

Budget Unit Brief

FY 2017



Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School

Purpose and History

The [Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School](#) (IBSSS) operates under the direction of the Board of Regents. As a partner in Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the school collaborates with the Department for the Blind, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Area Education Agencies to provide a wide variety of services to visually impaired or blind Iowans and their educators.

Services Provided

The collaborative provides services directly to students, as well as technical assistance, consultation, and collaboration for educators serving visually impaired or blind students. The primary services offered through the Statewide System for Vision Services include:

- Itinerant teachers to provide instruction in Braille, literacy, mathematics, and accommodations and modifications needed for the visually impaired student.
- Itinerant orientation and mobility specialist services to address orientation and mobility skills and provide an expanded core curriculum appropriate for visually impaired students.
- A deafblind technical assistance team to provide consultation regarding accommodations and modifications needed for students that 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.

The Braille and Sight Saving School also provides educational services on the campus in Vinton, Iowa, that include short-term educational programs, a residential component with emphasis on independent living, enriching athletic and activity programs, demonstration classrooms, and transition services.

Collaboration with Iowa School for the Deaf

Currently, the [School for the Deaf](#) (ISD) and the Braille and Sight Saving School share a director, and leadership teams from both schools often meet jointly. Efforts in recent years have been aimed at better statewide coordination of services for students at both schools and for the hearing and visually impaired students who are mainstreamed in their local schools.

State Funding

The Braille and Sight Saving School is not funded through the K-12 school aid formula but instead receives 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 the school aid or any other formula, the General Assembly has frequently increased appropriations to IBSSS by the same percentage as K-12 funding. Funding in FY 2017 was \$4.0 million. Teachers at the school participate in some features of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program through a special appropriation for that purpose. That appropriation has remained at \$82,000 for several years and funds teachers at both the ISD and the IBSSS.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [269](#)
[681](#) Iowa Administrative Code

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More Information

Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired: <http://www.iowa-braille.k12.ia.us/>

Board of Regents: <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>

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