

## FACTSHEET

# State of Oregon Blind and Visually Impaired Student Fund (BVIS)

### **What is the BVIS Fund?**

The Blind and Visually Impaired Student Fund (BVIS) was created by the Oregon legislature and outlined in House Bill 2834 when it closed the Oregon School for the Blind (OSB) September 1, 2009. There are two main purposes of the fund:

1. To provide transitional and follow up services to those students who were enrolled in OSB on March 1, 2009 and expected to be enrolled in OSB on Sept. 1, 2010.
2. To provide on-going educational resources and services to students who are blind or visually impaired in the communities where the students reside by supplementing existing services and funds.

As directed by HB 2834, the Superintendent of Public Instruction designated one of the eight Low Incidence Regional Programs to provide statewide coordination of the BVIS fund. In August 2009, Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D) was appointed to provide administration and statewide coordination and technical assistance necessary to fulfill the educational requirements of the bill. The Department of Human Services (DHS) was identified to evaluate and identify students and families with needs for alternative care or other support services such in the areas of mental health and developmental disabilities.

Full text of House Bill 2834: [www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2834.en.pdf](http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2834.en.pdf)

### **How much did the Legislature Appropriated for the Fund?**

HB 2834 allocated \$2,850,000 out of the General Fund for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009 for transition costs and other services provided to students who are blind or visually impaired and for the closure and disposition of OSB.

### **Fiscal Information (see additional document titled "BVIS Revenue-Expenditure Chart 8-24-12.pdf")**

*Where do funds for the next biennium come from?*

*Where do proceeds from sale of the property that went to Ed. Stability fund come in?*

### **How Many Students Benefit from the Fund?**

- At the time of its closure, there were 28 students enrolled at OSB. Twenty-two of those students were and/or are currently being supported by the BVIS fund.
- There are approximately 875 additional students who are blind or visually impaired currently being served in Oregon with support from the BVIS fund.

### **How much Has Been Spent To-Date**

Of the \$2.85M in the BVIS Fund to date 2.2M has been utilized as follows:

- ODE spent \$720K (\$450K for the closure of OSB and \$270,000 technology and Braille services related to the OAKS Braille Interface).

- NWRESD has overseen the expenditure of \$1.9M on a reimbursed basis. See additional PDF with fiscal information (BVIS Revenue-Expenditure Chart 8-24-12.pdf).

### **Who May Request Funds?**

Currently, the BVIS Fund has received and approved requests from Regional Programs, School Districts, Oregon Commission for the Blind, and the Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation. Requests for funding and/or reimbursement are typically submitted to the BVIS Fund Administrator at ODE in the form of a written proposal.

### **What is the Process for Spending the Fund?**

Most of the funds are spent on a reimbursement basis and all expenditures must be approved by the Oregon Department of Education. There are, however, specific programs such as the ECC Summer Programs in which funds are distributed to regional programs using a funding formula that is based on the number of students with visual impairments being served in a specific region.

### **How Have Funds Been Spent?**

- I. The students who were enrolled at the time of the closure of OSB had received a variety of services that were provided to them in collaboration with their school districts via the IEP process: These include: Tuition for educational services and programs, equipment, technical assistance, and records management.
  - *BVIS Fund staff track all former OSB students still in the Oregon public school system. This includes contacts with case managers, personal visits, and parent/guardian interviews.*
  - *.5 FTE BVIS Administrator*
  - *.5 FTE Support Staff*
  
- II. There are five specific components that were included in HB 2834 that are currently being addressed via the BVIS fund:
  1. **Assisting students who are blind or visually impaired in receiving appropriate resources and services in the communities where the students reside:**
    - *Lion's Low Vision Clinic: Provides free low-vision exams and prescribed optical devices (e.g. magnifiers, monoculars, etc.) to regionally eligible students with visual impairments. Exams are provided in all regions of the state.*
    - *Tuition for students to attend WSSB as placed by the IEP team and accepted by WSSB.*
    - *Tuition for students to attend WSSB – Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) program: transition from high school to college or career.*
    - *Purchased: 180 iPads (to include apps; Learning Ally and Bookshare's Read2Go for access to textbooks and other literature in both auditory and large print).*
    - *All Braille users (taking OAKS) in grades 2-12 provided with: ViewPlus Tiger Embosser, 40-cell refreshable Braille display, Jaws 12 Screen-Reader, and 2-types of Braille translation software (Duxbury and Tiger). (Approximately 40 students statewide).*
    - *Talking scientific calculators provided as needed.*
    - *Approved individual requests from regional programs and school districts for technology, educational materials, staffing and services.*

- 2. Supplementing funds available to regional programs to ensure access to the expanded core curriculum for students who are blind or visually impaired:**
  - *Tuition for Oregon students to attend the Washington State School for the Blind summer programs (8-9 students have attended each summer 2011 & 2012).*
  - *Funds to each regional program for ECC summer program (both residential and day programs).*
  - *Funds for each regional program to run Expanded Core Curriculum experiences throughout the year.*
- 3. Coordinating professional development of persons who provide educational services to students who are blind or visually impaired:**
  - *Provided financial support for Oregon TVI/O&M Specialists to attend the Association of Education and Rehabilitation (AER) International Conference in Seattle, Summer 2012.*
  - *Provided financial support for Oregon TVI/O&M Specialists to attend the Technology Summit hosted at WSSB during the summer of 2012.*
  - *Provided training on the OAKS Braille Interface to all Oregon TVIs and O&M Specialists. Follow-up/refresher course will be offered in January 2013.*
  - *Planned training for Fall 2012 on the use of iPads for students with low vision.*
  - *Trainings are planned for summer and fall 2012 for general education teachers who have students who are blind or visually impaired.*
- 4. Providing technical assistance for the purpose of providing educational services to students who are blind or visually impaired**
  - *1.0 FTE BVI Technology Specialist*
  - *BVIS Website*
- 5. Coordinating activities for the benefit of students who are blind or visually impaired.**
  - *Summer Work Experience (SWEPE) Program partnership with the Oregon Commission for the Blind.*
  - *Three Annual Events:*
    1. *Fall Paralympics Experience at OSD: Goal ball, Tandem Cycling, and Judo*
    2. *Winter Goalball State Tournament and official goalball season November-March. BVIS funding is used to pay for coaches, equipment, and travel costs.*
    3. *Spring Track and Field Day for the Blind and Visually Impaired.*