
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2025

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2024



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Purpose and History

Iowa Education for the Deaf and Blind is the combination of two programs, the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) and Iowa's Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI). The administrative positions for ISD and IESBVI have been consolidated since 2010. Under the direction of the Iowa Department of Education, the ISD and IESBVI collaborate with each other and with Area Education Agencies (AEAs) to provide a wide variety of services to visually impaired, blind, deaf, and hearing-impaired Iowans. An agreement between Iowa and Nebraska also allows Nebraska students to attend the ISD.

Iowa Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind were transferred to the Iowa Department of Education from the Iowa Board of Regents during the 2023 Legislative Session in [SF 514](#) (State Government Alignment Act).

IESBVI Services

The primary services offered through the IESBVI include:

- Itinerant teachers to provide instruction in Braille, literacy, and mathematics and to provide accommodations and modifications for visually impaired students.
- Itinerant orientation and mobility specialist services to provide an expanded core curriculum for visually impaired students.
- A deafblind technical assistance team to provide consultation regarding accommodations and modifications for students who are both deaf and blind.
- Consultants in mathematics, literacy, early childhood, family services, assistive technology, deafblind needs, and transition services.
- An assistive device center to provide consultation and equipment demonstrations and loans.
- Low vision clinics to provide screening, assessment, and advice on accommodations and equipment.
- Expanded learning opportunities through regional programs and summer school camps.
- Professional development opportunities for educators through summer institutes and semiannual conferences.

More Information

Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired: www.iesbvi.org

Iowa School for the Deaf: www.iowaschoolfortheblind.org

LSA Staff Contact: Jacob Ludwig (515.725.0155) jacob.ludwig@legis.iowa.gov

ISD Services

Students with a variety of communication methods, abilities, and devices attend the ISD. Students vary in their hearing levels, from those with mild losses to those with severe and profound losses. Cochlear implants and hearing aids are used by many students, while some students do not use any device. Speech language pathologists strategize with students who wish to maintain their residual voicing abilities. American Sign Language is used on campus, and all employees are required to attain and retain a level of signing based on the amount of interaction they have with students. Depending on individual class needs, teachers sign, speak, or conduct class using both communication methods.

Funding

Neither the IESBVI nor the ISD are funded through the K-12 school aid formula but instead receive an operating appropriation from the General Fund through the Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Though there is no provision in statute that requires funding to be based on school aid or any other formula, the General Assembly has frequently increased appropriations to both programs by the same percentage as K-12 funding. Teachers at the ISD participate in some features of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program through a separate appropriation for that purpose.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters [269](#) and [270](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [681](#)

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