

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (0510)

FISCAL YEAR 2018

Per Acts 174 and 412 of 2017

**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 \$8,472,972 in FY2018 as appropriated in Act 174 of 2017.

A Supplemental appropriation of \$78,000 is also added to the FY2017 appropriation through Act 412 of 2017.

**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 \$6,864,106 in FY2018 and includes the following changes:

**Regular Salaries and Matching** - Decrease of (\$32,937) for the reduction of one Public Safety Security Officer.

**Per Act 412 of 2017 Regular Session:** A supplemental appropriation is added for the State Operations Appropriation for FY2017 adding \$8,000 to Conference and Travel to allow staff to attend professional development seminars and \$70,000 is added to Special Maintenance for repair of facilities.

**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 \$711,334, which includes the following changes:

**Extra Help and Matching** - Increase of \$1,077 to restore appropriation to previous level.

**Operating Expenses** - Increase of \$50,000 to provide for any unanticipated grants

**Professional Fees** - Increase of \$50,000 to provide for any unanticipated grants.

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

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

This appropriation totals \$223,024 and is funded with general revenue. It provides for the reproduction or purchase of new Braille and Large Print Textbooks for Blind and Visually Impaired students attending Arkansas Schools. The total appropriation is 223,024 for each year of the biennium and includes the following change:

**Braille Textbooks** - Increase of \$50,000 in appropriation only to restore the appropriation to previously authorized levels.

**SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND - CASH OPERATIONS (Appropriation (A19))**

This cash appropriation is used to supplement general revenues to provide required services to the blind and visually impaired student population. Funding is derived from USDA reimbursements, interest from investments and legacy donations. The appropriation is \$474,508 for each year and includes the following increase:

**Capital Outlay** - \$50,000 for the purchase of equipment.

**III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS (Total FY2017 authorized positions: 106)**

Total Positions FY2018: 105

Total Base Level Positions:106

Increase / (Decrease) over FY2016 Base Level: (1)

One Position - Public Safety Security Officer is removed from FY2018 Appropriation.

Extra Help Positions FY2018: 17 (Total FY2016 Authorized Extra Help: 17)

**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 REVISED\* 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. A new line is added to the language to allow the School for the Blind to purchase electronic textbooks and adaptive technology.

**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.

**\*LANGUAGE REVISED\* 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. New language added that approval by the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State is required before this provision may be implemented.

**\*LANGUAGE REVISED\* 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. School for the Deaf is stricken from the language as the Schools for the Blind and Deaf are now independent of one another in statute.

**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.