

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (0510)

FISCAL YEAR 2016

As Enacted by Act 53 of 2015 and Act 245 of 2016 Fiscal Session

**I) AGENCY SUMMARY & REVENUE SOURCES**

**MISSION**

The School for the Blind provides education and training for all children and young people (birth through age twenty-one) who are visually impaired so they possess the required skills to become personally productive and self-sufficient citizens. The School's programs include academic and vocational training, residential living, extra curricular activities, low vision evaluation services, physical and occupational therapy, psychological evaluations, orientation and mobility services, life skills training, nutritional meals, vocational work study program, Braille publications, adaptive technology training, evaluation and weekly statewide transportation for residential students.

**TOTAL APPROPRIATION**

The total appropriation is \$8,835,674.

**FUNDING SOURCES**

The appropriations for the School for the Blind are funded by general revenue, federal funds, cash funds and fund balances.

**II) CHANGE LEVEL REQUESTS**

**STATE OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION 076)**

This appropriation provides for the operating costs of the school, and is funded by general revenue. The total appropriation is \$7,044,452 and includes the following changes:

**Regular Salaries and Matching** - Increase of \$383,638 in appropriation only for the requested transfer of 9 positions from the Arkansas School for the Deaf to the Arkansas School for the Blind and the reclassification of 3 positions.

**Operating Expenses** - Increase of \$307,761 in appropriation only for critical needs in maintenance, updating furniture and repainting aging classrooms and dormitories; \$259,171 in transfer of appropriation and funding from the Arkansas School for the Deaf to the Arkansas School for the Blind for transportation, security, and maintenance costs.

**Capital Outlay** - Increase of \$25,000 in appropriation only for adaptive technology needs for students.

**Special Maintenance** - Increase of \$115,000 for facility updates; \$65,000 in transfer of appropriation only from the Arkansas School for the Deaf to the Arkansas School for the Blind.

**Summer Projects** - Increase of \$10,000 in appropriation only to cover the cost of additional staffing needed during Summer school.

**Per Act 245 of 2016 Fiscal Session:** A supplemental appropriation with funding is added for the State Operations Appropriation adding \$100,000 to Operating Expenses and \$25,000 to Capital Outlay to provide for the reproduction or purchase of new Braille and Large Print Textbooks.

**FEDERAL OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION 077)**

This appropriation provides federal support for the school's operations and receives its funding from Rehabilitation Act Chapter VI-B Pass Through, Carl

Perkins Federal Vocational Grants, Medicaid Reimbursements, and an Adaptive Technology Grant through the Arkansas Department of Education. The total appropriation is \$568,690, which includes the following changes:

**Professional Fees** - Increase of \$48,590 to cover Physical and Occupational Therapy costs.

**Capital Outlay** - Increase of \$85,000 for the purchase of adaptive technology for students.

**BRAILLE AND LARGE PRINT TEXTBOOKS (APPROPRIATION (086))**

**Per 2016 Fiscal Session - Joint Budget Committee Recommendation from Governor's Letter:** An supplemental appropriation with funding is added for \$50,000 for Braille and Large Print Textbooks to provide for the reproduction or purchase of new Braille and Large Print Textbooks for Blind and Visually Impaired students attending Arkansas Schools.

**III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS (Total FY2015 authorized positions: 97)**

Total Authorized Positions FY2016: 106

Total Base Level Positions FY2015: 97

Increase / (Decrease) over FY2015 Base Level: 9

Extra Help Positions FY2016: 17 (Total FY2015 Authorized Extra Help: 17)

a. Nine (9) positions were transferred from the School for the Deaf to the School for the Blind to provide maintenance, personnel, transportation and security services.

b. Three (3) positions were recovered as a result of the discontinuation of positions being transferred and budgeted in the Deaf School Budget pursuant to special language that allows the Blind school to transfer positions, appropriation and funding to a shared services paying account.

c. The following three (3) positions are recommended to be reclassified: Agency Fiscal Manager (C121) to Fiscal Support Manager (C123), Maintenance Supervisor (C115) to Campus Maintenance Supervisor (C119), and Human Resources Assistance (C110) to Payroll Services Specialist (C115).

**IV) SPECIAL LANGUAGE**

**TRANSFER PROVISION:** Authorizes a transfer of appropriation from the Summer projects special line item in the State Operations appropriation to Regular Salaries and Personal Services Matching and Maintenance and General Operating Expenses within the same appropriation, to compensate staff who work during the summer months on summer projects, cover other expenses of summer project activities, and pay shift differential pay, upon Chief Fiscal Officer approval.

**SPECIAL ALLOWANCE:** Allows the School to provide up to \$3,500 per school term/per fiscal year in special allowances to employees who complete any of the following in addition to their regular duties:

- Teach adult education classes, parent training, or student tutorial services on weekends or evenings
- Coach one or more sports
- Sponsor a club or organization outside of normal working day
- Provide interpretative services

**ADDITIONAL SALARY/COMPENSATION PROVISION:** Prohibits employees from receiving an additional salary from the School or other state agency without written

certification from the Superintendent and approval by the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State that the additional position does not interfere with their primary duties and that the combined salaries do not exceed the maximum salary for the highest salary of the two positions. Provides for termination upon knowingly violating this provision, and the employee is barred from employment for three (3) years or until the salary in violation of this provision has been repaid including 10% interest.

**\*LANGUAGE TO BE DELETED\* SHARED SERVICES:** Authorizes a joint paying account in the State Treasury between the School for the Blind and School for the Deaf for the purpose of serving both schools in the areas of Accounting, Personnel, Inventory, Safety and Health Services upon direction by the Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Deaf. Authorizes the Board to transfer positions, funds and appropriations with the funding and appropriation to be divided proportionately from each agency based on student population. Supervision of this account and the positions may come from either school as determined by the Board of Trustees.

**BRAILLE AND LARGE PRINT TEXTBOOKS:** Authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations for the implementation of the Braille and Large Print Textbooks program and allows the Board to negotiate directly with publishers for the purchase of such books. Also authorizes the School to use this appropriation and funds for costs of providing the books to public schools, such as copying, postage and freight costs.

**SUMMER SCHOOL EMPLOYEES:** Authorizes additional compensation not to exceed 1/12 of their annual salary each month or part thereof worked to selected classifications of employees who work during the summer months in addition to working during the regular school term. Adds Licensed Social Worker (C118), Licensed Professional Counselor (C119) and Licensed Master Social Worker (C120) to the list.

**CERTIFIED MASTERS OR BACHELOR TEACHERS ENTERING STATE SERVICE:** Allows teachers entering state service to teach sensory impaired individuals to be paid not less than what they would have received from their previous employer effective on their employment with the Arkansas School for the Blind, upon certification of the prior service by the Superintendent to the Office of Personnel Management.

**TEACHER SALARY INCREASE:** Provides that if an act is passed to provide funds to the public schools to raise salaries of teachers, the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf are also included.

**SPECIAL RATES OF PAY:** Authorizes the School to adjust specified classifications of new or current employees to at least the minimum level of compensation for public school employees, up to the maximum for the assigned grade, upon Office of Personnel Management and Arkansas Legislative Council Personnel Committee review and Chief Fiscal Officer Approval of the plan for the adjustments. Authorizes the use of Merit Adjustment funding for these increases, but also requires the School to use salary savings.

Revised: June 2016