School for the Deaf Blue Ribbon Task Force determined it would recommend to the State Superintendent of the North Dakota of Public Instruction three proposed changes in legislation which – it would appear – hold promise for increasing the organization's short-term and long-term cost/effectiveness. Those three proposed changes are as follows:

- **Expand the mission of the North Dakota School for the Deaf to permit the future delivery of non-duplicatory programs and services to deaf and hard of hearing adults over the age of 21.**
- **Initiate discussion with the North Dakota State Legislature about the possibility of school district purchase of direct services from the North Dakota School for the Deaf as warranted.**

3.4 Advisory Recommendations

At the conclusion of its facilitated meetings, the North Dakota School for the Deaf Blue Ribbon Task Force believed it had fulfilled the mission assigned to it by Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. That is, the Blue Ribbon Task Force assessed that it had identified – at least – initial alternatives, methods/concepts, and priorities among alternatives and methods/concepts for enhancing the cost/effectiveness of the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

Detailed below are advisory recommendations tendered by the North Dakota School for the Deaf Blue Ribbon Task Force to State Superintendent Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead:

Recommendation 1

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction approve and authorize high priority revenue generation methods/concepts identified by the Blue Ribbon Task Force for implementation – as expeditiously as possible – by the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

Recommendation 2

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction approve and authorize high priority expenditure reduction methods/concepts identified by the Blue Ribbon Task Force for implementation – as expeditiously as possible – by the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

Recommendation 3

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction approve and authorize high priority collaboration methods/concepts identified by the Blue Ribbon Task Force for implementation – as expeditiously as possible – by the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

Recommendation 4

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction approve and authorize high priority outreach/marketing methods/concepts identified by the Blue Ribbon Task Force for implementation – as expeditiously as possible – by the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

Recommendation 5

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction recommend to the North Dakota State Legislature that select statutes be changed to permit the North Dakota School for the Deaf to expand its mission to include the delivery of non-duplicatory programs and services to deaf and hard of hearing adults over age 21 in the State of North Dakota.

Recommendation 6

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction direct the Superintendent of the North Dakota School for the Deaf to immediately modify the organization's strategic plan to incorporate cost/effectiveness and economization measures recommended by the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Recommendation 7

That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction direct the Superintendent and Strategic Planning Committee of the North Dakota School for the Deaf to continue to identify and implement additional alternatives and methods/concepts for enhancing the organization's short-term and long-term cost/effectiveness.

Recommendation 8

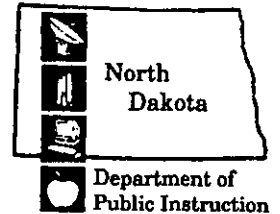
That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction direct the Superintendent of the North Dakota School for the Deaf reconvene the Blue Ribbon Task Force, Project Consultant, and Facilitator at the conclusion of the 2004-05 organizational year to assess progress on the Blue Ribbon Task Force's advisory recommendations.

3.5 Final Note

It is to be noted that, by the completion of the Blue Ribbon Task Force's study process, the North Dakota School for the Deaf's administration and staff had implemented or proposed for implementation measures which fulfilled multiple recommendations tendered by the Project Consultant in the **Organizational Status Follow-up Study**, including Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9. Such proactive steps by the administration and staff of the North Dakota School for the Deaf are recommended by the Project Consultant.

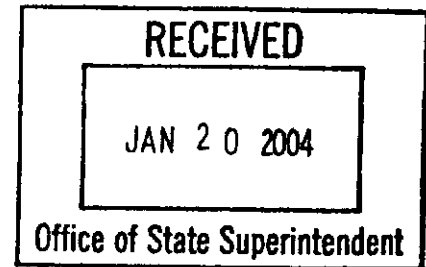
North Dakota School for the Deaf

1401 College Drive
Devils Lake, ND 58301-1596
(701) 662-9000 U/TDD Fax (701) 662-9009
Rocklyn Q. Cofer, Superintendant



1/15/2004

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead,
State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
600 E. Blvd. Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505-0400



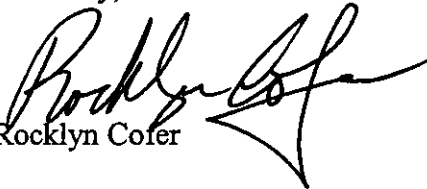
Dr. Sanstead,

This letter is to advise you that as of today's date, January 15, 2004. The following departments at the North Dakota School for the Deaf have been consolidated under the direction of the Director of Business Administration: Facilities and Grounds, Food Service and Housekeeping, and Administrative Support Services.

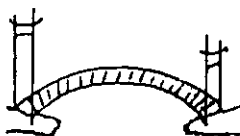
The heads of these departments will report to the Business Manager and will continue to be part of the management team for the agency.

This consolidation was done to improve overall operations and work flow management of the agency and to relieve some of the direct supervisory role of the superintendent.

Sincerely,


Rocklyn Cofer

*"Looking Back With Pride,
Looking Forward With Confidence"*



*A Division of the North Dakota Department of Public
Instruction, Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, Superintendent*

copy
to Irish
on 10/6/04

Roger Worner Associates, Inc.

3859 Majestic Pond Dr. ~ Sartell, MN 56377 ~ 320-202-0428

September 28, 2004

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
State Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
State Capital
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND

Dear Wayne:

It was good visiting with you and Irish last week in Jamestown regarding the process and final report of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's Blue Ribbon Task Force. As I expressed to you, I believe the Blue Ribbon Task Force process was exceptionally well facilitated by Irish Linnertz, and the recommendations tendered to you by the Blue Ribbon Task Force represent an excellent first series of steps in addressing the North Dakota School for the Deaf's cost/ineffectiveness – largely driven by persistent declining enrollment.

During the course of our two hour conversation, you had asked that I summarize for you and members of your Management Council salient thoughts about the Blue Ribbon Task Force's recommendations and the North Dakota School for the Deaf's response to those recommendations and, as well, changing conditions and needs impacting the short-term and long-term operation of the North Dakota School for the Deaf. As detailed in my conversation with Irish and you and upon subsequent reflection, here are my thoughts:

- The North Dakota School for the Deaf clearly needs to follow through and implement recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Task Force. Without attempting to be judgmental, the fact is two previous studies were completed by Dr. Roger Worner and one study completed by Mr. Richard Foster – all three pointing to substantial need for organizational change – and few of the recommendations were ultimately implemented. Over a five year span of time, the result was that the cost/ineffectiveness of the North Dakota School for the Deaf increased with the passage of each subsequent year.
- The North Dakota School for the Deaf must incorporate the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force into its organizational strategic plan. Such an action will result in redirecting the organization's focus from marketing the center-based programming (with limited prospects) to outreach-based programming (with extensive prospects).
- The North Dakota School for the Deaf has barely explored collaborative options for achieving greater cost/effectiveness and maintaining and/or expanding programs and services with the Devils Lake Public Schools, Lake Region State College, the City of Devils Lake, Ramsey County, and the Multi-District Special Education Cooperative. Clearly, collaborative possibilities exist – it would seem – in the delivery

of the following functions: administration/business services; buildings and grounds; food service; dormitory life/housing; technology; and others.

- The North Dakota School for the Deaf needs to develop a sophisticated plan of action for implementing an expanded state-wide outreach program. While I have heard numerous North Dakota School for the Deaf staff members articulate their perceptions of the service potential of an expanded outreach program, the fact is that no demographic data have been gathered to affirm the accuracy of staff members' speculations on the level of need and, candidly, no sophisticated plan of action has been developed, refined, and approved for implementation as far as I have been able to ascertain. In short, "talk is cheap." An articulated plan needs to be developed, refined, and approved.
- The North Dakota School for the Deaf needs to strongly consider reduction of its regular teaching staff in the future. As student enrollment has decreased over time in the organization, protection of regular teaching positions has seemed almost sacrosanct. Staff reductions have been made in virtually all other functional domains of the organization, but the domain most sensitive to student enrollment increases or decreases – the teaching staff – has escaped virtually every reduction (except when a position was virtually impossible to fill). To make matters worse, the wages and benefits attached to teaching positions are among the highest in the organization and least justified to maintain in light of the fact that the very numbers of students served by teachers have substantially decreased. Conversely, positions in other functional areas – less sensitive to the loss of students – have been reduced.
- The North Dakota School for the Deaf will likely need to pursue budget reductions of a similar magnitude in the future, and the organization's administration should be prepared to implement a similar process next year. As distasteful as it may seem, budget reductions – including staff losses – must be viewed as an annual event (just as is the case with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction itself). The North Dakota School for the Deaf has not experienced significant, recurring, anguishing budget reductions in the past. It will have to in the future if it wishes to maintain long-term organizational viability.
- The North Dakota School for the Deaf should prepare and distribute periodic (quarterly) updates to the Blue Ribbon Task Force on progress made in implementing Task Force recommendations.
- The North Dakota School for the Deaf should reconvene the Blue Ribbon Task Force in the spring of 2005 to pursue, further, budget reduction, collaborative/cooperative, and new initiative options to enhance the organization's cost/effectiveness in the future.

Letter to Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
September 28, 2004 – Page 3

- The North Dakota School for the Deaf and North Dakota Department of Public Instruction should be cautious about the conditions under which parcels of property and facilities on the grounds of the North Dakota School for the Deaf are leased, long-term, to a non-governmental entity. Such a lease of property/facility should be considered in the context of whether or not the State of North Dakota may at some future time wish to sell the facilities and grounds of the North Dakota School for the Deaf.

As always, it is a pleasure to work with you, Wayne, and members of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and its external organizations. Please let me know if there is any further information I can provide you or assistance I can offer to the North Dakota School for the Deaf. My best wishes are extended to you in the November election. I have every confidence you will be re-elected by a staggering margin.

Give my regards to Mary Jane.

Yours most sincerely,

Roger B. Worner
Roger Worner Associates

RW/dmp

Fifty-sixth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4044

Introduced by

Senators St. Aubyn, W. Stenehjem

1 A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Council to study the feasibility and desirability
2 of consolidating under the School for the Blind all programs and services provided to children
3 and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

4 **WHEREAS**, the state has a significant interest in ensuring that children and adults who
5 are blind or visually impaired are able to function as independently as possible; and

6 **WHEREAS**, children and adults who are blind or visually impaired require a continuum
7 of educational, rehabilitative, and other services or assistance if they are to function as
8 independently as possible; and

9 **WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility of the state to make available an appropriate
10 continuum of services to children and adults who are blind or visually impaired; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the state offers a variety of services to children and adults who are blind or
12 visually impaired through the School for the Blind and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of
13 the Department of Human Services;

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE**
15 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:**

16 That the Legislative Council study the feasibility and desirability of consolidating under
17 the School for the Blind all programs and services provided to children and adults who are blind
18 or visually impaired; and

19 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislative Council report its findings and
20 recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to
21 the Fifty-seventh Legislative Assembly.

(2173)

Assigned Studies and Responsibilities (1999-2000 Interim)

Budget Committee on Institutional Services

2012 § 22 Study residential treatment centers and residential child care facilities, including occupancy rates, the number of out-of-state residents, and the need for additional facilities

2012 § 31 Study the feasibility and desirability of collocating the Developmental Center and the State Hospital at one location and of transferring additional buildings on the State Hospital grounds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

4044 Study the feasibility and desirability of consolidating under the School for the Blind all programs and services provided to children and adults who are blind or visually impaired

Receive annual reports from the Department of Human Services concerning grants or loans under the nursing facility alternative grant fund or alternative loan fund (NDCC § 50-30-08, effective until July 1, 2001)

Receive a final progress report by June 30, 2000, from the Department of Human Services regarding the progress of the Alzheimer's and related dementia projects established under NDCC Section 50-06-14.4 (1999 S.L., ch. 150, § 2)

Receive periodic reports during the 1999-2000 interim from the executive director of the Department of Human Services regarding the establishment of a traumatic brain-injured facility in western North Dakota (1999 S.L., ch. 419, § 1)

2173

improvement of any public lands shall ever be recognized, nor shall such occupation, cultivation or improvement of any public lands ever be used to diminish either directly or indirectly, the purchase price of said lands.

Section 10. The legislative assembly may provide by law for the sale or disposal of all public lands that have been, or may hereafter be granted by the United States to the state for purposes other than set forth in article IX, section 1. The legislative assembly in providing for the appraisal, sale, rental, and disposal of the same shall not be subject to the provisions and limitations of article IX, sections 1 through 11.

Section 11. The legislative assembly shall pass suitable laws for the safekeeping, transfer and disbursement of the state school funds; and shall require all officers charged with the same or the safekeeping thereof to give ample bonds for all moneys and funds received by them, and if any of said officers shall convert to his own use in any manner or form, or shall loan with or without interest or shall deposit in his own name, or otherwise than in the name of the state of North Dakota, or shall deposit in any banks or with any person or persons, or exchange for other funds or property any portion of the school funds aforesaid or purposely allow any portion of the same to remain in his own hands uninvested, except in the manner prescribed by law, every such act shall constitute an embezzlement of so much of the aforesaid school funds as shall be thus taken or loaned, or deposited, or exchanged, or withheld and shall be a felony; and any failure to pay over, produce or account for, the state school funds or any part of the same entrusted to any such officer, as by law required or demanded, shall be held and be taken to be prima facie evidence of such embezzlement.

Amble 9
Section 12. The following public institutions of the state are permanently located at the places hereinafter named, each to have the lands specifically granted to it by the United States in the Act of Congress approved February 22, 1889, to be disposed of and used in such manner as the legislative assembly may prescribe subject to the limitations provided in the article on school and public lands contained in this constitution.

1. The seat of government at the city of Bismarck in the county of Burleigh.
2. The state university and the school of mines at the city of Grand Forks, in the county of Grand Forks.
3. The North Dakota state university of agriculture and applied science at the city of Fargo, in the county of Cass.
4. A state normal school at the city of Valley City, in the county of Barnes, and the legislative assembly, in apportioning the grant of eighty thousand acres of land for normal schools made in the Act of Congress referred to shall grant to the said normal school at Valley City, as aforementioned, fifty thousand (50,000) acres, and said lands are hereby appropriated to said institution for that purpose.
- * 5. The school for the deaf and dumb of North Dakota at the city of Devils Lake, in the county of Ramsey.
6. A state training school at the city of Mandan, in the county of Morton.
7. A state normal school at the city of Mayville, in the county of Traill, and the legislative assembly in apportioning the grant of lands made by Congress in the Act aforesaid for state normal schools shall assign thirty thousand (30,000) acres to the institution hereby located at Mayville, and said lands are hereby appropriated for said purpose.
8. A state hospital for the insane at the city of Jamestown, in the county of Stutsman. And the legislative assembly shall appropriate twenty thousand acres of the grant of lands made by the Act of Congress aforesaid for other educational and charitable institutions to the benefit and for the endowment of said institution, and there shall

be located at or near the city of Grafton, in the county of Walsh, an institution for the feeble-minded, on the grounds purchased by the secretary of the interior for a penitentiary building.

Section 13. The following public institutions are located as provided, each to have so much of the remaining grant of one hundred seventy thousand acres of land made by the United States for "other educational and charitable institutions" as is allotted by law:

1. A soldiers' home, when located, or such other charitable institution as the legislative assembly may determine, at the city of Lisbon in the county of Ransom, with a grant of forty thousand acres of land.
- * 2. The school for the blind at the city of Grand Forks in the county of Grand Forks or at such other location as may be determined by the legislative assembly to be in the best interests of the students of such institution and the state of North Dakota.
3. A school of forestry, or such other institution as the legislative assembly may determine, at such place in one of the counties of McHenry, Ward, Bottineau, or Rolette, as the electors of said counties may determine by an election for that purpose, to be held as provided by the legislative assembly.
4. A school of science or such other educational or charitable institution as the legislative assembly may prescribe, at the city of Wahpeton in the county of Richland, with a grant of forty thousand acres.
5. A state college at the city of Minot in the county of Ward.
6. A state college at the city of Dickinson in the county of Stark.
7. A state hospital for the mentally ill at such place within this state as shall be selected by the legislative assembly.

No other institution of a character similar to any one of those located by article IX, section 12, or this section shall be established or maintained without an amendment of this constitution.

sexual offender treatment program at the State Hospital were not intended to be an alternative to criminal prosecution.

Conclusion

Although the committee does not make a specific recommendation regarding the collocation of the Developmental Center and the State Hospital, committee members expressed their support for the cooperation and collaboration that has occurred between the two institutions and the resulting cost-savings.

VISION SERVICES STUDY

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4044 directed the Legislative Council to study the feasibility and desirability of consolidating under the School for the Blind all programs and services provided to children and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Available Vision Services

The committee reviewed information on vision services available in North Dakota. The committee learned an estimated 15,822 individuals in North Dakota have a moderate or severe visual impairment. Of this total, 9,609 are aged 55 or older, 5,946 are aged 16 through 54, and 267 are aged 21 and younger. Because the 0 through 21 and 16 through 54 age categories overlap, the North Dakota Census Data Center estimates that persons with visual impairments may be shown in both categories.

The committee learned vision services are provided to persons with visual impairments by:

1. The School for the Blind.
2. The Department of Human Services - Vocational Rehabilitation Division.
3. The Department of Human Services - Infant development program.

4. The State Library.
5. School districts.
6. Independent living centers.

Vision-specific services are primarily provided by the School for the Blind and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Human Services. Services provided by the School for the Blind include family and adult services, outreach and in-home support services, technology and library services, skills training, summer camps, orientation and mobility training, and curriculum services. Services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation include medical evaluations, vocational evaluations, training and placement services, visual aids if necessary for work, reader services, telecommunications and other technological aids and devices, individual counseling, and other work-related support services.

The majority of the vision-specific services provided by the School for the Blind are provided to individuals who are blind or visually impaired between the ages of 0 and 21. The majority of vision-specific services provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Division are provided to individuals who are blind or visually impaired aged 55 and over or visually impaired individuals aged 16 to 54 who are seeking employment.

The committee learned services are generally not available to persons between the ages of 21 and 54 who are blind or visually impaired and who are not seeking employment. The following schedule presents the numbers of individuals served by the School for the Blind and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division each year and the percentage of the total number of visually impaired individuals in the state who are being served. The schedule only reflects services provided to individuals who are moderately or severely visually impaired, and the agencies may provide additional services to individuals whose visual impairments are not as severe.

Age	Visually Impaired Persons Served By			Estimated Total Number of Visually Impaired Persons	Percentage Served
	School for the Blind	Vocational Rehabilitation Division	Total		
0-21	162	0	162	267	60.7%
16-54	98	181	279	5,946	4.7%
55 and over	7	695	702	9,609	7.3%
Total	267	876	1,143	15,822	7.2%

The following schedule reflects funding available for vision services at the School for the Blind and the

Vocational Rehabilitation Division for the 1999-2001 biennium:

School for the Blind		Department of Human Services - Vocational Rehabilitation Division - Vision Services	
Salaries and wages - 28 FTE	\$2,391,456	Salaries and wages - 10 FTE	\$723,458
Operating expenses	678,059	Operating expenses	210,961
Equipment	70,500	Equipment	7,925
Capital improvements	51,790	Capital improvements	830
		Grants	155,407
		Total all funds	\$1,098,621
	\$3,101,805	Less estimated capital	\$66,004
	\$2,773,577	Estimated total	\$2,707,577

From Rater.

Other available vision services include:

- The State Library provides books on tape, large print books, and the Dakota Radio Information Service. The talking book program is available across the state and serves approximately 2,400 individuals. The Dakota Radio Information Service broadcasts live daily programs that provide information read from local newspapers to 570 listeners.
- School districts provide vision services through special education units for visually impaired students attending public schools.
- The Department of Human Services infant development program provides early intervention services for children with disabilities from birth through age 2, including vision-related disabilities. Services available include in-home assistance, parent training, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy.
- Independent living centers provide services to individuals with disabilities, including vision-related disabilities. Core services of independent living centers include independent living skills training, peer counseling, information and referral, self-advocacy, and systems advocacy.

Barriers to Services

Based on information provided by state agencies, private providers, other organizations, and consumers, the committee learned the following items may restrict individuals with visual impairments from accessing services:

1. Lack of health insurance coverage for vision rehabilitation services.
2. Fiscal disincentives for visually impaired individuals who seek and obtain employment.
3. Lack of awareness of the availability of vision services.
4. Lack of funding to provide additional needed services.
5. Time delays in determining an individual's eligibility for services.
6. Requirement that individuals be seeking employment in order to access services under the vocational rehabilitation employment program.
7. Difficulties in reactivating cases that may have been closed.
8. Travel required to access certain services.
9. Fees required to access certain services.
10. Eligibility requirements associated with the level of vision loss needed to access services.
11. Fragmentation of services for adults because two agencies are involved in providing vision services.
12. Confusion regarding the appropriate service provider to contact.

13. Denial of the need for services or lack of confidence regarding the ability to learn necessary changes.

Committee Considerations

Based on the committee's review of vision services available in the state, the number of individuals accessing the services and input from interested agencies, organizations, and individuals, the committee considered alternative bill drafts providing the following four options for improving the delivery and administration of vision services in North Dakota:

1. Consolidating all vision services under the School for the Blind.
2. Consolidating all vision services under the Department of Human Services.
3. Consolidating all vision services under a separate agency with its own governing board.
4. Continuing the current administrative structure of the School for the Blind and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division vision services program but clarifying that the School for the Blind is responsible for serving persons of all ages with visual impairments.

The committee received testimony regarding the various options for administering and delivering vision services in the state from representatives of state agencies, private providers, other organizations, and consumers that suggested:

1. Improving the access and availability of vision services.
2. Improving public awareness of the vision services available.
3. Expanding partnerships and improving cooperation and collaboration among vision service providers.
4. Coordinating vision services.
5. Establishing an independent board with members who are blind or visually impaired to oversee the provision of vision services.
6. Receiving more home or community-based services rather than center or institution-based services.
7. Establishing peer counseling programs and expanding support groups.
8. Providing vision services by vision specialists rather than general vocational rehabilitation counselors.
9. Expanding the use of the independent living centers to serve additional persons who are blind or visually impaired.
10. Continuing to allow the teachers at the School for the Blind to provide assistance to teachers in local school districts across the state.
11. Consolidating all vision services under the School for the Blind. This option:

- a. May result in a concentration of staff in one-quarter of the state that may cause service coordination problems.
 - b. Could cause a disruption in services for the elderly population during the transition period.
 - c. Would improve the accountability for the vision services being provided.
 - d. Would enable all vision services to be provided by vision specialists rather than general vocational rehabilitation counselors.
 - e. Would make the majority of individuals who are blind or visually impaired feel more comfortable with the School for the Blind remaining under the administrative structure of the Department of Public Instruction.
 - f. Would create difficulties in serving persons with multiple disabilities.
12. Consolidating all vision services under the Department of Human Services. This option:
- a. May require a constitutional change.
 - b. Would emphasize regional service delivery through the human service centers.
 - c. Could cause a disruption in services for children during the transition period.
 - d. Would expand the use of independent living centers.
 - e. Would provide opportunities for better communications with other community services.
13. Consolidating all vision services under a separate vision services agency. This option:
- a. Would result in more efficient and cost-effective services.
 - b. Would improve the accountability for the vision services being provided.
 - c. May require a constitutional change.
 - d. May lead to the creation of additional state agencies to serve other specific disability groups.
 - e. Could cause a disruption in services during the transition period.
 - f. Would create difficulties in serving persons with multiple disabilities.
 - g. Would result in duplicative reporting to comply with federal vocational rehabilitation funding requirements.
 - h. Would enable all vision services to be provided by vision specialists rather than general vocational rehabilitation counselors.
 - i. Would improve communications.
14. Continuing the current administrative structure but enhancing service delivery. This option:
- a. May result in an expansion of School for the Blind outreach services.
 - b. Would not result in service disruption.
 - c. Could improve the coordination of services.
 - d. Would enable the School for the Blind to serve as a "case management" agency for persons who are blind or visually impaired.
 - e. May continue the confusion by consumers regarding the appropriate agency to contact for services.
 - f. Will allow for continuation of the separate service agencies that complement each other.
 - g. Would make the majority of individuals who are blind or visually impaired feel more comfortable with the School for the Blind remaining under the administrative structure of the Department of Public Instruction.
 - h. Allows the School for the Blind to fulfill its appropriate role as facilitator and collaborator of agencies and organizations involved in providing vision services.

Committee Recommendation

The committee recommends House Bill No. 1038 to continue the current administrative structure of the School for the Blind and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division's vision services program but clarify that the School for the Blind is responsible for serving persons of all ages with visual impairments not just children. The bill changes the name of the school to North Dakota Vision Services - School for the Blind. It removes outdated statutory provisions relating to educating students in general education subjects who cannot receive an appropriate education in the public schools. It also clarifies that the School for the Blind is a state-wide service, resource, and referral center for all residents of this state who are blind or have a visual impairment. The School for the Blind would be responsible for:

1. Collecting and distributing information on vision services programs available in the state (a new responsibility).
2. Facilitating collaboration with agencies and programs providing services to individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment (a new responsibility).
3. Assisting residents to access appropriate vision services (a new responsibility).
4. Maintaining a data base of blind or visually impaired persons in the state (a new responsibility).
5. Providing vision services, including vision-specific consultations, evaluations, information, training, and loans of adaptive devices, equipment, and materials.

The committee learned the estimated cost of the provisions of this bill for the 2001-03 biennium is \$149,667 of special funds available from revenues generated by the school, and that two additional FTE

positions will need to be located in western North Dakota to provide technology-related services.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS AND RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE FACILITIES STUDY

Section 22 of Senate Bill No. 2012 directed the Legislative Council to study residential treatment centers and residential child care facilities, including occupancy rates, the number of out-of-state residents, and the need for additional facilities.

Moratorium on the Expansion of Beds

Sections 8 and 11 of 1999 Senate Bill No. 2012, provide that the department may not issue a license for any additional bed capacity for a residential treatment center or residential child care facility above the state's gross number of beds licensed as of June 30, 1999, which was 320 excluding group home beds that were not a part of the moratorium. The following schedule shows the residential child care facilities and residential treatment centers licensed by the department in June 1999 and the number of licensed bed capacity for each facility:

Facility	Location	Number of Licensed Beds
Group Homes		
Charles Hall Youth Services	Bismarck	24
Eckert Youth Homes	Williston	16
Harmony House	Devils Lake	7
Lake Oahe Group Home	Fort Yates	8
New Outlooks	Devils Lake	10
Total group home beds		65
Residential Child Care Facilities		
Home on the Range	Sentinel Butte	79
Red River Victory Ranch	Fargo	12
Dakota Boys Ranch	Minot	39
Dakota Boys Ranch	Fargo	10
Dakota Boys Ranch - Transitional living	Minot	12
Prairie Learning Center	Raleigh	50
Southwest Key	Mandan	24
Total residential child care facility beds		226
Residential Treatment Centers		
Southwest Key	Mandan	16
Ruth Meiers Adolescent Center	Grand Forks	12
Dakota Boys Ranch	Minot	16
Luther Hall	Fargo	16
Manchester House	Bismarck	10
Total residential treatment center beds		70
Accredited Residential Treatment Centers		
Eight Rivers	Jamestown	8
Rivers Edge	Fargo	16
Total accredited residential treatment center beds		24
Total beds		385

The committee learned that in early 2000, the Southwest Key Program at Mandan ceased operations of its 16-bed residential treatment center and 24-bed residential child care facility. Of the 38 youth residing in the facility when it closed, four returned home, four were placed out of state, and 30 were placed in other facilities in North Dakota. The committee learned the reason cited by Southwest Key for closing was a lack of adequate funding. The committee learned Housing, Industry, and Training (HIT), Inc., and the Dakota Boys Ranch began operating an eight-bed residential treatment center facility in Mandan to meet the needs of lower-functioning children.

Types of Foster Care Placements

The types of foster care placements are:

1. Foster care family - A family providing for the child's care. Children placed with a foster care family are generally younger and have been deprived, neglected, or abused.
2. Therapeutic foster care family - A family providing for the child's care. Children placed with a therapeutic foster care family generally have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder and may have previously been placed in a residential treatment center.
3. Group homes - Children placed in these types of facilities are generally adolescents who have been deprived or abused, involved in a parent-child conflict, or have character disorders. A group home serves from 4 to 10 children.
4. Residential child care facilities - Children placed in these types of facilities are generally adolescents who have been deprived or abused, involved in a parent-child conflict, or have character disorders. A residential child care facility serves more than eight children.
5. Residential treatment centers - Children placed in these types of facilities are generally adolescents who have been diagnosed with psychiatric disorders.

Foster Care Placements and Costs

The following schedules present foster care placements and costs in recent years: