

The Legislative Fiscal Division Presents an Agency Profile of:

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind

Contact: Rob Miller, Fiscal Analyst

Rm. 132, State Capitol Building

Phone: (406) 444-1795

E-mail: robertmiller@mt.gov

Updated August 2014

Definition of Terms

Agency Description

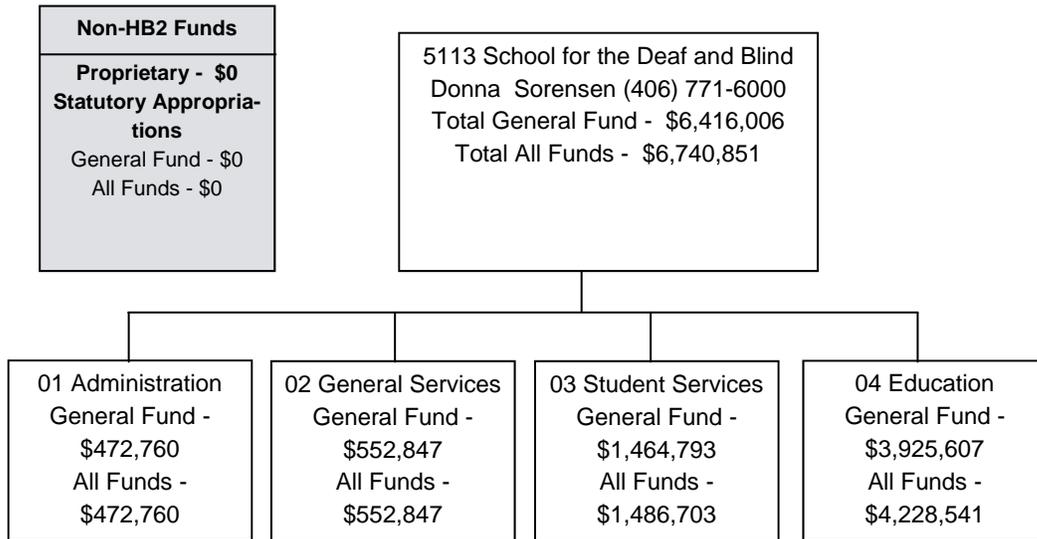
The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB), located in Great Falls, is part of Montana's educational system, and under the policy and governance of the State Board of Public Education.

The school promotes and provides free, appropriate, and comprehensive educational opportunities statewide, for children ages birth through twenty-one who are either deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision, or deaf-blind. The school works to ensure these children achieve their greatest potential for independence, success and self-sufficiency toward a meaningful personal, family and community life, and a useful, productive occupational life.

In accordance with 20-8-101 through 121 MCA the legislatively assigned duties are:

- Serve as a consultative resource for parents of, and for public schools enrolling, hearing impaired or visually impaired children
- Establish a system for tracking these children from the time of impairment through the child's exit from intervention or educational services
- Furnish and provide an education for the hearing and visually impaired children that is commensurate with the education provided to non-handicapped children in the public schools
- Assist in locating suitable employment for hearing or visually impaired persons in attendance at the school in consultation with county, state and federal agencies
- Provide vocational training
- Provide transportation expense for residential students to and from the students home

Below is an organizational chart of the agency including general fund appropriations, statutory appropriations, proprietary funds, and total funds. The School for the Deaf and Blind does not have proprietary or statutory funding.



How Services are Provided

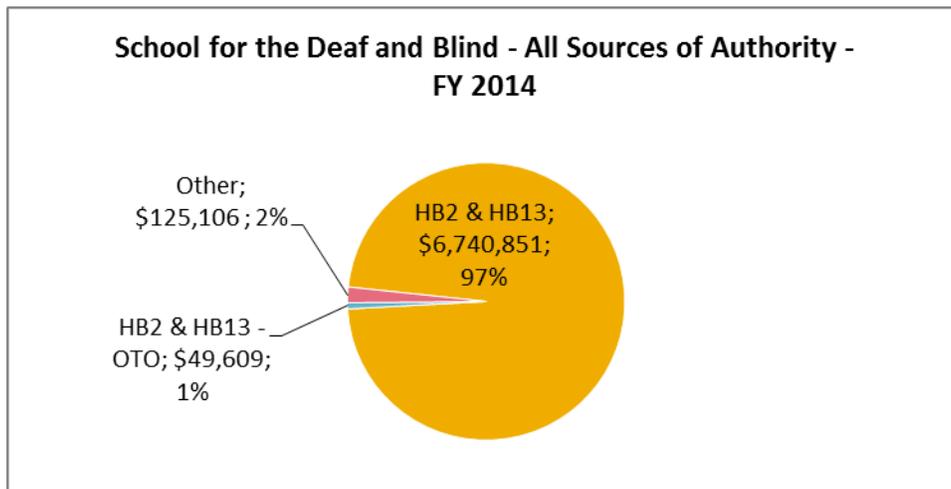
The school provides services through four programs. Their functions are described below.

- 1) The Administration Program provides purchasing, accounting, personnel functions, and management of the business affairs for the school.
- 2) General Services is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the school's campus.
- 3) Student Services provides residential care for children living at the school including:
 - Living quarters
 - Food services
 - Around the clock supervision
 - Health services
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Transportation services
- 4) The Education Program at the Great Falls campus provides an education for children with hearing and/or sight loss that prevents them from receiving a quality education in their local schools. There are two functional areas within the education program.
 - The education program at the Great Falls Campus:
 - Provides educators and aids with specialized training in the education of hearing/visually impaired children
 - Provides specialized curriculum, instruction, equipment and learning environment for students taking classes on the Great Falls campus.
 - Provides extracurricular activities comparable to the mainstream K-12 education system.

The outreach services is a statewide program that serves visually and hearing-impaired children who remain in their local school districts by:

- Providing audio-logical and educational assessments for deaf and blind children
- Providing consultation and technical assistance to local school districts
- Providing home-based family training for sensory impaired infants and toddlers
- Lending of specialized education equipment to school districts throughout the state
- Arranging family learning weekends for parents and siblings
- Conducting summer skills camps for deaf and blind students

Sources of Spending Authority



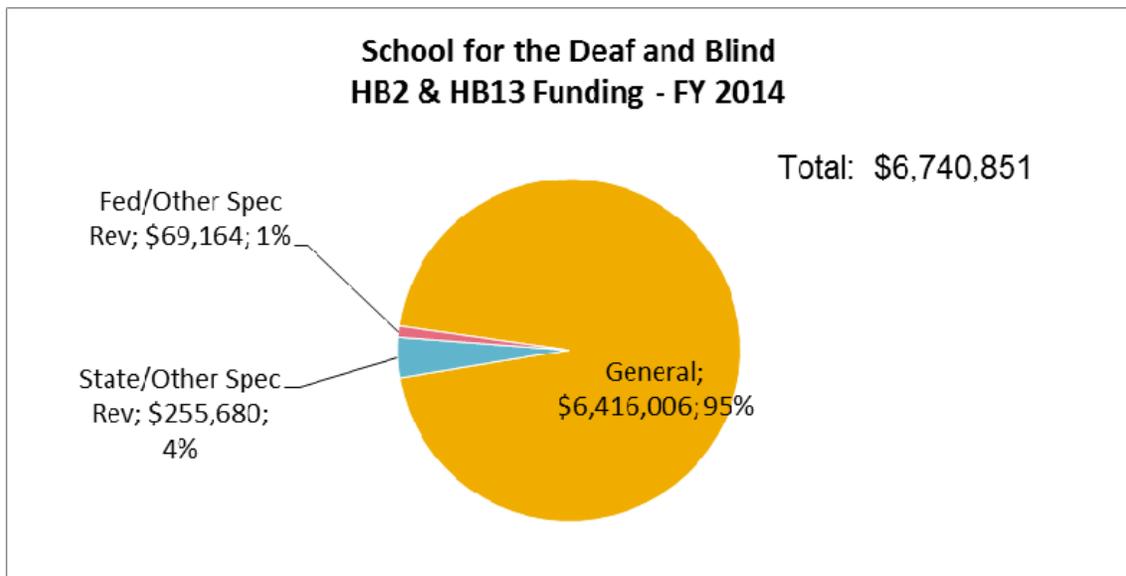
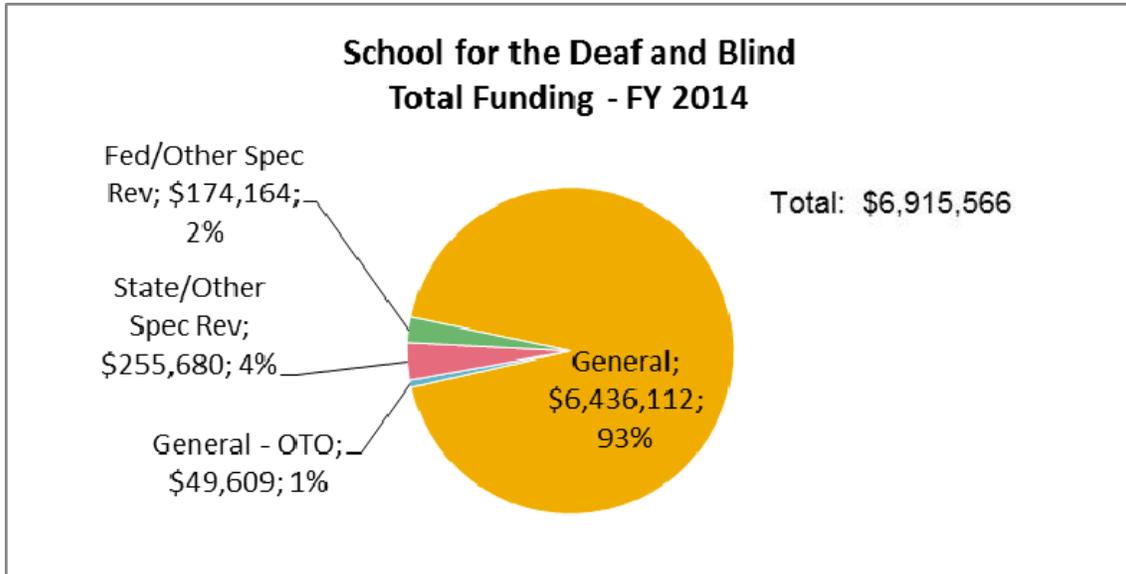
The above chart shows the sources of authority for the School for the Deaf and Blind. Other legislative appropriations (sometimes called cat and dog bills) are included in the above categories as appropriate. For a more detailed description of accounting terminology, please refer to the definition of terms.

The Montana School for Deaf and Blind receives funding from four sources:

- Funding authorized by House Bill 2 (HB 2)
- State special revenue is from school trust income and Medicaid reimbursement.
- Federal funds are from E.C.I.A. Chapter I and national school lunch .
- The MSDB Foundation supplements the budget. Since 1981, the MSDB Foundation has provided funds to support:
 - Job training and career preparation
 - Assistive technology
 - Outreach services for students in their home communities
 - Capital improvements on campus
 - Field trips, summer camps, and social events for students

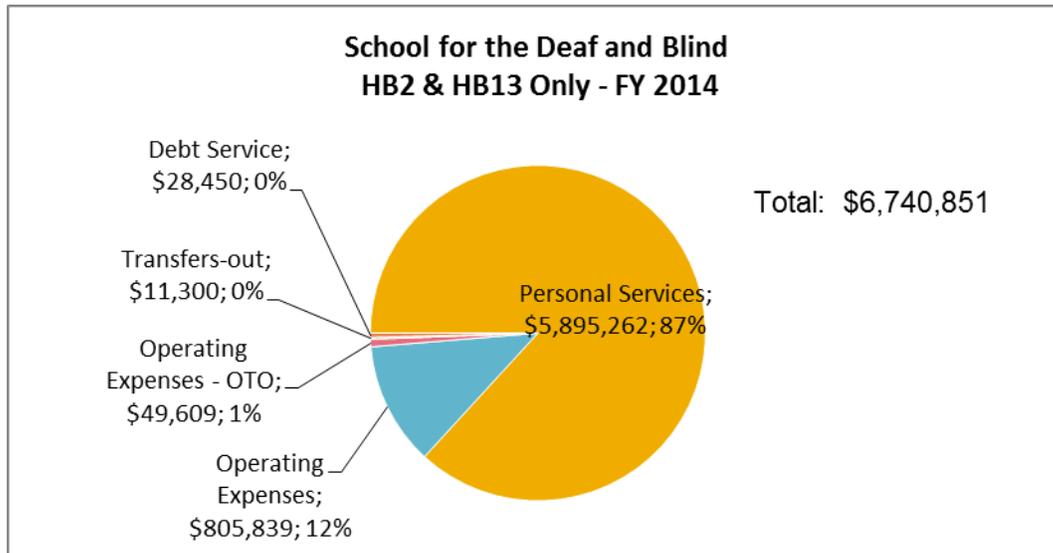
Funding

The following charts show the agency's HB 2 funding authority by fund type and all sources of its total funding authority.



Expenditures

The pie chart explains how the HB 2 authority is spent. In FY 2014 MSDB expended \$6.7 million. The MSDB provides educational services and as is typical with a service organization the major expense is personnel. The pie chart matches the agency chart found in the 2017 Budget Analysis.



How the 2015 Legislature Can Effect Change

In order to change expenditure levels and/or agency activity, the legislature must address one or more of the following basic elements that drive costs.

In order to change expenditure levels and/or activity, the legislature might address legislation:

- Governing the existence and definition of the School for the Deaf and Blind: funding, operation, and fees charged for services
- Governing state aid to public schools and how it relates to the School for the Deaf and Blind “commensurate with the education provided to non-handicapped children in the public schools”
- Related to off campus consultations, and transition and employability, as well as summer, weekend or vacation time programs

The legislature is less likely to control:

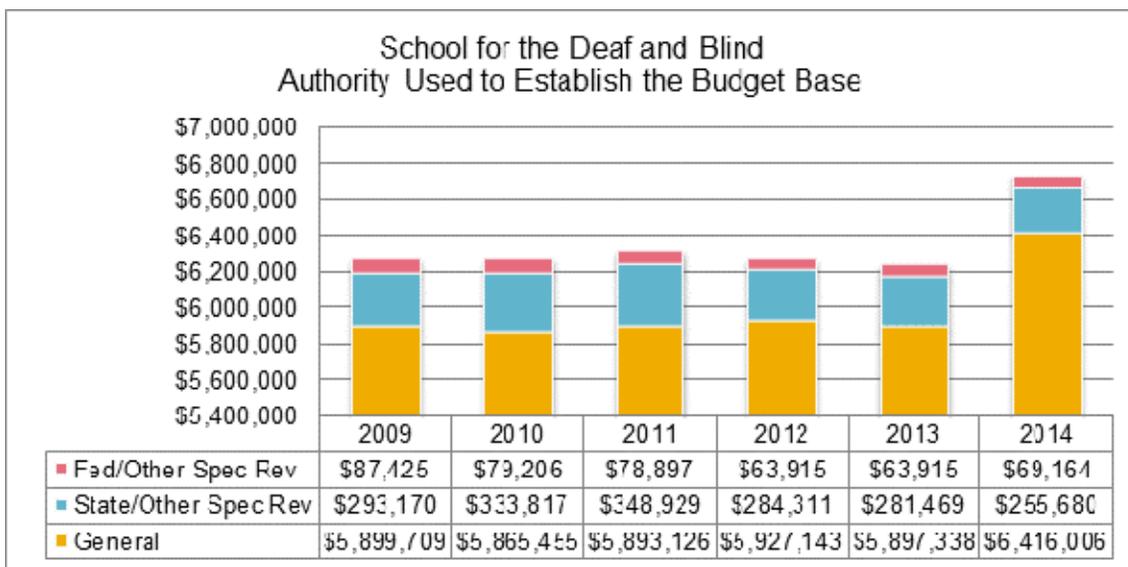
- Federal legislation impacting schools serving citizens with disabilities
- Initiatives or legislation responding to citizen action
- Growth in web-based or long distance education, or other changes in technology that serves this population
- The number of Montana citizens needing this service from year to year
- Economic changes related to costs of utilities, transportation, and residential services

Major Cost Drivers

Montana School for Deaf and Blind Students Served									Significance of Data
Elements	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	
<u>Students served at Great Falls Campus</u>									Slowly declining enrollment, little to no impact on workload
Education Program Deaf	51	38	34	33	39	35	33	27	
Education Program Blind	19	20	19	18	20	26	20	22	
Transition Students	0	4	2	4	6	6	6	3	
Total Campus Program Students	70	62	55	55	65	67	59	52	
Total Students in Residence		23	21	18	20	26	20	22	
<u>Students served through outreach</u>									Increasing number of students receiving services within local school district, increasing workload
Outreach Services - D/HH	100	142	141	188	207	247	265	275	
Outreach Services - VI Students	212	242	229	236	241	271	300	310	
Outreach Services - Deaf/Blind Students	6	5	8	10	10	11	12	12	
Total Outreach Services Students	318	389	378	434	458	529	577	597	
Total Schools Served	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	94	96	114	114	

Funding/Expenditure History

Expenditures for operations have varied little in recent years. The legislature provided funding for pay increases and increased staffing at the school resulting in an increase of 8% in personal service expense. Within the education program there has been a shift from campus based services to services provided statewide through outreach initiatives. Student enrollment in the residential program has varied little since 2001 while students served through outreach services have grown at an annualized rate of 11%. As a result, within the education program the outreach services expenditures have increased each year as a percentage of total spending.



Major Legislative Changes in the Last Ten Years

- The 2011 Legislature statutorily exempted the imposition of vacancy savings on the MSDB for budgeting purposes (17-7-162, MCA).
- The 2005 Legislature increased general fund appropriations by \$150,000 to address repair and maintenance issues on the campus, and eliminated \$276,200 of vacancy savings to allow MSDB to address recruitment and retention issues with staff.
- The 2005 Legislature passed House Bill 438, which required MSDB to provide outreach and Braille services to blind or visually impaired children. MSDB received \$440,000. It established a Braille electronic equipment loan program and used the funds to purchase equipment and hire 4.0 FTE as outreach consultants.
- The 2002 Legislature (special session) passed SB 37, which allowed MSDB to use Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) funds for specialized equipment and telecommunications services for persons with disabilities. It also allowed MTAP funds to be used for hearing related intervention services for infants.

For further information, you may wish to contact the agency at:

School for the Deaf and Blind

3911 Central Ave.

Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: (406) 771-6000

Webpage: <http://www.msdb.mt.gov/>