

School For The Deaf & Blind

Agency Proposed Budget

The following table summarizes the total executive budget proposal for the agency by year, type of expenditure, and source of funding.

Budget Item	Base Budget Fiscal 2004	PL Base Adjustment Fiscal 2006	New Proposals Fiscal 2006	Total Exec. Budget Fiscal 2006	PL Base Adjustment Fiscal 2007	New Proposals Fiscal 2007	Total Exec. Budget Fiscal 2007	Total Exec. Budget Fiscal 06-07
FTE	81.68	(0.73)	0.00	80.95	(0.73)	0.00	80.95	80.95
Personal Services	3,285,424	475,472	0	3,760,896	475,109	0	3,760,533	7,521,429
Operating Expenses	561,260	48,297	0	609,557	15,955	0	577,215	1,186,772
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Costs	\$3,846,684	\$523,769	\$0	\$4,370,453	\$491,064	\$0	\$4,337,748	\$8,708,201
General Fund	3,408,893	575,943	0	3,984,836	543,238	0	3,952,131	7,936,967
State/Other Special	341,095	(58,343)	0	282,752	(58,343)	0	282,752	565,504
Federal Special	96,696	6,169	0	102,865	6,169	0	102,865	205,730
Total Funds	\$3,846,684	\$523,769	\$0	\$4,370,453	\$491,064	\$0	\$4,337,748	\$8,708,201

Agency Description

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, located in Great Falls, operates under the authority of 20-8-101 through 121, MCA, is part of Montana's educational system, and is under the policy and governance of the State Board of Public Education. The school is to be a day school with a residential option for children and adolescents whose hearing or sight is a barrier to receiving proper education in the public schools of the state. The school is also to provide outreach educational services and serve as a resource center for parents of deaf and blind children, as well as state public schools and organizations that serve sensory impaired children. Their goal is to allow their students to attain the attitude, understanding, skill, ability, and knowledge to become contributing members of society.

Agency Highlights

School for the Deaf & Blind	
Major Budget Highlights	
•	The executive, with minor exceptions, proposes no changes to the budget except statewide present law adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present law adjustments increase the general fund by \$0.9 million over the 2005 biennium, due mostly to a workers' compensation premium increase of \$318,000 • Termination of Montana Telecommunications Access Program funds • A permanent elimination of .73 FTE
Major LFD Issues	
•	Possible research projects
•	Possible impact of equitable school funding changes

MSDB executes its mandated duties with 80.95 FTE and four programs: administration, general services (grounds and buildings), student services (residential), and education.

In FY 2004 MSDB served a total population of 2,418, a 16 percent increase over the 2,082 served in FY 2003. The population served includes students enrolled in the education program, individuals receiving educational and

audiological evaluations, outreach programs serving families and public schools, summer and weekend programs, professional development, and staff training.

The executive is recommending a total biennial budget increase of \$915,000 over the 2005 biennial budget, primarily due to an increase in personal services of \$860,000 that comprises a \$121,000 lump sum adjustment for the aggregate positions of substitute teachers, interpreters, and teaching assistants, statewide adjustments and vacancy savings, and a \$415,695 workers' compensation premium. The school's total operating expenses over the biennium increase by \$55,000 because of present law adjustments and decision packages that reduce the use of the general fund by \$20,400. The largest adjustments occur in the education and student services programs, which employ 71.95 FTE of the agency's 80.95 total FTE. There is further discussion on this in the education program.

LFD COMMENT The School for the Deaf and Blind was assessed a workers' compensation premium of \$415,695 over the biennium, which averages \$5,100 for each of the 80.95 FTE. The increase is based upon a formula reflecting claims for injuries. The school's premium was \$60,000 in FY 2002, \$77,000 in FY 2003, and \$97,800 in FY 2004. Estimated premiums for FY 2005 to FY 2007 range from \$203,000 to \$212,000, impacting the agency's biennial premium with a \$318,000 increase.

Because of its 24/7 nature of program delivery, the residential program and day school (10-8-101 – 102, MCA), as well as extensive outreach services, the school's educational programs are staff intensive. Additionally, the school responds to social and employment issues in conjunction with other agencies working on common issues, such as:

- DPHHS, birthing facilities, and audiologists on the process of tracking children with hearing loss
- County, state, and federal agencies to secure employment for self-sustaining persons upon graduation from the school
- Vocational Rehab and/or Blind and Low Vision Services on the transition of students upon graduation to prepare them for the workforce and independent living
- School districts throughout the state to ensure quality services to sensory impaired children enrolled in public schools

The school's outreach program and consulting services to public schools and families is growing while the number of children using the residency service is declining. In FY 2002, 42 students were in the residency program and individuals receiving other services totaled 1,246. In FY 2004, there were 37 students in residency and other services totaled 2,381. This trend reflects the philosophy of this school and statewide public schools to keep children in their communities and homes whenever possible. In accordance with 20-8-102 and 107, MCA, the school is allowed to collect a consultation fee from public schools or agencies they assist on behalf of a hearing or visually impaired student. The school may also collect a sum from each child enrolled in the school who is not a Montana resident. The fees are deposited into a state special revenue account that is statutorily appropriated to the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. Fees are a minimal source of revenue, having ranged from \$6,000 to \$9,000 from 2000 through 2004.

Funding

The following table summarizes funding for the agency, by program and source as recommended by the Governor. Funding for each program is discussed in detail in the individual program narratives that follow.

Total Agency Funding 2007 Biennium Executive Budget					
Agency Program	General Fund	State Spec.	Fed Spec.	Grand Total	Total %
01 Administration Program	\$ 700,812	\$ 878	\$ -	\$ 701,690	8.1%
02 General Services	821,452	-	-	821,452	9.4%
03 Student Services	2,259,382	-	58,222	2,317,604	26.6%
04 Education	4,155,321	564,626	147,508	4,867,455	55.9%
Grand Total	7,936,967	565,504	205,730	8,708,201	100.0%

The school's programs are funded primarily from the general fund, augmented by federal funding from Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the school lunch program, the Early Childhood Intervention Act, and Medicaid reimbursement. It also receives about \$280,000 per year from the school trust interest earnings that are listed in state/other special revenue. This biennium, \$58,000 is removed from the state special revenue category to adjust for a decrease in the school land trust income.

**LFD
ISSUE**

Components within the educational delivery for sensory impaired children might lend themselves to cost reduction while maintaining educational services

As stated, the school has shifted from primarily a campus-based educational delivery system to one that includes more outreach programs to provide services to children within their own communities and school districts. Statewide public schools, DPHHS, Job Service Centers and workforce development programs of the Department of Labor and Industry, hospitals, audiologist clinics, and advocacy programs for disabled citizens are also involved in services for the population served by the school throughout Montana.

Legislators may want to investigate possibilities of partnerships with other agencies and non-profit organizations working on similar issues.

One potential approach is to investigate possibilities of sharing staff, space and expertise, while making maximum use of the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind facility; research and development of new funding sources; and the possible development of a data base of regional experts that could be used on a contract basis for services related to:

- 20-8-102(2), MCA, which requires the school to serve as a consultative resource for parents of, and public schools enrolling, hearing impaired or visually impaired children
- 20-8-102(3), MCA, which requires the school to maintain a system for tracking these children from the time of impairment through the child's exit from intervention or educational services
- 10-8-116 and 20-8-104, MCA that require the school to assist in locating suitable employment for hearing or visually impaired persons in attendance at the school in consultation with county, state, and federal agencies and with the Department of Public Health and Human Services; work with federal programs, such as Social Security and reemployment for those out of work; develop and offer continuing education programs of a vocational nature for the hearing and visually impaired who use the campus and facilities of the school during the summer months and other times when the school facilities are not being used by its students

Option A – Direct staff to investigate and report to an appropriate legislative interim committee.

Option B – Request that the Legislative Finance Committee consider undertaking this project during the 2007 biennium.

Option C – Introduce legislation to undertake a legislative branch study of this issue.

Option D – Take no action

LFD
ISSUE

The Supreme Court's recent decision on equitable school funding could potentially impact the school's budget and the general fund

There are legislatively assigned obligations attached to the School for the Deaf and Blind that may be impacted by the Supreme Court decision. The resulting definition of quality education and its delivery could cause expenditures and programmatic changes as the school responds to meet the new standards or definitions. Additionally, the residential component of the school may be impacted as it relates to the total education of a child with sight and hearing disabilities depending upon the definition of quality education related to community culture, social, and employability skills.

In preparation for this possibility and impact on the general fund, legislators may want to establish a reporting process through which the School for the Deaf and Blind responds to the results of any studies undertaken and explains impacts relative to 20-8-102(4), MCA, which requires the school to "furnish and provide an education for the hearing and visually impaired children commensurate with the education provided to non-handicapped children in the public schools."

Some items that the legislature may want to include in this reporting process to gauge impacts are:

- Accreditation and standards
- Parity for licensed professional staff with peers in public schools
- Replacement / improvement of education technology, books and materials, and the educational library
- Adequate maintenance of school facilities to ensure provision of educational services
- Possible increase in requests for MSDB staff consultations to public schools serving students with sight and hearing disabilities to ensure quality education is maintained

Biennium Budget Comparison

The following table compares the executive budget request in the 2007 biennium with the 2005 biennium by type of expenditure and source of funding. The 2005 biennium consists of actual FY 2004 expenditures and FY 2005 appropriations.

Biennium Budget Comparison								
Budget Item	Present Law Fiscal 2006	New Proposals Fiscal 2006	Total Exec. Budget Fiscal 2006	Present Law Fiscal 2007	New Proposals Fiscal 2007	Total Exec. Budget Fiscal 2007	Total Biennium Fiscal 04-05	Total Exec. Budget Fiscal 06-07
FTE	80.95	0.00	80.95	80.95	0.00	80.95	81.68	80.95
Personal Services	3,760,896	0	3,760,896	3,760,533	0	3,760,533	6,661,571	7,521,429
Operating Expenses	609,557	0	609,557	577,215	0	577,215	1,131,679	1,186,772
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Costs	\$4,370,453	\$0	\$4,370,453	\$4,337,748	\$0	\$4,337,748	\$7,793,250	\$8,708,201
General Fund	3,984,836	0	3,984,836	3,952,131	0	3,952,131	6,916,681	7,936,967
State/Other Special	282,752	0	282,752	282,752	0	282,752	683,177	565,504
Federal Special	102,865	0	102,865	102,865	0	102,865	193,392	205,730
Total Funds	\$4,370,453	\$0	\$4,370,453	\$4,337,748	\$0	\$4,337,748	\$7,793,250	\$8,708,201