

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR
ANNUAL REPORT



**NEW MEXICO SCHOOL
FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

Dear NMSBVI Family and Partners,

This report shows the breadth of services that NMSBVI provided to the children with vision impairments or blindness in the state of New Mexico during the 2020-2021 school year. This school year was perhaps the most challenging year of our lifetimes with the continuing risks that the pandemic brought to all of us. NMSBVI remained in virtual learning until April, 2021. Remote teaching was demanding and rigorous and we found ourselves learning right along with our students and families. However, along with challenges come successes, new skills, and stronger partnerships. Because so many educators, students and families were experiencing the same struggles, NMSBVI found that reaching out to other educators within New Mexico and across the country allowed us to think bigger, be more creative, share ideas, and learn through others' trials and errors along with our own.

Despite the struggles from the past year, we would like to celebrate our many triumphs by showcasing our programs, our students and our many initiatives, which include research projects, parent and educator state-wide trainings, and professional learning circles. These pages will show examples of a variety of remote-learning lessons, from teaching braille, to conducting science lessons, to addressing the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired.

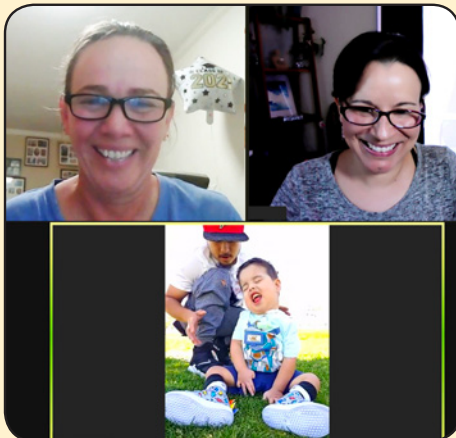
NMSBVI is grateful to our many partners and stakeholders. The funding that NMSBVI receives is used to support our two campuses as well as our many statewide programs that serve the children of New Mexico with vision impairments and blindness from birth to 22 years of age throughout the state. The support we receive assists NMSBVI in achieving our mission to be "an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-high school who are blind or visually impaired".

Thank you and join us in celebrating our students!

Patricia Beecher
Patricia Beecher, NMSBVI Superintendent



NMSBVI Superintendent Patty Beecher.



B-3 O&M Lynn Little and DVS Andrea Montano conduct a virtual joint visit with a family at the Park. Young Zander works on sitting and tactual exploration of the grass with his dad.



At an off-campus location in Alamogordo, student Jessica & sister Brisa meet the other Girl Scouts to sell cookies to drive-up customers.



Alamogordo student Hae'Leigh practices reading and writing braille on a BrailleNote Touch device as part of her assistive technology lesson.

Board of Regents

Board of Regents list at time of this publication (autumn 2021):

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NMSBVI Board of Regents: Mary Willows, Gary Smethurst (Secretary), Catherine Gray (President), Agnes Vallejos (Vice President), and Robyn Holmes.

History of Our School

As a network of services, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) staff can be found in hospitals, family homes, school classrooms, Low Vision Clinics, and in university classrooms. This network officially began with the creation of the Institute for the Blind in 1903 by the territorial New Mexico Legislature. The goal was to establish a residential campus for students who were blind to provide for their education and upbringing. The first building opened in 1906 on a 20-acre campus in Alamogordo with an \$8,000 appropriation from the legislative process.

Enrollment continued to increase and in 1925, R.R. Pratt, then superintendent, invited Helen Keller to help him lobby in Santa Fe. Helen Keller, along with Elizabeth Garrett, daughter of lawman Pat Garrett, addressed a joint session of the New Mexico Legislature on behalf of the school and were successful in raising \$65,000 for expansion; these buildings are still used today.

Through the years, new programs were added to meet student needs and federal legislation. In 1974, the school opened a second campus in Albuquerque to provide services to children aged 3-6 years. In the late 1990's, a statewide birth-to-3 homebased program was established and has become a national model for visual impairment services to very young children and their families. Since the 2000s, a Low Vision Clinic, technology lending library, Instructional Resource Center, and a university teacher preparation program with extensive mentorship have all followed in order to continuously meet the needs of all students who are blind or visually impaired in the state.

NMSBVI staff have adapted programming and instruction through the years, always tailoring to the individual needs of the student. Some students attend the Alamogordo campus full-time, while others come for short, intensive instruction. Career education has blossomed from chair caning and piano tuning to individualized career plans that teach job skills matching the interest of each student. Braille and independent travel skills continue to be a priority, along with the Core Curriculum and Expanded Core Curriculum. One thing has remained consistent: our dedication and responsibility to ensuring our students become independent and productive members of their families and communities.



One of the earliest NMSBVI buildings, located in Alamogordo. The partially-established "high desert" landscaping suggests that this photo was taken within the first few years of the school's operation.

Strategic Plan

NMSBVI's Strategic Plan is a dynamic document that drives decision-making at every level at NMSBVI. The plan centers on six overarching goals that support all of the initiatives of the school. The goals include:

1. Supporting systems that result in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment in the state;
2. Creating a system to convey & receive information about blindness;
3. Building, maintaining, and supporting a system of data-driven decision-making to help support the needs of the students throughout New Mexico;
4. Developing a system throughout the state that supports early identification as well as successful transition of students across programs and into adult life;
5. Developing and maintaining partnerships and resources that will be used to advance the success of each student.
6. Developing systems to document, share and advance the efficacy of NMSBVI practices for educating students with visual impairments using the core and expanded core curricula.

This new Strategic Plan was finalized in April, 2019. We have created action steps and timelines under each broad goal and are actively working to achieve these steps. The process of strategic planning is vital in ensuring that NMSBVI continues to embrace and follow our mission. It provides clarity and direction for our staff and maintains our focus on educating our students with vision impairments and blindness throughout our beautiful state. The process allows each staff member to have a voice in determining the direction of our school and supports our collaborative spirit. We look forward to achieving these goals.

Our Ongoing Mission

NMSBVI, an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-to-high-school who are blind or visually impaired, will identify students and promote quality education through collaborative relationships with students, families, and local/state/national partners through outstanding advocacy, training, resources, and support services, thus empowering all students who are blind or visually impaired to become independent, productive members of their communities.



Aimee and her Instructor Ms. Stephenson work together in the classroom to create a beautiful Valentine's Day art project.



Hector reads the braille maker about the perpetual flame that is located outside at the Rose Garden on the Alamogordo Campus.



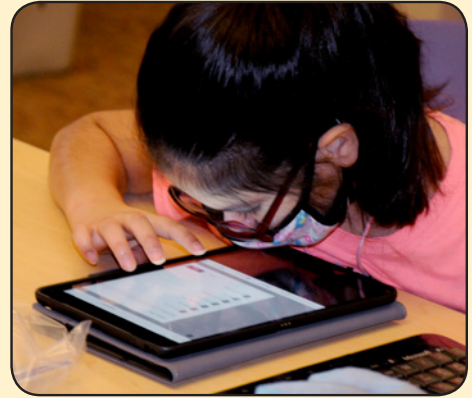
On the ECP playground, Zaylie gets ready to catch a big beachball while other students play on the lovely green lawn behind her.



In the preschool classroom in Alamogordo, Ezeriah works on a calendar-themed activity with his Instructor, Jennifer Lara.



In the Sacramento Dormitory kitchen, Faebian prepares everything he'll need to cook himself a delicious dinner!



Mersedies uses an iPad device to assist with her schoolwork; here, she looks closely at the screen before selecting the correct button.

A Bill of Rights for All Children with Visual Impairment and their Families

Preamble: In addition to numerous educational principles that have been proven to be beneficial for children with visual impairment, all the provisions of what constitutes a "Free and Appropriate Public Education" under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 shall be assumed along with this bill of rights.

1. Children with all levels of visual impairment (including those with multiple disabilities and those who are DeafBlind) have a right to early intervention/instruction provided by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment and certified orientation and mobility specialists, that is timely, ambitious, and results in the highest possible achievement for each child.
2. Children with visual impairment have the right to a functional vision evaluation and a learning media assessment by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment to determine appropriate services following the initial clinical eye exam.
3. Parents/guardians of children with visual impairment have the right to assistance in interpreting the educational implications of the diagnosed visual impairment that is provided by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment and certified mobility specialists and the right to seek assistance from regional/national agencies (including consumer advocacy organizations) that can help them make informed decisions on behalf of their child.
4. As required in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act "in the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team must provide for instruction in braille and the use of braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child." Appropriate reading and writing media are determined by conducting a learning media assessment.
5. Children and families have the right to be fully informed about the "Expanded Core Curriculum" of skills unique to students with visual impairment, which includes: compensatory skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills, & self-determination.
6. Children have the right to assessment and instruction, in school and in their communities, in every area of the Expanded Core Curriculum that is deemed appropriate by the educational team and includes the parents/guardians as the primary decision makers and includes the student when appropriate. The Expanded Core Curriculum is equal in importance to the standard academic curriculum and will not be overlooked in the educational plan.
7. Children have the right to receive school materials that are accessible, in the preferred format and at the same time as their sighted peers. Children have an absolute right to testing procedures and instruments that are fair and accessible, that take into consideration the results of the functional vision evaluation, and include all accommodations identified in the IEP.
8. It is the right of children and families for a full range of educational placement settings to be discussed at IEP meetings, including the variety of unique programs and options offered in specialized schools/services for children who are visually impaired. A specialized school may offer the best opportunity for achievement and be the "least restrictive environment" for some children.
9. All children with a visual impairment have the right to teams that enthusiastically assist them in preparing for transition to independence and adulthood.
10. Children with visual impairment, including those with multiple disabilities and DeafBlindness, have the right to be perceived and treated as equal, active, and contributing members of their communities, classrooms, and schools. As with all children, their engagement through belonging increases the collective value of each setting within which they participate.

The rights listed in this document consist of a combination of legal rights, ethical rights, and human rights. This document exists as a resource for students, parents, and professionals. The authors hope that this resource will be widely distributed and endorsed (formally or informally) by interested individuals and organizations. It is not fully inclusive of all rights; it is a starting point for teams when planning individualized programs for children with visual impairments.

This resource is the result of a joint project between the leaders of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) and the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB), May 2019.



Demographics ~ Fiscal Year 2021

Birth-to-3 (also called Family, Infant, Toddler Program/FIT)

- 340 children were screened
- 687 new referrals (549 added to caseloads)
- 620 children served on caseloads

Early Childhood Program (ECP/Albuquerque campus)

- 63 students were enrolled during the school year.
- School districts included: Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Moriarty, and Grants.

Residential Campus (Alamogordo campus)

- 48 students were enrolled during the school year.
- 11 of these students received additional consult/itinerant services in their general education classes that they continued either remotely or in-person with their local school district.

Outreach Department

- Completed 6 Functional Vision Evaluations/Learning Media Assessments for districts without their own TSVI; these were all done virtually.
- Mentored 6 interns in 7 districts plus one charter school and NMSBVI, remotely
- Direct services to 10 students in 5 school districts
- Virtual learning circle training targeting the SW, SE, and North regions of NM; 47 attendees

Assistive Technology:

- Loaned 31 devices from the Lending Library to students, and another 80 devices to staff for trainings
- Direct services to 15 students; indirect services to 70 (not including evaluations)
- Served 23 districts and 4 separate schools
- Conducted 13 AT evaluations
- Provided 54 AT trainings

Vision Impairment Program

- Enrollment data for Summer 2020 - Spring 2021: TSVIs = 6, COMSs = 6, VI Focus = 1; MA in SPED = 1
- Completion Data for Summer 2020 - Spring 2021: TSVIs = 3, COMSs = 0, MA in SPED = 1
- Internship Data: TSVIs = 6 in 8 districts + NMSBVI, COMSs = 1 in 3 districts

Instructional Resource Center (IRC)

- Loaned 52 APH Assistive Technology devices in conjunction with NMSBVI AT Lending Library
- 2,545 APH items were checked out; 1,684 were consumables
- Provided materials to 40 school districts in New Mexico

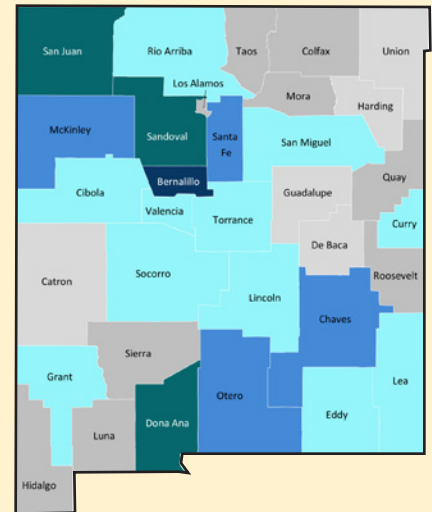
Students Served: approximately

1,300 + 340 Screenings

2,500+ vision-related adapted supplies provided to New Mexico Students

County Map

Students Served 2020-2021



- 1-9 Students
- 10-29 Students
- 30-75 Students
- 76-200 Students
- 400+ Students



NMSBVI students and staff board buses parked in the Watkins Education Center parking lot. Students travel from all over the state each week to attend school.

Academic Life

Patty Beecher ~ NMSBVI Superintendent

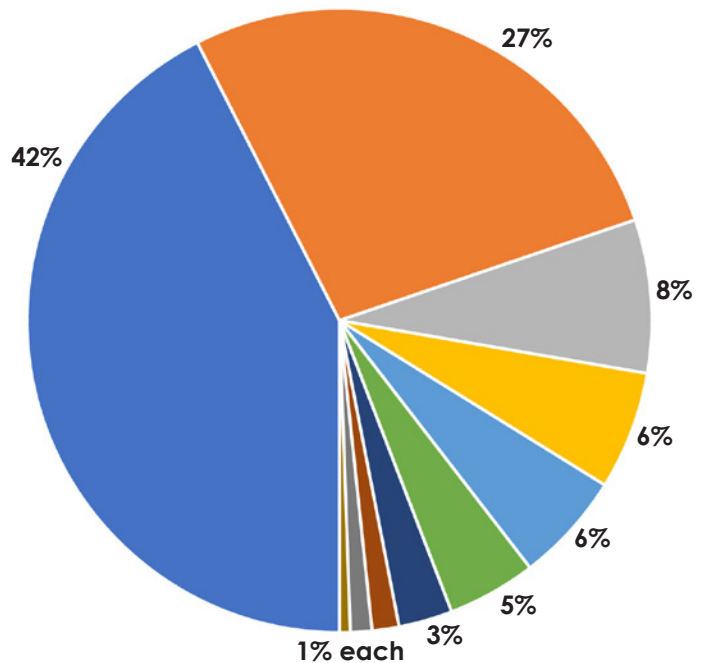
The 2020-2021 school year was fully remote until April, 2021. We know that remote learning is not optimal for many of our students, especially given their vision impairments and the need for hands-on learning. We anticipated that some students would experience interrupted learning during this time. However, students were able to acquire new skills not only in technology, but also in flexibility and resilience. NMSBVI understands that their learning trajectory may be different and that the social-emotional needs of the students may be greatly increased. In order to help address these issues, NMSBVI has begun several initiatives:

- We have adopted a blended learning model which incorporates both in person and online learning while at school. In this model, teachers utilize online resources, give online homework, etc. to reinforce in-class lessons while continuing to build upon the technology skills that were acquired during remote learning. This model also allows us to continue teaching without interruption should we be required to move into full remote learning. It also supports students' acquisition of 21st Century Skills.
- We provide asynchronous lessons, homework, and activities for students who are required to quarantine so that no learning time is lost. Staff communicate with and support parents of students who are sent home to quarantine to ensure they understand the asynchronous work.
- Student progress is being monitored for all students. For those students who are making limited progress, the educational team is meeting to adjust teaching strategies and add extra support based on team decisions.
- We provide after school homework support in our resource room.
- We have assigned additional support to the elementary grades to both students and staff. Assistive technology instruction has been incorporated into the elementary class schedule.
- To prepare fifth graders to transition to middle school, they are provided with weekly opportunities to join a science and braille class as well as abacus and Nemeth code support with secondary staff.
- We have incorporated a collaboration group led by an instructional lead teacher to better approach the instruction of students that need a unified learning approach.
- The transition coordinator is collaborating with life Skills to help all secondary students explore post-secondary career interests.
- We increased the number of summer camps at each campus in order to support social-emotional well-being.
- Finally, we are utilizing 3 social-emotional learning curricula with our students. Students also have the opportunity for one-on-one counseling and support with our social workers and/or psychologist. We have a 24-hour crisis call line for students.

NMSBVI will continue with many of these initiatives into the future.

Statewide Vision Diagnoses

- At Risk
- Neurological Vision Impairment
- Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)
- Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH)
- Ocular Motor
- Anterior Defect
- Retinal Defect
- Anophthalmia / Microphthalmia / Enucleation
- Optic Nerve Atrophy
- Albinism





During remote learning time at home, Ricky enjoys some comfortable "tummy time" as he watches a video on his iPad device.



During the time of remote learning, ECP student Eliza has done some baking at home; here, she proudly shows her pumpkin cookie.



Jojo looks so excited as he arrives at the ECP for another fun day of learning! His white cane helps him to navigate into the building.

Partnerships and Collaborations

NMSBVI continues to work with others in-state and even internationally to serve our students and mission. There are several collaborative projects that were initiated or continued through the 2020-2021 school year, as well as our continued partnership with NMSU personnel prep for training teachers of students with visual impairments and certified orientation and mobility specialists. We have also continued to receive funding support from community partners, donors, and state programs. We are thankful for the continued support from The Navajo Nation, who funds two developmental vision specialists, the Land Grant Permanent Fund and support from the NM Land office, the current state legislatures who have funded capital projects for our Alamogordo Campus, and the NMSBVI Foundation, which provides funding support for unmet needs of the school. Working towards our mission and serving students throughout the state would not be possible without this support.

Research Projects & Grants: Children's Trust Fund Grant: Julie Maner/Jessica Pickard, B-3: In January 2021, NMSBVI was awarded grant funding from The New Mexico Children's Trust Fund to address the critical need of prevention of child abuse in New Mexico. These funds will allow us to implement the continuation and expansion of NMSBVI's Handle with Care Campaign, which aims to prevent shaken baby syndrome (SBS). SBS can result in visual impairment, blindness and/or brain damage. The campaign aims at increasing awareness through car magnets and printed materials, as well as conducting trainings to families and various community agencies in every region of the state. We were also able to purchase 2 simulation dolls to use in trainings. Dissemination of materials and trainings are planned for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

CVI Profile: In early 2020, NMSBVI teamed up with the authors of the CVI Companion Guide (Lueck, Chen, & Hartmann, In press) to research how the guide could be implemented in our B-3 and Early Childhood Programs. With the 2020-2021 school year primarily remote, B-3 continued to work with the authors to implement and document the use of the guide in their professional practice as part of a qualitative study. The small research group continues to meet monthly to discuss implementation, as well as potential plans for researching specific CVI accommodations, strategies, and interventions in early intervention and preschool settings.

B-06 O&M Skills Inventory: NMSBVI Birth-Three O&M Instructors have continued to work closely with faculty at Western Michigan University (WMU) to validate and establish reliability of the Birth-6 O&M Skills Inventory (B06OMSI), originally developed by NMSBVI. This would be the first O&M evaluation tool to be formally validated in the United States. Researchers from WMU have been able to virtually join in person and telehealth visits to collect reliability data on scoring the assessment. WMU is currently analyzing the reliability data. We are hoping the tool will be valid and reliable and will always continue to share it, for free, on our website!

UNM and Naked Heart Foundation: Jessica Matney, SLP and ILT for the ECP, has continued to work with the Naked Heart Foundation and UNM (OT/PT/SLP and neurology departments) to consult with the rehabilitation hospital in Tula, Russia. This work has focused on providing evidenced based practices for children with cerebral palsy. Jessica and Cathy Binger, UNM Professor, are working with the hospital's new communication team to increase understanding of early communication and AAC, as well as to bring attention to the possible impact of visual impairments on access to early communication. Due to COVID-19 limiting the opportunity for in-person instruction and visits, this is being done through virtual presentations, case studies, and multidisciplinary staffings with the Tula team.

The Expanded Core Curriculum

Teaching students who are visually impaired is not very complicated, but it is not intuitive, either. Students who are blind or have low vision (visually impaired), whose visual impairment is significant enough to adversely affect their education, require specialized instruction from professionals trained in understanding the impact visual impairment has on learning and development. At the foundation of teaching students with visual impairments is addressing skills and concepts that are typically learned through incidental learning, or by observation and visual access. In the presence of a visual impairment, incidental learning is either incomplete or nonexistent, resulting in the need of specialized instructional strategies and direct teaching through repeated, hands-on learning experiences. Furthermore, the skills our students need to reach their independent potential are often not adequately addressed through instruction and material adaptations in the general education curriculum, alone. These additional skills are referred to as the Expanded Core Curriculum (Allman & Lewis, 2014).

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is a disability-specific curriculum for children who are blind or visually impaired and is addressed at all ages. The ECC includes skills that are critical to a student's ability to access and participate in the core curriculum (math, language arts, science, social studies, etc.), interact with peers, and ultimately participate in their community and workplace as an adult. The ECC is made up of 9 different areas that include many skills which often require instruction and practice. Therefore, NMSBVI is dedicated to providing direct instruction and embedding the ECC in the daily activities of all students. The nine areas of the ECC are: Compensatory Access Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Social Interaction Skills, Independent Living Skills, Recreation and Leisure Skills, Career Education, Assistive Technology, Sensory Efficiency, and Self-Determination.

- **Compensatory Access (CA):** concept development & skills to access learning environment, including literacy & communication.
- **Orientation & Mobility (O&M):** knowing how to orient and travel safely, efficiently, and independently.
- **Social Interaction Skills (SIS):** to actively and appropriately participate in social situations, including verbal and nonverbal social skills, relationships, and social competence.
- **Independently Living Skills (ILS):** to care for oneself, completing tasks and functions for living, managing, and maintaining daily life (eating, dressing, hygiene, time management).
- **Recreation & Leisure Skills (R&L):** developing skills and interest in physical and leisure activities for choosing how to spend free time.
- **Career Education (Car.Ed.):** knowledge, behaviors, and skills to prepare students for work and careers.
- **Assistive Technology (AT):** using electronic equipment and blindness-specific devices to access electronic information, print, and computers.
- **Sensory Efficiency (SE):** learning to use all senses to access environments & information, including tactile skills & low vision devices.
- **Self-Determination (SD):** empowering the student to believe in & advocate for themselves, develop self-confidence, & meet long-term goals.

Addressing the learning needs of our students is at the foundation of teaching at NMSBVI—across all programs and departments. Providing our students and families with the supports they need to address their student's unique learning needs is why NMSBVI has diverse programming to serve all ages of students in New Mexico.



CA: Jessica uses a braille writer to work on her lesson in the classroom.



O&M: Angel uses his white cane as he crosses a busy street with his O&M instructor, Mr. Later.



SIS: On a quick walk around campus, good school friends Hae'Leigh & Dahlia hold hands.



ILS: Mercedes spreads jelly on bread as she makes herself a sandwich in the school's Life Skills kitchen.



R&L: Ariella and Ethyn use stationary bikes in the school's gymnasium.



Car.Ed.: Hae'Leigh measures a staff member's temperature, in Health Services.



AT: Savanna uses a computer to do her language-arts class work.



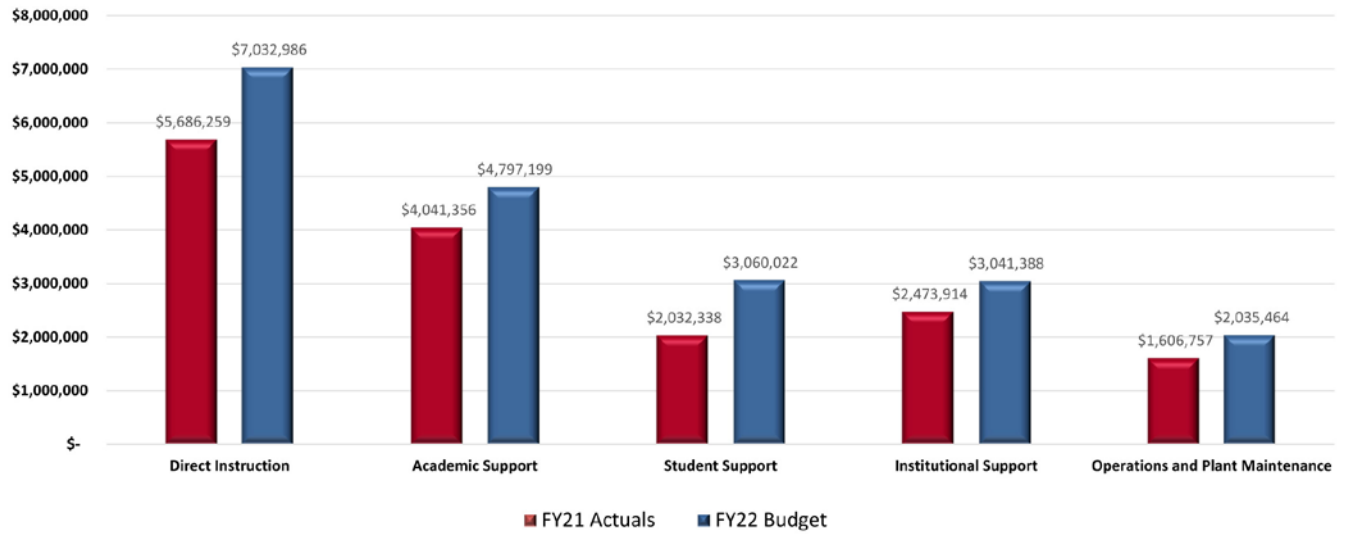
SE: Azrael uses her vision & tactile senses to explore cooking ingredients.



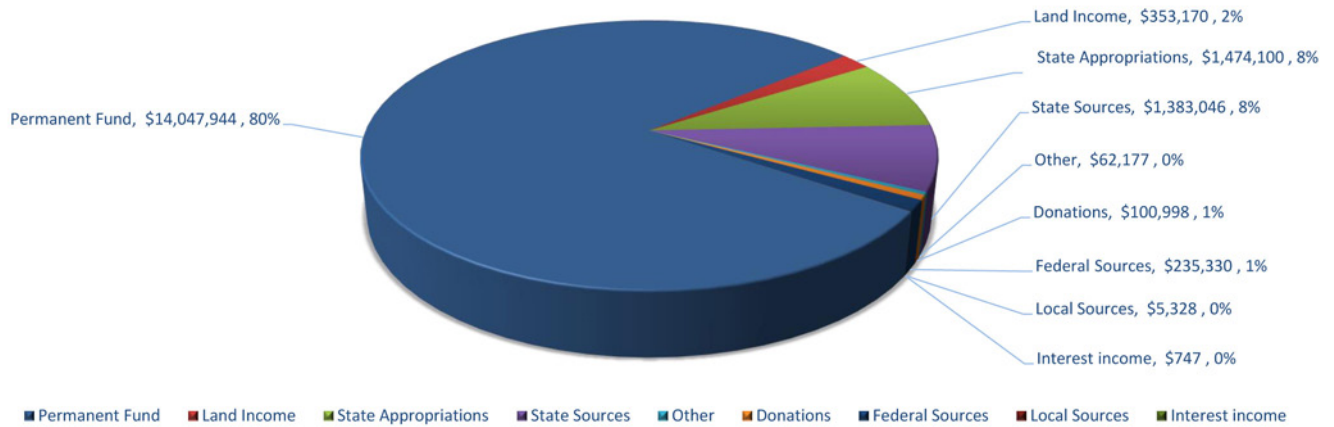
SD: Kaylee claps & smiles after taking steps in her walker to reach a goal.

Financials

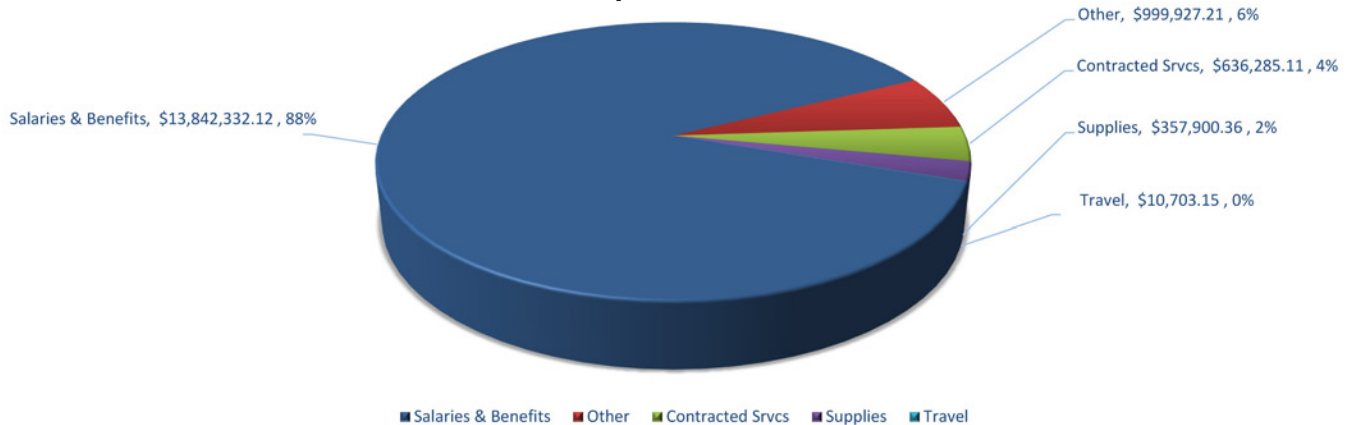
FY21 Actuals to FY22 Budget (unaudited)



FY21 Revenue (unaudited)



FY21 Expenses (unaudited)



Program Updates

Birth to Three Program

Julie Maner ~ B-3 Program Coordinator

NMSBVI's Birth to Three team has twenty staff consisting of Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Developmental Vision Specialists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, and one Administrative Assistant. We work as part of early intervention teams providing vision and orientation and mobility support to families across the state.

During the past year, the Birth to Three team has provided services to 703 children across the state. Average ongoing number of children on caseloads has been about 300, with monthly referrals increasing to about 70 per month over the past year. We partner with the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), Family, Infant and Toddler division to provide early intervention services statewide and work with early intervention teams across the state. We also continue our longstanding partnership with The Navajo Nation who generously provides funding for two developmental vision specialists.

Due to the pandemic, the past year of early intervention services has primarily been conducted remotely through telehealth. Beginning in Spring, 2021, we have had the opportunity to see students and families in person again, as well as offering telehealth visits. The hybrid of in person and telehealth provides us and families more flexibility and efficiency in scheduling. We have been working virtually from our home offices to participate in telehealth home visits, doctor visits, team meetings, various trainings, and family transition/IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings as students transition from Part C to Part B services.

Telehealth has allowed us to be creative with families and implement the evidence-based practice of family guided routines-based intervention (FGRBI). This approach allows families to become the driver of the intervention strategies and address priorities that are most meaningful to them.

Birth to Three staff continue to participate in the Birth to Six Orientation & Mobility Skills Inventory research with Western Michigan University to validate this assessment tool. Our team also continues to participate in research with the authors of the CVI Companion Guide (in press) involving the implementation of strategies and accommodations.

During the 2020-2021 school year, our staff has also presented via webinar for the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC) & Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) in partnership with The Utah Parent & Infant Program on how services are provided during the pandemic. We have also done presentations for the NM Vision Bee on Sensory Integration and on The Use of the CVI Companion Guide for the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI).

NMSBVI continues to be a leader in providing vision services and orientation and mobility services in early intervention. We are thankful for the continued support of all our partners and wish everyone health and happiness.



A baby looks absolutely delighted to explore several special giant and bumpy block toys; they all seem to glow, illuminated from the light-table beneath them.

Early Childhood Programs (ECP)

Paul Kilman ~ Program Coordinator, Early Childhood Programs

The Albuquerque ECP campus continues to grow. We had 63 students enrolled during the 2020-2021 school year and anticipate more students this coming school year (increasing to 10 classrooms) as we return to full in-person learning.

For most of the 2020-2021 school year, we provided services through our Continuous Learning Plan, where students learned virtually from home due to the pandemic. Virtual learning was a challenge, however, the ECP staff handled it with dignity and grace. Teachers and staff were creative and dedicated to providing quality educa-

tion and learning opportunities. Staff created personalized lesson plans and therapy activities to address each student's unique learning needs and the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). Activities were presented live zoom instruction and asynchronously through the online platform Class Dojo. All staff had opportunities to lead live activities on a group or individual basis as needed. Parents were instrumental in supporting their child during live activities, as well as in leading their child through asynchronous activities, documenting and sharing the activity with the entire team through Class Dojo. This allowed the child's team to see and comment on progress, offer next steps, and support parents in a new way. Staff also created videos to demonstrate skills, support strategies, and activities for parents to follow at home. During virtual learning, teachers, therapists, and parents were able to connect and collaborate together more frequently through the online platform. These interactions helped parents stay involved and develop a greater understanding of their child's unique visual needs and how to address these needs in their home. We are so incredibly thankful for their ability and flexibility navigating virtual learning with us.

The school year ended with the ECP offering a hybrid model with in-person and virtual learning options for families who chose to stay remote. Student and staff who returned quickly implemented strict COVID-safe practices while also providing hands-on instruction and support. We were happy to hold a drive-by good-bye to graduating students during which families could come say bye to staff in person before the virtual graduation ceremony.

At the ECP, during virtual and in-person instruction, we continued to use a transdisciplinary approach that involves the teacher, educational assistants, and therapists meeting at least monthly to discuss the students' needs and plan next steps for the student. During these meetings, staff worked together to create hands-on experiences that specifically address the students' developmental and vision needs; these recommendations were then integrated into the individualized lesson plans and daily routines for the students at home and at school. We plan to continue using Class Dojo to maintain contact with families in the upcoming school year to share student progress, as well as continue to provide suggested activities that can be done at home. This past school year demonstrated the true dedication of our staff to our students and families. We are continuously grateful to work together and for all those involved in helping us provide these services.



Ms. Navi and her students gathered together for a virtual class, to explore a tactilely engaging toy. This is an activity designed as a part of the ECP's early braille skills curriculum.



Toward the end of the 2020-21 school year, the ECP re-opened to welcome students back on-site. ECP student Aryel smiles beneath her mask as she works on a classroom writing activity.

Life Skills Program

Jackie Freeman ~ Program Coordinator, Alamogordo Campus

The NMSBVI Life Skills program is focused on teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum: 9 areas that require explicit instruction to help students learn skills they cannot learn incidentally (through observation) due to their visual impairment. During virtual learning, the Life Skills Program had to be creative and adjust their normal "hands-on learning" instruction and activities to now supervising "from a distance" through video/virtual instruction. One difficulty for staff was not having knowledge of the students' kitchens. But this provided a unique opportunity for the students to teach the staff and communicate what was or was not available. While virtual learning also meant instructors had to be more deliberate in their planning and delivery, it did not mean they limited their content! Students still explored diverse content to include



The Life Skills program re-tooled its woodworking curriculum so students could do projects from their own homes. Samantha holds up her name project, to show the remote class her work.

college and career exploration, job readiness skills, social and recreational skills, health and nutrition, self-advocacy, and home management, refining and expanding their technology skills in the process.

Instead of a traditional wood working project using the power tools, Life Skills developed woodworking projects that could be assembled at the student's home with using every-day items to clamp the wood after it was glued together. Instead of the Holiday Sampler event during which students typically prepare holiday food to serve to campus staff, we took it to the students' homes: Life Skills staff worked with students to identify a dish they would be responsible for cooking for their family holiday dinner. Staff and students worked together to practice making the dish so the student could do it independently for their family. And lastly, the yearly greenhouse projects adapted to teaching students how to create the greenhouse effect at home for the plants they would grow. While in-person instruction is ideal for teaching and reinforcing adaptive techniques and tactile strategies for completing daily tasks, there were certainly advantages to providing the students daily living instruction in their own homes and helping families identify obstacles and implement adaptations!



In the days of remote learning, instead of visiting the school's greenhouse, students planted flowers in pots in their own homes; Life Skills teachers watched online and offered suggestions.

Intensive Support Classes

Jackie Freeman ~ Program Coordinator, Alamogordo Campus

While the Intensive Support Program (ISP) is always a creative group, remote instruction challenged them to up their game even higher! It was immediately clear to this team that they needed to send home a great deal of multi-sensory, hands-on materials to ensure lessons were engaging and easy for families to use. Materials were designed to engage all the senses and lessons included sensory collages, yarn art, noise makers, and tactile mazes.

ISP 1 utilized a focus on different cultures to incorporate their students' lived experiences in at-home lessons. ISP 3 made sure to incorporate movement into their morning group lesson to get everyone's brains activated before the students took turns being the teacher to keep them engaged and familiarizing them with the new virtual learning format. Routines, repetition, and multi-sensory materials kept our students engaged and making progress.

Without in-person community-based instruction (CBI), we moved to a weekly virtual CBI with the Orientation & Mobility Instructor "taking" the students via video streaming to local farms, parks, deserts, and stores. During the holidays, students prepared a family dish with their family, then shared the recipe with the class; the collection became a showcase of their cultural diversity.

One of the biggest benefits of virtual learning was the increase in family involvement and interactions which allowed staff the rare opportunity to work with students in their home environment and allowed families a better opportunity to understand what happens during their child's education, as well as gain ideas they could incorporate at home -- whether that be teaching skills, helping their child explore their environment, or fun games to play with their child. Though we were happy to have students back on campus towards the end of the school year, we gained valuable insight and experience from virtual learning that we can carry forward in our in-person instruction.



Holidays are an exciting time every year, and the remote school year was no different! Students and staff gathered virtually for a very gooey hands-on pumpkin carving class.



During remote-teaching time, orientation & mobility teacher Mr. Carnes broadcasts from his cell-phone a series of virtual fieldtrips; here, he shows students the roses from the Alamogordo campus.

Residential Campus-Academic Program

Maritza Morales ~ Alamogordo Principal

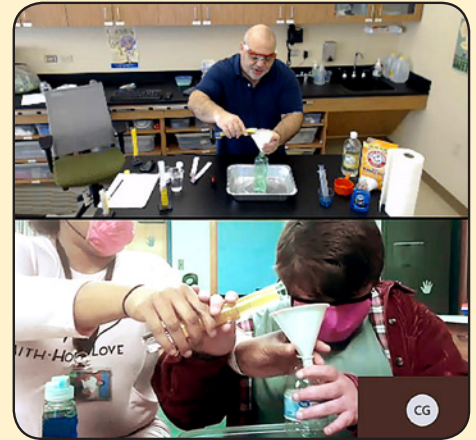
During the 2020-2021 school year, the NMSBVI Academic Program put together a virtual learning plan for all students using Microsoft TEAMS and Zoom to offer students access to live video classes and class materials. We provided each student with either a laptop or an iPad, and every Friday, transportation delivered next week's class materials and picked up completed homework assignments.

Our teachers, educational assistants, and residential staff did a fantastic job preparing class materials, providing class lessons, and communicating with parents. Even though remote instruction was challenging, teachers incorporated creative strategies in their classes to help students learn. Some of the strategies were:

- Providing manipulatives, real objects, or representations of real objects prior to the lesson to allow students to touch the model while the teacher was providing online instruction.
- Science and O&M joined to provide virtual walks every Friday morning for middle school students. During those walks, students learned about orientation skills as well as the science that was in different environments.
- Assignments that could be completed electronically were accessible and allowed students more opportunity to use their assistive technology devices and skills. Teachers could quickly grade and provide students with immediate feedback.
- The use of the electronic white board was a successful tool for students with low vision
- Video presentations were used to supplement and expand upon live instruction.
- Lessons from textbooks were recorded in Victor Streams to provide increased opportunity for students to work on assistive technology skills while also working on their core content.
- Some of the secondary students used their technology skills to create their own virtual study groups with classmates. They could study together, as well as maintain social relationships.
- The librarian held designated read aloud times, as well as weekly audiobook/e-book selections for different levels that could be accessed from home.

In the spring, teachers faced a new challenge of providing both in-person and virtual learning. Most of the classes were hybrid and our teachers and staff continued to provide quality instruction through both learning modes, ensuring students were accessing their curriculum no matter the learning platform.

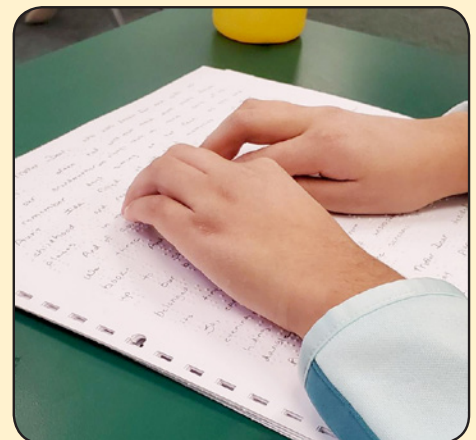
We are proud of our students! They embraced the challenge of virtual learning, enhanced their technology skills, and increased their independent access to instruction, learning from their own experiences and participating in a variety of activities. They gained technology skills at an exceptional rate as the nature of virtual learning demanded more. We are so grateful for the families who continued to support their student while navigating their own challenges of the pandemic. We have all learned so much from each other and hope to continue these relationships into future school years. We have certainly learned that virtual learning is a team effort; it could have not been successful without the support of the parents, school staff, and students that were willing to learn no matter the situation.



Science classes were adapted to work via remote sessions. Here, Mr. Killebrew and student Ivory, located in two different places, work simultaneously on a chemistry project.



Library time is a highlight of many students' day; remote learning included online storyhours with Ms. Brody, the school's Librarian. Students & instructors gathered virtually to listen and laugh.



Whether learning is done through a remote model or on-campus classes, braille skills remain at the forefront of the curriculum, across all ages of NMSBVI's student population.

Recreation & Leisure / Adapted P.E. During Remote Learning

Alex Bocian ~ Adaptive Physical Education Instructor

During remote learning, the students of NMSBVI continued to explore movement topics in adapted physical education. The adapted physical education program at NMSBVI strives to provide a wide variety of movement experiences through practicing object control skills, locomotor skills, enhancing overall fitness, learning sport skills, recreation topics, and exposure to lifetime-based activities which will provide the students with tools & knowledge needed to lead an active lifestyle. After taking the time to reflect on the distance learning experience, I have identified some components that I feel increased success participation & success.

Collaboration: During adapted physical education sessions, both Randal M. (physical therapist) and Ron L. (O&M) were able to attend and assist students with specific feedback and instruction. We all have different specialties, but much overlap exists, and this team approach lead to safe and successful student outcomes.

Demonstration: Each adapted physical education class contains a wide range of ability. To best support the unique needs of each class, we determined that each staff would provide a different demonstration. This allowed for students and caregivers to see progressions and be able to identify what the expectation was for the child that they were working with. For example, Randal would show a wheelchair modification, I would show a standard form, and an educational assistant would show an easier modification of the standard form. This allowed all students to participate together at their own level.

Equipment: PE equipment can be costly, and many students require some equipment to be modified or adapted. To provide students with a wide range of activities and equipment for virtual lessons, lots of the equipment was made inexpensively by staff. This allowed students to have equipment that they could modify and continue using in the future. Some examples of items that students utilized were beanbags, pool noodle pieces, sock or paper balls, ropes, hula hoops, and plastic cups. -- A huge thanks to all the staff who contributed to make and transport all these items to our students' homes!

Recordings: Each class session was recorded and posted for asynchronous students. These videos allowed students that might have schedule or internet issues access to content and the ability to see and hear their classmates. Additionally, these videos were made available for any students or parents that wanted to review content, practice a skill, or replay a favorite activity.

Activities: Each lesson and activity needed to be carefully crafted, allowing for multiple movement sequences that allowed for student success. For example, when bowling, allowing a student to roll a ball using one or two hands, one or two feet, or driving their wheelchair into it to progress the ball forward into their target. Additionally, many activities were crafted that allowed students to have the opportunity to socialize and engage with their peers, another component that was difficult during remote learning.

Remote learning posed a new challenge, and required creative thinking in order to continue addressing these skills at home without physical guidance or special equipment; and with the help of the whole team, we made it a success!



During times of remote learning, Mr. Bocian broadcast his PE classes from the AlamoGordo campus; here, student Eil and his mom follow along with his big stretching activities.



After students were allowed back on campus, PE classes were offered as in-person experiences, alongside a simultaneous online offering for students who were still attending from home.

Orientation & Mobility ~ Alamogordo Campus During Remote Learning

Ron Later ~ Resource Specialist / O&M Instructor

The change to remote learning posed a difficult and unique challenge for Orientation & Mobility (O&M) services to students who have visual impairments. O&M lessons typically build on real-time, real-life obstacles and the problem-solving needed to handle those situations. For example, during in-person instruction, students learn to detect an intersecting hallway in a large building, not only through tactile input (by hand trailing or use of a cane), but also by the subtle change in air currents or a seemingly minor noise that the instructor often needs to be there to point out. Students learn to align for crossings at intersections by using a wealth of auditory input created by parallel and perpendicular traffic, which can only be experienced in person, as well as the instructor needing to be close-by for safety. This posed a problem for our O&M Specialists, as they were required to consider how to translate these real-life lessons into our new virtual system.



In her home, student Jessica listens via iPad to O&M teacher Mr. Later, as she manipulates a tiny physical mock-up of an intersection with cars, to demonstrate real-world spatial relationships.

Our O&M Specialists quickly realized that remote O&M instruction was able to help students develop many other concepts and in a variety of different ways. Left/right, parallel/perpendicular, clockwise/counterclockwise, clockface directions, and cardinality — all necessary concepts to be able to travel down the street—were all incorporated into a number of different games during PE classes with elementary students. Preschool-age students with multiple impairments were seen in their own backyards where concepts like up/down, behind/front/side, in/out, backwards/forwards were added to their personal play activities. Older students reviewed a series of videos that each featured different types of intersection and had questions to answer about which of the crossing options were viable choices, given the different types of traffic controls at each type of intersection. We were grateful to resume in-person instruction in the spring, and were able to continue building and working on the foundational concepts and skills that were addressed during remote learning.

Transition Planning at NMSBVI

Holly Bird ~ Transition Coordinator, Alamogordo Campus

Transition planning legally refers to the planning and goal-writing process that is part of the first IEP when a student turns 14 years old. It also directly relates to several areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). This special future planning portion of the IEP assists the student with identifying career, education, and independent living goals for their future and helps him/her develop an action plan for reaching those goals. Transition planning is unique to the needs of the individual student, thus, the assessment and information gathering process is tailored for each NMSBVI student, including student and family interviews and discussion with the student's educational team to get input on the strengths, interests, aptitudes, and needs of the student. This information is then incorporated into long and short-term plans to help the student develop the skills needed to reach his/her goals.

Although special education laws require transition planning be in place when a student turns 14, we know that for students who are blind and visually impaired, true transition planning begins at birth and is impacted by the experiences in a student's life.

To address the unique learning needs of our students at NMSBVI, we are incorporating transition information into all the lower grade levels (pre-K through Middle School), as well as continuing to work closely with our traditional transition students. This past year, we added working with our Elementary age students by incorporating career and independent living skills into the Morning Meeting and Circle Time and hope to incorporate these activities into the preschool this next school year. By addressing career education and daily living skills throughout the



Student Melisa wants to be a baker and own her own bakery after high school. She works with Mrs. Bird to plan her bakery, and works with Life Skills staff to expand her baking skills.

grades provides our students the foundation they need to begin making career and independent living decisions for themselves when they turn 14, setting them up for more future success.

NMSBVI Transition faced some challenges during virtual learning, but also experienced some significant benefits. Virtual meetings allowed individual meetings with students and families to continue and even become more individualized to the student's home. Additionally, since other agencies involved in transition planning (NM Commission for the Blind, social security benefits advisors, etc..) were also working remotely, we could join students in meetings with those agencies – which was always difficult to schedule prior to COVID. With more parents staying home to support students and more agencies conducting business remotely, we actually had more access to students and families during virtual learning.

Finally, virtual learning allowed great opportunities for interactions that were not as accessible prior to the pandemic: virtual college field trips, virtual interviews with professionals, virtual college fairs, virtual visits to businesses, etc. We anticipate getting to continue these virtual tours and experiences, while also returning to the hands-on career exploration that gives our students the truest sense of a job so they can continue evolving their own goals and future plans.

NMSBVI Summer Camps

Alamogordo Campus Summer Camp ~ by Ron Later

During June and July of 2021 there were camps for NMSBVI preschool to secondary students at both campuses. Most years, NMSBVI summer camp programming is open to all students in NM, but with the uncertainty of what the summer rules would be, we opened summer camp to only NMSBVI students. We were excited to be able to offer camp in person and allow students to stay in the dorms. The Alamogordo campus hosted preschool, elementary, and secondary camps. While the camps retained the academics and daily living skills that have been a part of the program for many years, there was a renewed focus on socialization and just being together and taking advantage of the chance to reconnect. The preschool camp in Alamogordo brought familiar faces back together, with students who attended live classes once we had reopened getting to spend time with students who had stayed remote through the 20-21 school year. While the classroom activities were familiar, the skills conducive to learning in a live classroom needed to be relearned. The elementary camp got a refresher on the academic skills, such as braille and math, that helped bridge the gap between May and August but also spent time on fun art projects and went on a series of afternoon trips to add to the "camp" feel. The secondary camp was the only one with students staying overnight on campus and had a heavy focus on life skills – each made their own meals and several students decided to learn to make fried rice – as well as extra practice with assistive technology. They also went on a series of afternoon trips to local outdoor attractions.

ECP Summer Camp ~ by Kitty Edstrand

With the majority of the school year conducted through virtual learning, the ECP wanted to create more opportunity for staff and students to join in more in-person interactions through our first summer camp for ECP students. We had about 10 students sign-up to attend 1 of 2 weeks offered in June and were able to offer two classrooms. ECP Summer Camp used an Ocean/Beach theme to create fun activities that included baking soda/vinegar treasure experiments, digging for treasure in sand and water beads, beach balls, popsicles, and lots of outside time in individual pools! Student had the opportunity to play with and learn from new teachers and peers and everyone had so much fun they can't wait to do it again next year!



As a part of the Summer Camp based on the NMSBVI Alamogordo campus, secondary students enjoyed a field-trip to a local park. Hiking along a forest trail offered unique challenges!



Avery cools off and plays in their own pool during water day (every day!) at ECP summer camp in Albuquerque.

Health Services

Kelly McCallister ~ Coordinator

During the Covid-19 school closure, Health Services has provided on-going services to students & their families, despite not being in person. Supportive medical care has been provided by making routine medical check-ins via telephone or email, and nursing staff was available to answer questions or provide assistance as needed to parents and students. Because nursing staff was required to work remotely, we were able to use Google numbers so family members could reach out to the nurses at any time. These frequent communications provided a nice opportunity to stay in touch and even get to know the families a little better.

A quarterly newsletter was started in December whereby nursing staff sent information to parents/students regarding Covid-19. Nursing staff also provided parents/students with hand-outs, both in print and Braille, regarding important reminders on proper hand washing.

Health Services was constantly monitoring CDC and PED recommendations to determine proper PPE and daily Covid-19 screening/preventative care for staff on campus, including working with IT to employ the Dr. Owl screening app. Health services went beyond student care and took charge of surveillance testing and teaming up to host a vaccine clinics with a local pharmacy. Even with the closure, we continued to focus on the health of our students, families, staff, and community!



Our nursing staff stayed busy during remote-learning time... and got even busier after staff & students were allowed back onto campus! Temperature checks for entry were a daily activity.

Instructional Resource Center

Mary Vaughn ~ IRC Coordinator

The New Mexico Instructional Resource Center (NM-IRC) is coordinated by NMSBVI and houses the statewide lending library for educational materials from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). The NM-IRC exists to support the students of New Mexico with educational resources through The Federal Quota program. This program was started in 1879 when congress passed The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind. The creation of this Act led to a national system that could offer braille books to students with visual impairments. Now the appropriations from the Act provides funds for the wide variety of products offered in the APH catalog that are eligible through this Federal Quota Program.

With funds distributed based off the Federal Quota Census, the NM-IRC is able to order the necessary educational materials each year. These quota materials are available to any eligible student in the state; NMSBVI has worked hard to support the efforts of the NM-IRC to increase the number of materials loaned throughout the state by implementing a statewide online database, NMVICount.org, so teachers can register their students and be sure they are counted as part of the state and national quota census. This past year, close to 100% of NM School districts used NMVICount.org to register their students for APH Quota.

The NM-IRC is responsible for submitting registered students for the national Quota Census at APH and fulfilling order requests submitted by any teacher of students with visual impairments in New Mexico. Last year, 40 districts in NM borrowed materials from the NM-IRC for their students. During the 2020-2021 school year, the dedicated NM-IRC staff continued to get materials out to districts and families when the state was utilizing virtual and hybrid learning platforms and will continue to embrace any changes needed to get educational materials into the hands of students.



The IRC's Mr. Willmot and Ms. Meisch work together daily to send out and receive mountains of boxes containing educational materials for students all across the state!

Outreach Department

Julie Johnson ~ Program Coordinator

The NMSBVI Outreach department partners with school districts to support students who are blind or visually impaired throughout the state through a variety of programs to provide evaluations, mentorship, consult services and direct services to a small number of districts. Additionally, Outreach is responsible for the Assistive Technology Lending Library and Low Vision Clinic, which provide specialized evaluations and services statewide. Unfortunately, the rules of the pandemic prevented the Low Vision Clinic from holding events, but will be back for 2021-2022!



Members of NMSBVI Outreach Department meet virtually each week.

While virtual learning changed the way we provided services, our group quickly realized that they could increase the time and frequency of meetings with their interns and with each other. This created a new opportunity for collaboration, discussion, and brainstorming between everyone. This collaboration was especially helpful for conducting remote evaluations; staff could plan and conduct an evaluation together. Conducting functional vision evaluations and learning media assessments remotely required a lot of organization, pre-planning, and work with families or teachers to implement tasks we would normally do in person. Remote assessment provided more time to talk with families and teachers to really understand the student and their vision, which was a great benefit of virtual learning. We also had more flexibility to attend national trainings and webinars on remote assessment and evolving practices in remote instruction so that we could try out a variety of ideas for evaluations and instruction.

Outreach staff continued to target different regions of our state with virtual Learning Circles, as well as working with their interns and various school districts to consult or provide indirect support. We sure missed getting to see the successes of our interns and students in person, but are thankful we were able to continue these services and relationships through technology!

Assistive Technology Lending Library

Fatima Portugal & Cheryl Petree ~ AT Consultants

This past year, our technology Lending Library has served children from NMSBVI's birth-3 program all the way up to older high school students throughout the state. Working throughout the state in multiple districts, we had to come up with ways to demonstrate devices, train teachers, students, and families, and conduct assistive technology evaluations remotely. Often, we were able to team up with the Outreach teachers conducting functional vision evaluations and learning media assessments in order to collaborate and minimize the amount of time students and families needed to be present for online evaluation.

The Lending Library loaned out 112 devices for student use, trainings, and evaluations, served 85 students in 27 districts and conducted an additional 31 evaluations. The instructors were able to conduct these assistive technology trainings and evaluations virtually and provided contactless delivery of the devices to students throughout the state. We loaned out more devices than ever and were able to use video conferencing to address training needs; the ability to screen share documents and show how features and applications work on various devices was particularly helpful.

We're looking forward to the next school year with more in-person instruction and trying out new head tracking and eye gaze technology designed to be used with students with multiple impairments to increase their communication and access.



Students use an array of technologies to assist them in learning. As always, NMSBVI's Technology Lending Library continues to be an excellent resource for families!

Personnel Prep Program / NMSU's Visual Impairment Program (VIP)

Loana Mason, Ed.D., COMS ~ Visual Impairment Program Coordinator

Over its 19-year existence, the VIP has successfully trained 98 teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs)/developmental vision specialists (DVSs) and 27 certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMSs). Thirty-one of our students have also gone on to earn a scholarly Master of Arts in Special Education.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the progress of the 2019 cohort due to restrictions on in-person learning and practicum experiences/internship hours. Hence, only 3 of our prospective TSVIs and none of our prospective COMSs have completed their licensure requirements to date; these licensure programs require certain activities and amounts of hours of direct teaching and observation that simply were not feasible with virtual learning. Therefore, these students are now working on finishing these requirements during the 2021-2022 school year with the return of in-person instruction. Furthermore, only one of our students completed the scholarly Master of Arts in Special Education this past year.

During the 2020-2021 school year, VIP alumni and interns accounted for 71% of practicing TSVIs, DVSs, and COMSs in New Mexico. In Summer 2021, 4 prospective TSVIs and 9 prospective COMSs joined the VIP. Five of the prospective COMSs are VIP alumni who are furthering their professional development. Over the course of the pandemic, mentorship was provided remotely using various video conferencing platforms. Four NMSBVI Outreach Consultants, 3 NMSBVI FIT COMSs, and 1 COMS contractor provided mentorship to 10 different interns throughout the state during the 2020-2021 school year. The NMSU VIP currently provides high quality professionals trained in blindness and visual impairment to at least 20 public school districts and to NMSBVI, which in turn makes the continuum of services accessible to most children and youth with visual impairments who reside in the land of enchantment.

During the 2020-2021 school year, statewide virtual learning allowed our interns increased access to their mentors and to each other, providing more opportunity for collaboration and comradery. Interns and mentors worked together during their weekly meetings to problem-solve to conduct online evaluations and instruction. This meant interns could learn from all the mentors—not just their individually assigned mentor, increasing their support network and the tools they have in their professional toolbox.

This particular group of interns have displayed tremendous dedication, grace, creativity, and resilience through the unexpected changes of the year. They have had unique opportunities to work with practitioners near and far and have pioneered their own remote instruction strategies. Online education was not invented during the pandemic, and thus, it is not going to disappear when the pandemic ends. Thus, the NMSU VIP is dedicated to continuing to develop proficiency in online instructional methodology not only to help reduce travel demands on its own students, but to also help our interns be effective online educators and most importantly, teach their learners with visual impairments how to be effective online learners.

O&M PPP (by Mark Carter ~ Statewide Training and NMSU O&M Adjunct Instructor):

NMSU students in the Orientation and Mobility training program are required to complete observations of Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) to meet national accreditation requirements. During virtual learning, direct, in-person observations were not possible, but we were able to continue moving forward with some creativity and the use of technology so students could still complete some observations. Since orientation and mobility instruction was occurring virtually, NMSU students were given a brand-new opportunity to observe instruction from COMS in other states, such as the COMS at the Governor Morehead School in North Carolina, as well as birth to three O&M lessons across the state of New Mexico. Though some O&M coursework had to be postponed due to the safety requirements (i.e., independent street travel), students have been understanding and flexible, working hard towards the requirements of the O&M program.

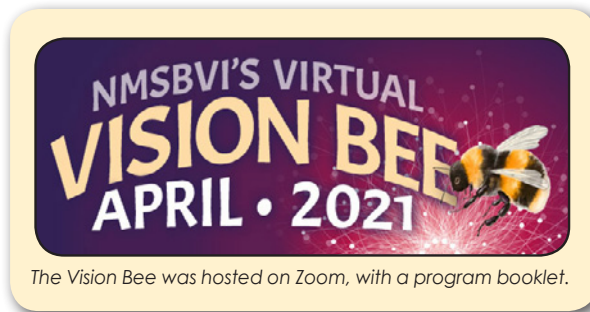


Orientation & Mobility program students learn neighborhood travel & route planning. Shown here, the student instructor presents a tactile map to another student under blindfold to preview the route.

State-Wide Training: Virtual Vision Bee

Mark Carter ~ NMSBVI Statewide Training

"Noah is Spinning and Sophia is Sleeping..." Sensory Strategies to Facilitate Learning" was a six-hour Vision Bee virtual training spread over two days. The Vision Bee was conducted on April 23 and April 26, 2021 and was attended by parents, therapists, teachers, VI professionals, and educational assistants. Over 200 people registered for the free training. NMSBVI employees Mary Vaughn, Ron Later, Audrey Bergen, and Andrea Montano presented, in addition to out-of-state presenters: Mildred Smith, Michelle Chacon, and Kristy Bates.



This was a unique opportunity for us to continue our work with statewide training when no one could travel! Offering this training virtually allowed us to have multiple presenters and reach more attendees at a single time, rather than having the same training in multiple locations. It also allowed us to bring in out-of-state speakers without travel requirements and even opportunity to collaborate as a large planning group since the speakers wanted to ensure that their topics complemented one another. Attendees gave very positive feedback regarding the training: they loved the topic and getting to see local and national experts speaking together and sharing ideas that could be implemented immediately. We look forward to hopefully being able to offer Vision Bees in person again next year, but now feel comfortable in our ability to offer a statewide virtual training, or even hybrid options, if needed!

A little more about the presenters: Mildred Smith shared research of students functioning at the sensory motor stage of development in which Sensory Learning Kit routine-based instruction was used to achieve goals. Mildred showed video of the learners and she provided an explanation of the intervention strategies used. From Colorado, Michelle Chacon and Kristy Bates discussed collaboration between a vision specialist and special education teacher to provide meaningful learning experiences to enhance the tactical and daily living skills of students who are blind. Audrey Bergen presented sensory strategies to facilitate regulation for students across the lifespan. She provided examples of how to work with students in the moment to maximize learning and stressed the importance of educating the educational team to help increase learning across different environments. Sensory strategies presented by Audrey included the use of sensory diets to facilitate learning. Andrea Montano discussed sensory integration issues that impact birth to three-year-old learners and offered strategies for parents and caregivers to create positive learning experiences for children. Andrea covered how to read the cues of young learners and respond consistently to help them grow and develop. Mary Vaughn and Ron Later provided video of a collaboration between a teacher and orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist to maximize the learning experience during O&M lessons for a student.

NMSBVI is a Top Workplace Again... **5 YEARS RUNNING!**

Albuquerque Journal

**TOP
WORK
PLACES**

2017-2021

This year, we are once again proud recipients of an Albuquerque Journal Top Workplaces 2021 award, for the 5th year in a row! This award is based on employee responses to a third-party workplace survey. We placed #4 in the midsize workplace category and received a special award for Excellent Leadership (top 5% nationally, as rated by our employees). Many thanks to the 78% of staff who completed the survey, as well as the students and families that make NMSBVI such a great place to work! It is our continuing honor to serve students across the state of New Mexico!

Construction on the Alamogordo Campus

Margie Macias ~ Director of Institutional Support Services

Despite the pandemic, we were able to continue several construction projects on the Alamogordo Campus. Renovations to the Quimby Gymnasium and Natatorium Building were completed this past summer, just in time to welcome students back to school after the closing of in-school classes during the 2020-2021 school year. Major renovations to these two areas included a new roof, mechanical, electrical and sewer/plumbing upgrades, reconfiguration of the student restrooms, locker room areas and shower areas, new energy efficient windows, addition of a pool laundry room, and refurbishment of the pool plaster. The parking lot adjacent to these two areas was also replaced.

NMSBVI is in the final days of issuing a Notice to Proceed for the demolition and replacement of the Garrett Dormitory. Included as part of this project is the demolition of the Sacramento Dormitory and restoration of the existing location with new dirt work, landscaping, and a sidewalk. While the new Garrett Dormitory is being constructed, the present Sacramento Dormitory is being used to temporarily house the residential students. Once construction of the new Garrett Dormitory is complete, and the students move in, demolition of the Sacramento Dormitory will occur.

Sadly, other NMSBVI projects that are currently fully designed and "shovel-ready," have had to be placed on hold at this time. These projects are: 1) replacement of the existing two-story, Superintendent's Residence with a handicap accessible, single-story residence, 2) construction of a new Residential Cottage for independent livings skills instruction, 3) asphalt resurfacing of the parking lot at the Lyle Administration Building/Tapia Building, 4) drainage upgrades and asphalt resurfacing of the access driveway off Catalina Lane, and 5) drainage upgrades and replacement of the east perimeter block fence.

It was NMSBVI's intent to proceed with these projects as a package with the Garrett Dormitory and Sacramento Dormitory projects; however, these projects were all placed on hold because of high construction costs and long lead times and/or materials shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NMSBVI remains hopeful construction prices will begin to normalize soon and we will be able to move forward with these projects once again.

The Paul & Lois Tapia Building, which is the oldest building on the Alamogordo campus, will soon undergo some much-needed restoration work. Built in 1918, the Tapia Building is one of four buildings on the Alamogordo Campus that is on the National and State Historical Records as a historical landmark. NMSBVI has recently contracted for design services for this project.

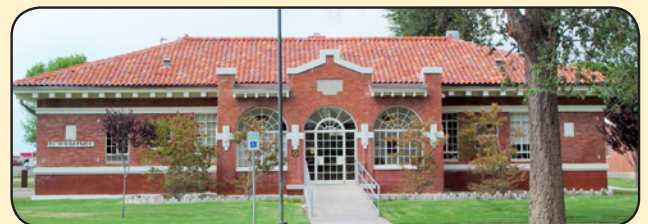
NMSBVI continues to work in partnership with the Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA), the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) and the Higher Education Department (HED). NMSBVI appreciates the support of these funding agencies and their understanding of how projects are scheduled and managed while, at the same time, considering the students' orientation & mobility, independence, and safety on a campus under construction.



Back on campus for in-person learning, students enjoy the freshly-remodeled Quimby Gymnasium. In PE class, they work together to lift and play with a giant colorful parachute in the gym.



The Garrett Dormitory building has served NMSBVI students very well for many years! Soon, it will be "retired" (demolished) and then rebuilt as a brand new dormitory for our students.



The school's oldest existing building, the Tapia Building, once served as the NMSBVI Teachers' Cottage; it is now the home of the school's Braille Production department.

The NMSBVI Foundation

Beth Lyle ~ NMSBVI Foundation; & Kitty Edstrand ~ NMSBVI Liason

The New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Foundation was established in 1982 to provide supplementary funding for the many student programs, projects, equipment, and services that NMSBVI provides. The Foundation works to meet the current and future needs of our students. Every year, thousands of children throughout New Mexico are served by NMSBVI. It is with this knowledge that the NMSBVI Foundation works hand-in-hand with the NMSBVI Innovations & Development Department to ensure that there is sustainable funding for the unmet needs of the school.

This year, the Foundation continued its efforts to fundraise for NMSBVI and was able to host the Glowball fundraiser in Alamogordo in May, and the Albuquerque event in September, 2021. The Alamogordo event, coordinated by now-Regent Robyn Holmes, was a great success. Many thanks to the numerous local sponsors and generous donations! The Foundation is looking forward to the next year and continuing to expand its fundraising efforts and board.



Golf carts parked all in a line, while golfers putt on the green; and Regent Robyn Holmes with her helpers, along with NMSBVI Admin. Assistant Kim Chavez & Superintendent Patty Beecher.

Saying Goodbye

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 GRADUATE, FELIZ RUIZ! AND CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PRESCHOOL GRADUATES!

- Ariana Abeyta
- Alain Dieu-Donne
- Gael Preciado
- Kaleigh Alequin
- Hazel Floyd
- Andrew Sala
- Diana Alvarado
- Kaylee Gonzales
- Juanita Torivio
- Zarina Anaya
- Adam Gutierrez
- Anthony Torres
- Isabel Bustamonte
- Azrael Hicks
- Lamont Washington
- TeVaughn Caldwell
- Tatum Jodie
- Sampagita Desai
- Eliza Jonkman

NMSBVI STAFF RETIREMENTS THANK YOU ALL, FOR YOUR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE!

- Carolyn Delone ~ Administrative Assistant, 8/8/05-6/30/21.
- Linda Elli ~ Developmental Specialist, 7/1/04-6/30/21.
- Cindy Faris ~ B-3 Coordinator, 8/7/00-8/31/20.
- Michael Garcia ~ ECP Instructor, 8/6/10-5/27/21.
- Jennifer Lara ~ Preschool Instructor, 8/11/16-5/21/21.
- Loretta Martinez-Cargo ~ Developmental Specialist, 8/10/09-12/31/20.

Thank You!

NMSBVI thanks all of our staff, students, families, and supporters!



During Alamogordo graduation, Superintendent Patty Beecher welcomes the audience (in-person and virtual) and special guests who attended the ceremony.



The Albuquerque preschool's graduation event was held virtually, over the internet. Here, ECP Principal Paul Kilman officiates the event while a large number of staff, family, and students attended via zoom to celebrate the day.

To request a copy of this publication in Braille,
please contact Sharon Hilton,
NMSBVI Braille Production Department:
email SHilton@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us



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