



MEMO

FROM: Justin Ruegg
Director of Human Resources – IBSSS/IESBVI

DATE: December 13, 2013

SUBJECT: Response to RFI 4902 – State Employee Efficiency Suggestions

Employee Feedback

On November 12, 2013 a memo was sent via email to all 75 employees of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School / Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired requesting suggestions to reduce costs and increase efficiency in state government. Employees were provided with an internal contact to submit suggestions, as well as a direct link to the public comment internet site.

As of December 13, 2013 one (1) employee submitted the following three (3) suggestions for improving efficiency of vision services delivery for students in Iowa:

1. *Consolidated Paraeducator Training:*
Currently, having individual Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) across the state training each of their paraeducators takes a massive amount of time away from the students. Paraeducator training could be done across the state via a 'team' over the ICN or in small group settings.
2. *Uniform Student Vision Service Referrals and Assessments:*
When a student is referred, it would be very helpful if we had ONE or TWO people who traveled throughout the state do these assessments. If the same person(s) is assessing, rather than individual TVIs, student eligibility and original services would be determined consistently and without the prejudice or bias that might be attached to a teacher's busy or light caseload. Plus, TVIs are busy with their daily work and often have to rearrange their schedule and/or cut their time short with other direct service students in order to deal with referrals.
3. The IA Department for the Blind supplies Braille textbooks to our students. It would free up TVIs from decoding textbooks if a print page accompanies the braille pages in the textbooks. TVIs spend a lot of time hand-writing with pencil, in a textbook so others can help support a Braille reader in the classroom.

Administration Efforts

The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School / Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired currently operates under the direction of the Board of Regents as a separate entity from the Iowa School for the Deaf. In order to plan for future effective and efficient operation of services for students with sensory impairments, a feasibility study was initiated in June of 2012. This study is currently in-progress and is examining the administrative and programmatic functions of the two schools. On February 6, 2013, the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, approved recommendations submitted by the Feasibility and Planning Study Committee. The approved recommendations are outlined on the following page and provide a summary of current organizational efforts to reduce costs and improve efficiencies:

FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve in concept the recommendations submitted by the Feasibility Study and Planning Committee regarding its examination of the administrative and programmatic functions of the Iowa Education Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Iowa School for the Deaf as required by Iowa Code §270.10.
2. Direct Superintendent Clancy to combine the Management Team for Vision Services and the Executive Team for Hearing Services to create a Leadership Team for Sensory Impairments. This team will lead the planning and implementation of recommended proposals with the superintendent.
3. Direct Superintendent Clancy to centralize administrative services to students who are deaf, blind, visually impaired, hard of hearing, or deafblind. Program specific administrative functions, including principal, program directors, and regional directors, will remain separate by area of focus but under the direction of the central administration.
4. Iowa School for the Deaf will continue to include a residential option for statewide students who may require this service. However, no other regional program will include a residential component.
5. In order to more fully understand the implications of the regional center concept, the Board directs the Superintendent to develop a proposal for a Pilot Program which will include one regional center at a location to be determined.
6. The proposal must describe the operation of the regional center, including the value of the site selected, financial implications, and the different funding sources available for the center. The proposal must be presented to the Board no later than September 2013 for potential implementation in FY 2015.
7. Direct Executive Director Donley to communicate the actions of the Board of Regents regarding the Feasibility Study and Planning Committee for the Iowa Department of Management and to inform the Department that no legislative action is required at this time.