

Annual Report 2020-2021

A message from Superintendent Nancy E. Benham

Dear CSDB Community and Friends,

It is my pleasure to present the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind's annual report for the school year 2020-2021. This has been a challenging year, but I have continually amazed by the creativity and ingenuity of our staff, and the positivity and enthusiasm of our students. Certainly, everyone has demonstrated the characteristics of P.R.I.D.E. (positive attitude, respect, independence, determination, and excellence).

Staff and students alike have continued to reach for the stars by staying focused, participating in opportunities to support each other and achieve their goals. 2020-2021 offered staff and students the opportunities to think outside the box as some students participated in-person, while others were remote.

The CSDB community values and supports education. Our community has rallied around our students and staff members to offer support, resources, and encouragement. We are incredibly grateful. Thank you for partnering with us to build a very bright future for the children of CSDB.

As you read the annual report, think about the lives of the children that CSDB serves on campus and throughout the state. Lives have been changed because of the commitment of our dedicated staff and the support of our community.

Sincerely,

Nancy E. Benham, Ph.D.
Superintendent

CSDB P.R.I.D.E.

Positive Attitude, Respect, Independence, Determination, Excellence

MISSION STATEMENT

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB), in collaboration with families, school districts and community partners, educates and inspires learners throughout the state, birth through age 21, to achieve their full potential through comprehensive, individualized academic, transition, residential and outreach programs and resources.

CSDB School Board

Teresa Raiford, Martin Becerra-Miranda, Allan Ward, Chair, Paul Foster, CDE Ex-Officio Member, Michelle A. Samuels, PhD, Vice-Chair, Walter VonFeldt, Meghan Klassen, M.Ed, Mike Merrifield (not pictured)

CSDB Serves a Diverse Population of Students

Our student body

- Average length of stay 4.45 years
- Eligible for free/reduced lunch 57%
- Student contact days
185 scheduled days

Student (On-Campus) Primary Disability

Deaf/HH 40%
Deaf + 13%,
Blind/VI 12%
Blind + 19%
Deafblind 3%
Multiple 13%

Student Diversity

Hispanic 46%
White-40%
Asian 5%
Black 7%
2+ Races 2%

Enrollment by Program

Grades Pre-School thru 2nd Grade
Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 17
Blind/Visually Impaired: 9

Grades 3rd thru 8th
Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 43
Blind/Visually Impaired: 27

Grades 9th thru 12th
Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 35
Blind/Visually Impaired: 16

Bridges to Life

Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 9
Blind/Visually Impaired: 7

Students, served by school districts in Colorado, who require a specialized, unique, learning environment in the area of deafness and/or vision loss, as outlined in their current Individual Education Program (IEP), may be eligible to enroll as a student, if the needs can be met in the environment, at CSDB.

School Performance Frameworks

CSDB has a specialized mission and is designated as an Alternative Education Campus (AEC). CSDB qualifies as an AEC because 100% of the students are on an Individualized Education Program.

The AEC School Performance Framework (SPF) is composed of required state measures but may also include additional optional measures. CSDB submits optional measures that are approved by CDE for inclusion in the AEC framework. The optional measures include NWEA MAP, BASC-Bess SURVEY and, Post-Completion Success Rate. CSDB received a rating of AEC: Improvement on the 2019 AEC School Performance Framework.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the pause on state assessments last year, and the subsequent 2020 accountability pause, the 2019 plan types were rolled over to 2020. A second year of Accountability Pause (2021-2022) has been authorized by the Colorado legislature. The state's accountability system has been paused for 2020-21 and 2021-22 and the plan type was rolled over from 2019.

School Performance Frameworks

AEC: Improvement 55.47/100

Indicator Rating Totals

Indicator: Academic Achievement

% Points earned 25%

Eligible Rating 3.75/15—Does not Meet

Academic Growth

% Points earned 44.9%

Eligible Rating 15.72/35—Approaching

Student Engagement

% Points earned 75%

Eligible Rating 15/20—Meets

Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness

% Points earned 70%

Eligible Rating 21/30—Meets

Cut-Points for Each Performance Indicator

Academic Achievement; Academic Growth; Student Engagement; Postsecondary Workforce and Readiness

Exceeds—at or above 87.5%

Meets—at or above 62.5% - below 87.5%

Approaching—at or above 37.5% - below 62.5%

Does not Meet—below 37.5%

CSDB is Comprised of the Following Departments

School for the Blind

School for the Deaf

Employability Center

Student Services

Student Life

Athletics

Outreach Statewide Services

- Early Education
- CIMC

Finance and Personnel

Facilities

Communications

School for the Blind

CSDB believes that focused professional learning communities (PLCs) impact achievement. Our professional learning communities concentrated on literacy, numeracy, and the Extended Evidence Outcome and Functional Academics for students with additional disabilities. Some accomplishments included selecting a new tier 1 numeracy curriculum, implementing a new curriculum for students with additional disabilities, and collecting assistive technology information and data on applicable students. An instructional media technology position was established to provide additional technology instruction as well as to provide evaluation, modeling, and training to staff and parents regarding available assistive technology options.

CSDB held Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) workshops, twice a month. These workshops connected families to one another and provided tips for embedding the ECC into everyday life. These workshops focused specifically on social skills, independent living skills, assistive technology, recreation and leisure, and orientation and mobility.

Students On-Campus literacy modality – School for the Blind

Braille Users 61%

Print Users 37%

Dual Users 2%

Students have an identified primary modality(ies) in which they access literacy that is either Braille, Print, or Dual (Braille and Print offered simultaneously).

School for the Deaf

During this challenging time of COVID, our teachers were able to adapt instruction through multiple platforms to accommodate students in-person and on-line, simultaneously. Instruction included a multitude of visual, recorded, and live resources and supports, to provide a blended online learning environment.

The 2020-2021 school year was the first year with our newly adopted core K-12 literacy curriculum: Into Reading (for grades K-5) and Into Literature (for grades 6-12). This year, staff began implementation of the curriculum, a large component of this process was for us to develop accommodations to meet the needs of our learners, including video adaptations of the reading material in American Sign Language (ASL).

A mathematics workgroup consisting of all elementary teachers and our secondary mathematics teachers met and reviewed various mathematics curricula, selecting a new core K-12 curriculum. This curriculum, Reveal Math, was purchased and will be ready for implementation next school year.

Communication Preferences- Students On-Campus Deaf/Hard of Hearing

ASL only 53%

Multiple Languages 20%

ASL/English 15%

Minimal Language 12%

Employability Center

The Employability Center, serving students who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind, partnered with 41 on-campus employers and off-campus community business partners to provide invaluable resources and hands-on work experiences for Bridges to Life (BtL) and high school students enrolled in career education courses. This school year, 92% of BtL and Post-Secondary Preparation students participated in a work study project.

Of our students who exited the BtL program in 2020, 67% were engaged in competitive employment, 21% were attending postsecondary education or training programs and 12% were not engaged in either and are continuing to explore their work/training opportunities. One BtL student exited the program to pursue his career dream of becoming a long-distance truck driver. This is our second student to successfully complete his licensing requirements and obtain employment in this field.

The Employability Center supported students in taking college-level courses at Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC). Students, from the Employability Center and the School for the Blind, enrolled in a variety of courses including English and Science courses.

Student Services

The Student Services team collaborates with the instructional staff to help students meet the goals in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). We focus on building skills that allow students access to instruction in the classroom and around campus, as well as skills necessary for independence. Related services at CSDB include Speech Language, Audiology, Psychological and Counseling Services, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Orientation and Mobility, and School Health Services.

The FM Loan Bank provides hearing assistive technology systems (such as Phonak Roger and Oticon Amigo) to districts that do not have the funds to purchase these devices. These systems are for students, who are hard of hearing, to help them hear spoken classroom lessons more clearly. For the school year 2020-2021, the FM Loan Bank served 31 Colorado school districts.

During the 2020-2021 school year, due to the COVID-19 closures, the Student Services team continued modifying the service delivery model to accommodate for in-person learning, and remote learning. Individual student appointments arranged on campus when students were home, online- video services, and meeting students for in person learning in the community were included. This flexible approach to providing related services ensured students' needs continued to be met regardless of learning location or platform.

Student Life

Residential Students

Due to COVID-19, students participated in after-school activities on campus. Staff helped make the time fun starting with cooking dinner in the dorms every night. All students helped plan menus, master basic cooking skills, and eventually, cooked full meals with minimal staff support.

During the holiday season, residential staff decorated a school vehicle for the “Curbside Holiday” event in neighborhoods in Pueblo, Castle Rock, Denver, Fountain, Peyton, and Colorado Springs. A signing Santa, Mrs. Claus, elves, and our Bulldog mascot, who used a white cane, visited with the families, and took photos.

After-School Programs

This year, residential students participated in Running Club, UNO tournaments, Lego building challenges, biking and big screen movie nights. Zoom events included Technology Hour, creating tactile art, and trivia nights. Campus events included Bingo, an outdoor Halloween party, St. Patrick’s Day party, and Sam’s Annual BBQ/farewell event.

Athletics

Student athletes competed with other 1A schools in girls' volleyball and track and field. Special Olympics offered track and field, where athletes competed at the regional level. Basketball, goalball, and volleyball hosted staff vs student nights to show off skills on the court.

The high school track and field team had three athletes compete at regionals and two moved on to compete at the state competition.

Outreach Statewide Services

Outreach Programs are designed to meet the needs of students, who do not attend CSDB, their families and school district staff. A variety of services for students, birth through high school, who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind are available.

The American Sign Language (ASL) instructors taught 98 education professionals, parents, and community members in virtual classes.

- Forty-two professionals participated virtually in ASL Immersion classes.
- ASL Instruction for students, parents and school staff were provided in collaboration with the Mesa Valley 51 and Lone Star School Districts.
- Itinerant teachers served 132 school-age students in their home schools.
- A collaboration with the Colorado Digital Learning Solutions (CDLS) supported 166 high school students, receiving instruction in American Sign Language (ASL), through online classes.
- Outreach staff and the Pikes Peak Library District collaborated on a monthly series of ASL storytelling events for young children, ages 0-2 and 3-5 years old.
- For students who are blind or visually impaired, Outreach co-hosted the virtual Denver Braille Challenge with the Colorado Center for the Blind.

Outreach: Early Education

Colorado Regional Hearing Coordinators (CO-Hears), employed by CSDB, provided services to 594 children, birth to three years of age, who are deaf or hard of hearing, and their families.

Language and Literacy support was provided to 166 families, through the Colorado Shared Reading Project (CSRP).

A total of 50 infants/toddlers, who are blind or visually impaired between the ages of newborn to three, and their families were supported in their homes through a collaboration with The Resource Exchange (TRE) and Colorado Blue Sky Enterprises, local Blue Sky Community Centered Boards (CCB), serving El Paso, Teller, Park and Pueblo counties.

A total of 16 early literacy events were offered with families attending from the Denver Metro, Pikes Peak, North Central, Northeast, Southwest, and West Central regions of Colorado.

Outreach collaborated with Hands and Voices, Marion Downs Center, and Listen Foundation to bring families with D/HH children a holiday party.

Statewide Participation Summary-CSDB Outreach Programs

Total Participants/Region

Pikes Peak Region—Deaf/HH 210, Blind/VI 101

Northeast Region—Deaf/HH 34, Blind/VI no services requested

Southeast Region—Deaf/HH 13, Blind/VI no services requested

Metro Denver Region—Deaf/HH 406, Blind/VI 2

North Central Region—Deaf/HH 76, Blind/VI no services requested

Southwest Region—Deaf/HH 8, Blind/VI 3

West Central Region—Deaf/HH 16, Blind/VI no services requested

Northwest Region—Deaf/HH 36, Blind/VI 3

Numbers represent people served through Outreach Services, including family members, students and professionals participating in activities such as the Colorado Shared Reading Project, Early Literacy activities, professional development, ASL family and community classes, school-age itinerant services, ASL Immersion activities, and early intervention services.

Colorado Department of Education (CDE)/CSDB Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)

The CIMC, funded by CDE, is housed on the campus of CSDB. CIMC provided braille and large print textbooks and novels, as well as instructional products, to licensed teachers of students with visual impairments. These products are used by students who have been identified as having “Visual Impairment Including Blindness (VIIB)”, in Colorado schools, at less than college level. The CIMC purchased books through funds provided by CDE, Colorado administrative units, and the APH Federal Quota Program.

School Year 2020-2021

Students, age 0-21, identified with a qualifying educational disability of VIIB – 1,257

Students, age 0-21, on the January Federal Quota count of eligible students who meet the definition of blindness – 605 (January 2020 count)

Textbook and novel requests fulfilled in braille and large print format – 361

Finance and Personnel

Revenue for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

- General Fund Appropriation \$15,401,155
- Per Pupil Operating \$1,671,570
- Federal Grants \$778,291
- Federal Funding \$74,913
- Donations & Other Revenue \$89,539

Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

- Programs \$9,383,011.65
- Support \$3,332,191.54
- Residential \$2,078,248.00
- Administration \$2,160,258.70

Staff Allocation

- Teachers 24%
- Support Staff 27%
- Healthcare Technicians 16%
- State Teacher Aides 7%
- Administrators 6%
- Other Professionals 20%

Building a Community with Pride

The Good Tidings Foundation and the LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation funded and created the LeRoy Neiman Art Studio, at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, which includes an educational partnership with the newly opened United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum located just minutes from the school's campus.

The new studio is outfitted with circular nesting tables to accommodate various communication needs and there's even a stage for students to present their pieces. All of it is geared toward nurturing Neiman's passion for the creation of art in young Coloradans of different abilities. The plan is to use the facility to bring in athletes to work with the students and even members of the community when possible.

How do you make school buildings safe for re-entry and maintain safe access for all occupants? This was a challenge that COVID-19 posed for the custodial staff at CSDB. Consultants provided the expertise in areas such as epidemiology, indoor air quality, industrial hygiene, and surface disinfection. Through these collaborations, CSDB coordinated cleaning and safety protocols in each building.

Telling the Stories

CSDB created a new Communications Department, beginning with two staff members, to increase the frequency of information distribution. Two additional staff members joined in March 2021, allowing the team to increase the number of live broadcasts and video production.

The Colorado Statewide Internet Portal Authority provided website developers and a content management solution, Drupal 8, to create a new CSDB website, which kicked off November 2020. Between November 2020-June 2021, the website had 84,304 pageviews.

While all social media platforms experienced growth in the past year, we continue to experience the most engagement through Facebook followed by Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. We grew subscribers to our YouTube channel through the addition of accessible videos and corresponding email marketing using Constant Contact.

The Communication Department produced more than thirty original videos for YouTube, twenty original videos for the social media platforms and created eight live broadcasts for use on the CSDB website, Comcast TV channels and social media platforms.

CSDB 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Areas

School Climate

- Equity
- Communication
- Morale
- Safety
- Recruitment

Instruction

- Core Classroom Practices/Universal Prevention (Tier 1)
- Targeted Prevention/Group Intervention (Tier 2)/Individualized Prevention/Intensive Intervention (Tier 3)
- On-line and Blended Learning
- Transition Education

Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness

- Graduation Requirements
- Workforce Readiness
- Post-Secondary Education

Learning and Living Beyond the Classroom

- Extra-Curricular Programming
- Building Autonomy

Statewide Services

- Trainings and Workshops
- Early Education Programs
- School-Aged Services and Programming
- Collaboration and Resources

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) and its Board is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment where all members of the school community are treated with dignity, and respect. CSDB does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, or marital status. Accordingly, no otherwise qualified student, employee, applicant for employment or member of the public shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or unwelcome behavior under any CSDB program or activity on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, ancestry, veteran status, or marital status. Discrimination against employees and applicants for employment based on age, genetic information and

conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth is also prohibited in accordance with state and/or federal law.