

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (0510)

FISCAL YEAR 2014 and 2015 - ALC/JBC Recommendation

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 BUDGET

The total budget is \$7,777,304 for FY2014 and \$7,783,133 for FY2015.

FUNDING SOURCES

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

II) SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

STATE OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION 076)

This appropriation provides for the operating costs of the school, and is funded by general revenue. The total appropriation is \$6,428,373 for FY2014 and \$6,434,202 for FY2015 and includes the following changes:

Regular Salaries and Matching - Increase of \$9,742 for FY2014 and \$9,886 for FY2015 to reclassify nine positions: Baker (C104) to Food Preparation Coordinator (C108), Two (2) Cooks (C104) to Food Preparation Coordinators (C108), and Six (6) Food Preparation Technicians (C102) to Cooks (C104).

Operating Expenses - Increase of \$100,000 in appropriation only for increased maintenance and janitorial supply costs.

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

Special Maintenance - Increase of \$125,000 in appropriation only for facility updates on fifteen campus buildings.

The recommendation further provides that the Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf consider discontinuing the annual general revenue fund transfer from the School for the Blind to the School for the Deaf.

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 \$751,399 each year which is an increase of \$154,000 each year for capital outlay to replace equipment that is beyond repair, obsolete or too expensive to maintain.

CASH OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION A19)

This appropriation provides funds to supplement general revenue as needed for the provision of services for the blind and visually impaired student

population. It is funded primarily by USDA Reimbursements, interest on cash investments, and legacy donations. The total appropriation is \$424,508 each year which continues the base level and FY2013 appropriated level.

BRaille TEXTBOOKS (APPROPRIATION 086)

This general revenue funded appropriation is used to purchase and distribute Braille and Large Print textbooks for visually impaired students attending public schools. The total appropriation is \$173,024 each year of the biennium which is an increase of \$25,000 each year to support the increasing costs of purchasing and shipping Braille and Large Print Textbooks.

III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS

Total Positions for FY 2015: 97

Total Positions for FY 2014: 97

Total Base Level Positions for FY 2014 and FY2015: 97

Increase / (Decrease): 0

Comparison is to base level rather than to budget due to 3 positions being 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.

The following 9 positions are recommended to be reclassified: Baker (C104) to Food Preparation Coordinator (C108), Two (2) Cooks (C104) to Food Preparation Coordinators (C108), and Six (6) Food Preparation Technicians (C102) to Cooks (C104).

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.

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.

BRILLE 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.

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.

January 2013