

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

An Agency Profile Prepared by the
Legislative Fiscal Division

November 2018

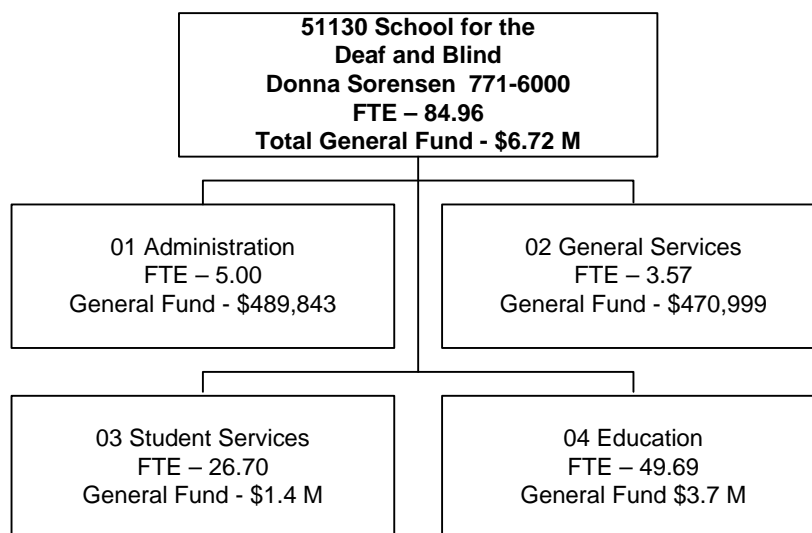
INTRODUCTION

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB), located in Great Falls, is part of Montana's public education 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. 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 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 branch, including full-time employee (FTE) numbers and the HB2 base general fund appropriations and the total of all funds.



HOW SERVICES ARE PROVIDED

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

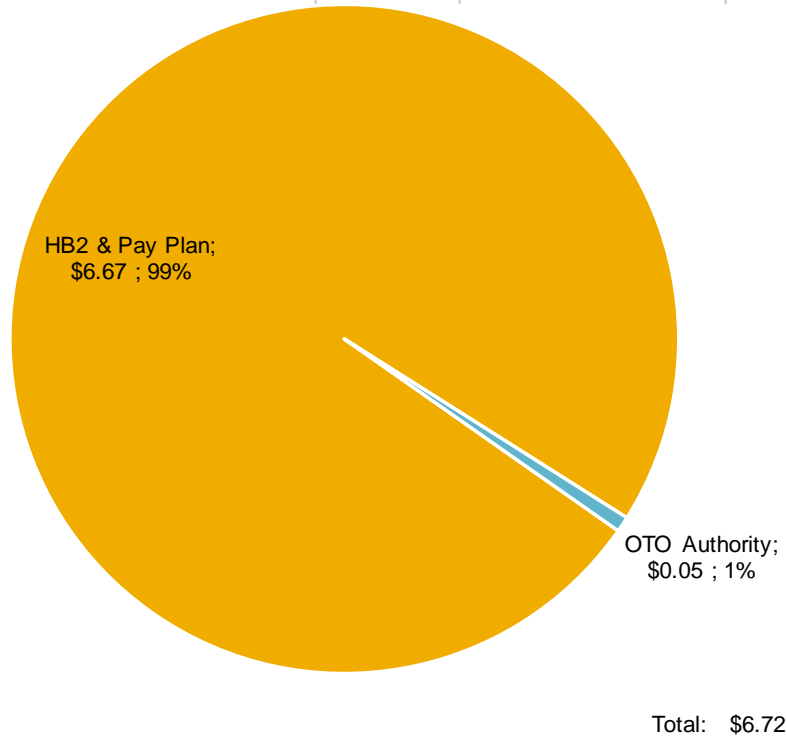
- Program 01 Administration - provides purchasing, accounting, personnel functions, and management of the business affairs for the school.
- Program 02 General Services - is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the school's campus.
- Program 03 Student Services – provides residential care for children living at the school including:
 - Living quarters
 - Food services
 - Around the clock supervision
 - Health services
 - Recreational opportunities

- Transportation services – monthly travel between home and school
- Program 04 Education Program - provides a free and appropriate public education for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired or deafblind. There are two functional areas within the education program.
 - 1) The education program at the Great Falls Campus:
 - Provides educators and paraprofessionals with specialized training in the education of deaf/hard of hearing and blind/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
 - Partners with Great Falls Public Schools to provide mainstreaming options
 - 2) The outreach services is a statewide program that serves children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind and who remain in their local school districts by:
 - Providing audio-logical and educational assessments
 - Providing consultation and technical assistance to local school districts
 - Providing home-based family training for infants and toddlers
 - Lending of specialized education equipment to school districts throughout the state
 - Arranging family learning weekends for families and siblings
 - Conducting summer skills camps for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired or deafblind

Sources of Spending Authority

The chart below shows the source of authority for the MSDB that was expended in FY 2018. HB 2 and pay plan expenditures comprise most of the expenditures of MSDB.

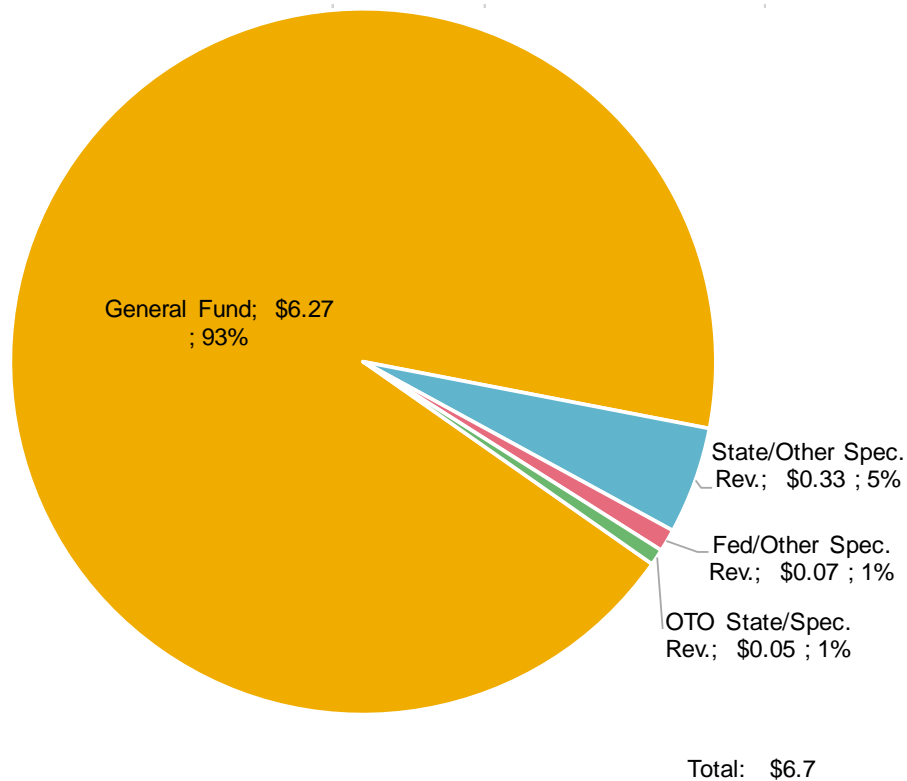
51130 School for the Deaf & Blind
All Sources of Authority
FY 2018 Expenditures by Source of Authority -
(\$ Millions)



Funding

The chart below shows FY 2018 actual expenditures by fund type for all sources of authority.

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind
 All Sources of Authority
 FY 2018 Expenditures by Fund Type -
 (\$ Millions)



The Montana School for Deaf and the Blind, funded almost entirely with state general fund, receives funding from four sources:

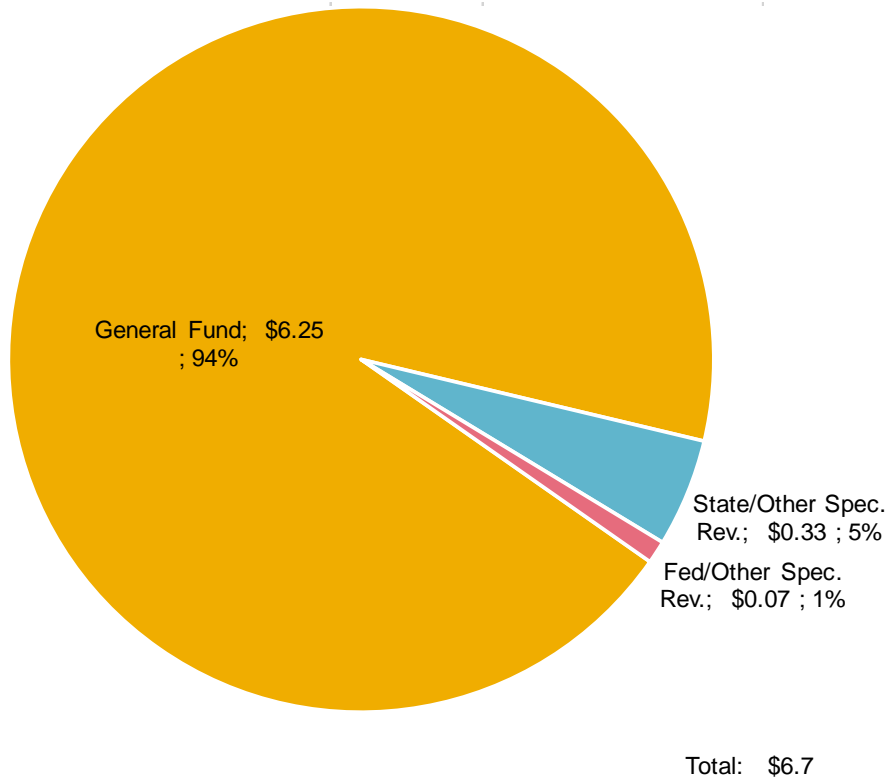
- General Fund (93.0%)
 - An ongoing appropriation from the state general fund authorized by House Bill 2 (HB 2)
- State special revenue (6.0%)
 - From school trust income and Medicaid reimbursement (5.0%)
 - One time only (OTO) for student travel and for stipends to be paid to staff sponsoring extracurricular activities and clubs (1.0%)
- Federal funds (1.0%)
 - From E.C.I.A. Chapter I and national school lunch

Not shown in the chart below, the MSDB Foundation, a separate 501c3 organization, provides additional support for students, families, and staff.

Unlike other Montana K-12 public school districts the school does not have authority to levy, the MSDB is entirely dependent on legislative appropriation for its budget.

The chart below shows the agency's HB2/pay plan expenditures by fund type.

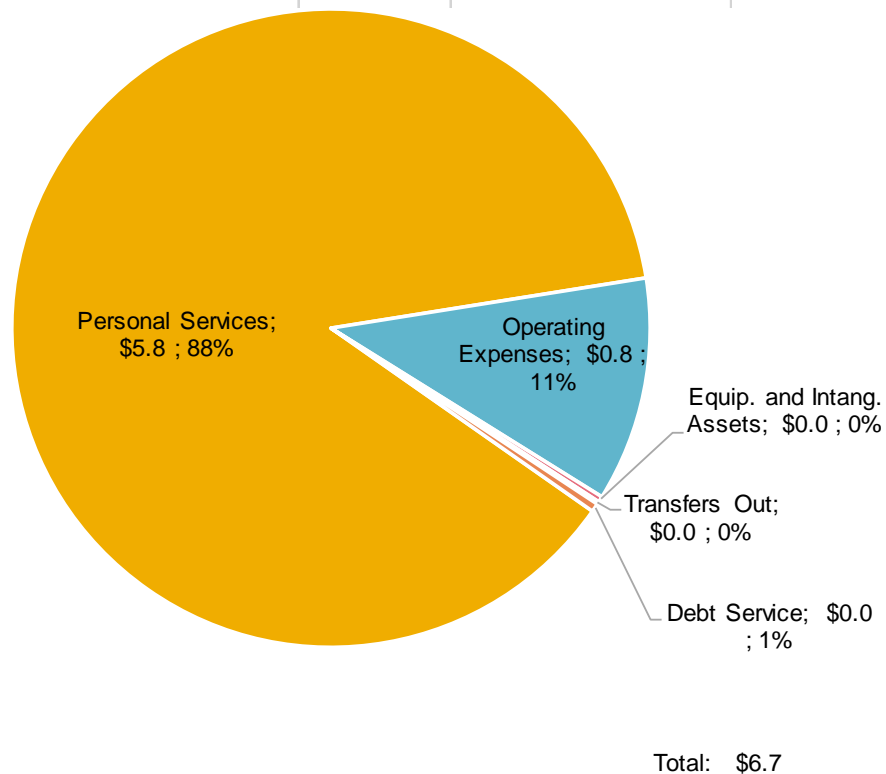
51130 School for the Deaf & Blind
HB 2 and Pay Plan Only
FY 2018 Ongoing Expenditures by Fund Type-
(\$ Millions)



Expenditures

The chart below explains how the HB 2 authority is spent. The largest expenditure category for MSDB is personal services.

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind
 HB 2 and Pay Plan Only
 FY 2018 Ongoing Expenditures by First Level-
 (\$ Millions)



How the 2019 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.

- Legislation governing the existence and definition of the School for the Deaf and Blind: funding, operation, and fees charged for services
- Legislation 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”
- Legislation 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 students 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 students needing this service from year to year
- Economic changes related to costs of utilities, transportation, and residential services

Major Cost Drivers

Personal Services account for 87.3% of all expenditures, services for residential students accounts for 19.1% of personal services. Operations expenses account for 11.9% of all expenditures, maintenance

and upkeep of great falls campus and expenses in support of residential students account 56.4% of operating expense.

The education program at the Great Falls campus provides a K-12 program for about 55 to 60 students per year; typically, about 18 to 25 of these students are in residence at the campus, for which the school provides:

- Provides educators and paraprofessionals with specialized training in the education of deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired children
- Provide specialized curriculum, instruction, equipment and learning environment
- Provide extracurricular activities comparable to the mainstream K-12 education system.
- Living quarters
- Food services
- Around the clock supervision
- Health services
- Recreational opportunities
- Transportation services
- Independent living skills training
- Post-high school transition program
- Opportunities to develop socialization skills with peers who are also deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind
- Access to Deaf role models and role models who are blind or visually impaired

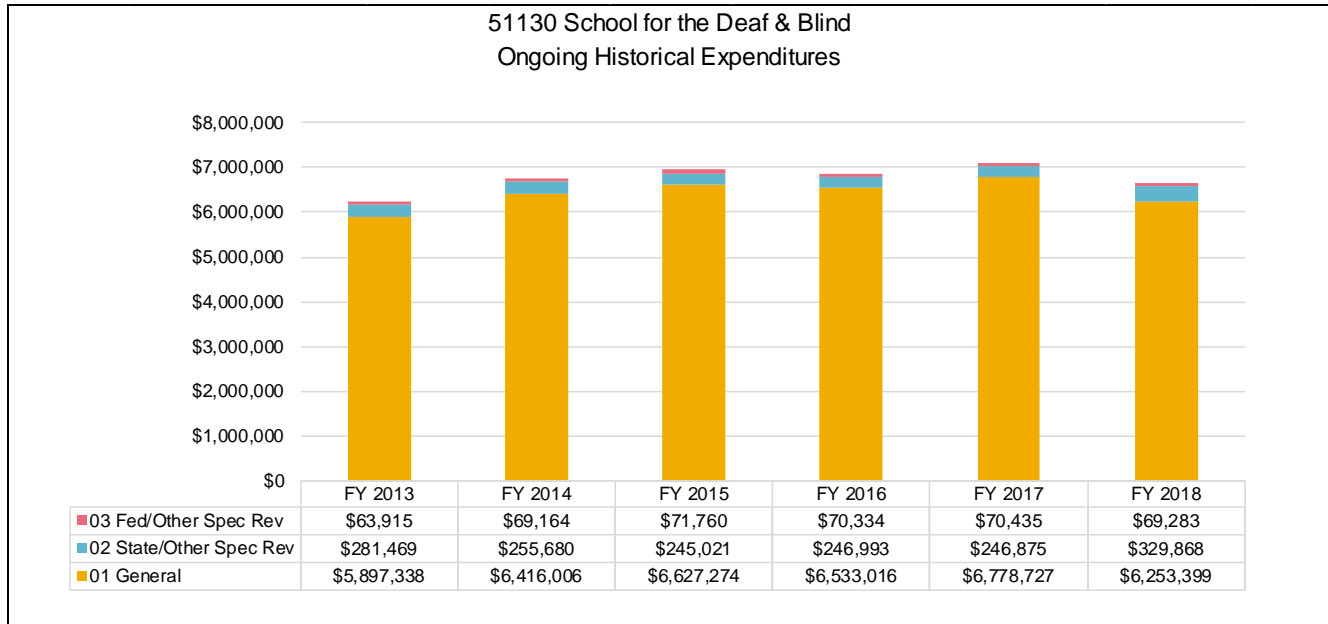
The outreach program provides services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind and who remain in their local school districts. This program serves about 700 students in 114 school districts statewide by providing:

- Providing audio-logical and educational assessments
- Providing consultation and technical assistance to local school districts
- Providing home-based family training for infants and toddlers
- Lending of specialized education equipment to school districts throughout the state
- Arranging family learning weekends for families and siblings
- Conducting summer skills camps for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind

The table below summarizes MSDB services provided on campus and through the outreach program

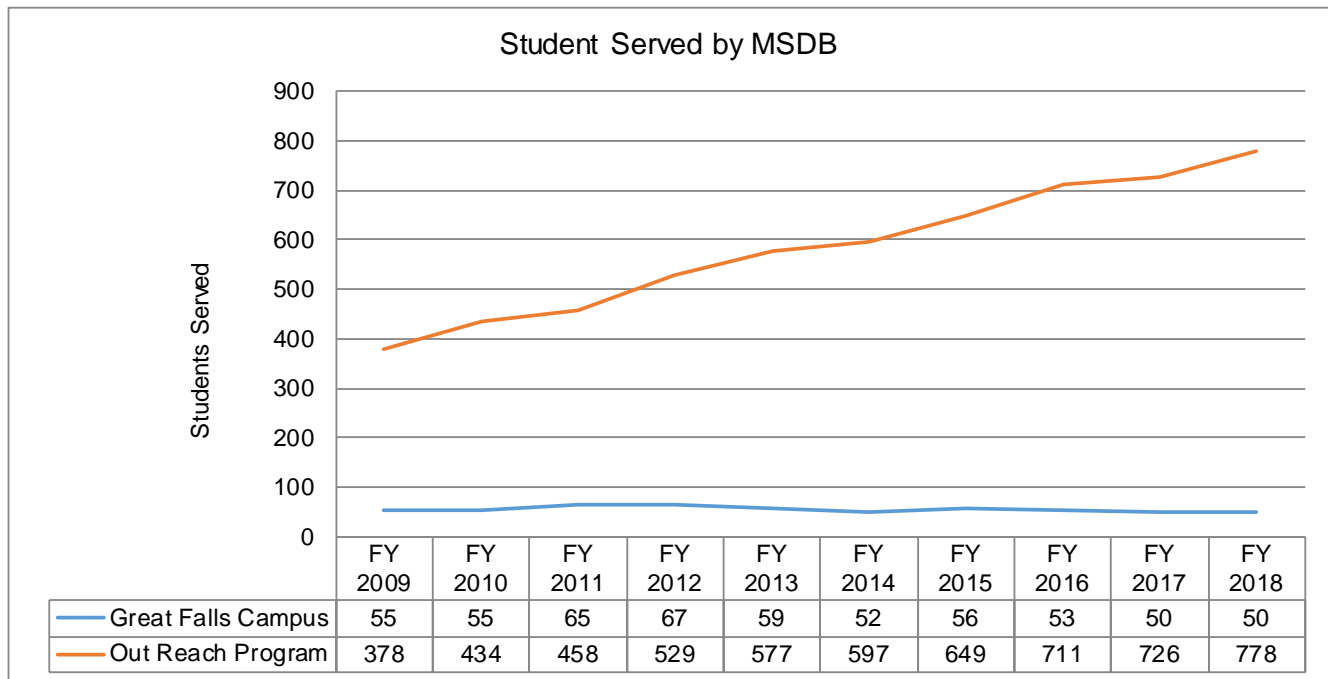
Montana School for Deaf and Blind Students Served											Significance of Data
Elements	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	
Students served at Great Falls Campus											Slowly declining enrollment, little to no impact on workload
Education Program Deaf	34	33	39	35	33	27	25	25	25	26	
Education Program Blind	19	18	20	26	20	22	29	27	25	24	
Transition Students	2	4	6	6	6	3	2	1	0	0	
Total Campus Program Students	55	55	65	67	59	52	56	53	50	50	
Total Students in Residence	21	18	20	26	20	22	22	23	18	18	Increasing number of students receiving services within local school district,
Students served through outreach											
Outreach Services - D/HH	141	188	207	247	265	275	248	340	356	344	
Outreach Services - VI Students	229	236	241	271	300	310	383	345	386	392	
Outreach Services - Deaf/Blind Students	8	10	10	11	12	12	18	26	36	36	
Total Outreach Services Students	378	434	458	529	577	597	649	711	778	762	
Total Schools Served	N/A	N/A	94	96	114	114	114	114	114	114	

Funding/Expenditure History



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 2007 while students served through outreach services have grown at an annualized rate of 8.4%.

The chart below shows the relative growth of students served on campus and through the outreach program.



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).

For further information, you may contact the agency at:

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Great Falls, MT 59405
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Webpage: <http://www.msdb.mt.gov/>