



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.

DATE: December 16, 2014

SUBJECT: The Maryland School for the Blind

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this presentation is to deliver an update to the State Board of Education regarding services provided by the Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) to the 24 Local School Systems (LSSs) in Maryland with both on-campus programs and outreach services, in accordance with Education Article §2-206.

BACKGROUND:

The MSB, established in 1853, is a private school governed by a 25 member Board of Directors. The members are confirmed by the Maryland Senate and are made up of appointees from the Governor, the State Superintendent of Schools, and one member from each house of the Maryland General Assembly. Funds received from the Maryland General Assembly support educational services to students with visual impairment, including blindness, and their families through campus-based and outreach services. The MSB maintains five on-campus programs for students with a wide variety of academic, functional and medical needs. These programs are "General Academic," "Functional Academic," "Multiple Disabilities Blind," "Autism Blind," and "Early Learning."

The statewide outreach services provide: professional development for instructional personnel who work with students and their families; instructional short courses for students aligned with the MSB Expanded Core Curriculum; academic and diagnostic assessments; and parent support and training. These services are provided to all LSSs with the goal of supporting students to be successful in their home schools.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the MSB maintain a partnership through monitoring and consultation, which includes the services of a Statewide Vision/Low Incidence Specialist position. Additionally, the MSB hosts the Maryland Instructional Resource Center which provides braille and large print textbooks to students in all LSSs and at the MSB.



Members of the State Board of Education
December 16, 2014
Page 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The MSB is required to provide the State Board of Education with an update on the programs, services, policies in the provision of services to students with visual impairments, including blindness, and their families.

ACTION:

For information only.





THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

State Statute 2-206
provides that The Maryland
School for the Blind (MSB)
shall keep the State Board
fully informed as to its
educational program and
administrative policies.



Reshard



Kuassi

Achieving Independence



Jamal



Virginia



Alana



Max

One

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Achieving Independence



**COLLABORATING WITH MSDE TO ASSIST ALL
24 LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS MEET THE
NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS**



One Maryland School for the Blind

--Partnering with MSDE

24 Local School Systems "One Maryland"



When any of the 24 Local School Systems need assistance meeting the needs of their students, they may make referrals to MSB for placements on the MSB campus or for outreach services that MSB provides in the local district.

MSB: A Brief History

- MSB, established in 1853, built its first campus in 1867 on North Avenue on the site that currently houses the Baltimore City School System administrative offices.
- In 1907— due to safety concerns— because the city insisted on running a busy city street through the middle of the campus, MSB moved to its present 100 acre Baltimore location, a wooded property purchased for \$26,000.





The Maryland School for the Blind, becoming accredited by the Middle States Association, is a 501(c)3 non-profit private school that receives a majority of its operating funds from the state through MSDE.



MSB, as a private school, is not a state agency as is the Maryland School for the Deaf, whose funding is a line item in the Governor's budget.



Tyler –
Baltimore County

Statutory Authority and Governance

- **State statute 8-314** (2003) provides that MSB, “A corporation of the State chartered on May 19, 1853, shall be governed by the MSB Board of Directors consisting of 25 members.”

Statutory Authority and Governance

- The MSB Charter and Bylaws provide that the members of the board:
 - are to be elected for no more than two three-year terms with the exception of the Chairman.
 - are subject to the confirmation by the Maryland Senate with five members of the board recommended by the MSB Board Chairman and appointed jointly by the Governor and the MSDE Superintendent.
 - Two of these five appointees shall include one member of each house of the Maryland General Assembly.



MSB Board of Directors

Edward J. Veilleux, Chairman

President of EJV Financial Services, LLC

Robin Zimelman, Vice Chairman

Attorney, parent of an MSB graduate who has multiple disabilities

Paul Schroeder, 2nd Vice Chairman

VP of the New York-based American Foundation for the Blind, is blind and attended both his local school system and a specialized school for blind students in New York.

Marion Mullauer, Treasurer

Corporate Chief Information Technology Officer

Dr. Lorraine Costella, Secretary

Former Kent County Superintendent, former MSDE State Assistant Superintendent of Instruction; and currently Goucher College Coordinator of Graduate Special Education Programs

The board is comprised of community individuals from throughout the state who represent various constituencies and have very diverse backgrounds and essential expertise.



MSB Board of Directors

Craig Borne

Governor appointee, is a blind former educator, who is currently an attorney employed by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Kimberly Alfonso

Governor appointee, Vice President of the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, parent of an LSS student who is blind who uses MSB Outreach Services, board member of National Association of Parents of Children who are Visually Impaired

Virginia Beauchamp

Educator, both parents graduated from a school for the blind and whose father was the first Director of Maryland Rehabilitation Services for Adults who are the Blind.



MSB Board of Directors

Craig Ballew

Attorney in private practice

Stephen Bender

Baltimore County Public Schools Elementary Principal

Raymond Brown

Former MSDE Assistant State Superintendent for Administration and Finance and currently Chief Financial Officer Prince George's County Public Schools

Liza Brown-DiCostantino

LSS occupational therapist, former MSB employee, parent of an MSB student in the Autism Blind Program, President of the MSB Parent Teacher Organization



MSB Board of Directors

Brian Ropp

T. Rowe Price Investment Management

William Ratchford

Former Legislative Services Budget and Policy Analysis Director

George Jenkins

Retired from Morgan and Stanley

Glenn DiChiera

*Former MSB Board member, now Board Advisor, is blind,
President of the MSB Alumni Association; Retired
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind supervisor.*

James Knell

Retired Legg Mason Investments



MSB Board of Directors

Sen. Kathy Klausmeier

Governor appointee

Delegate Cheryl Glenn

Governor appointee

Dr. Nancy Grasmick

Former State Superintendent of Schools, currently Towson Presidential Scholar for Innovation and Leadership Development

Irene Knott

VP Whiting Turner Contractors

Gary Lay

Baltimore County science teacher, parent of an MSB student who passed away, founded the Carman Lay Foundation that benefits MSB

Dennis Parnell

Human Resources Officer formerly with Marriot Corporation and Johns Hopkins Suburban Hospital; currently an HR consultant



Statutory Authority and Governance

- Statute 8-316 (1998) provides that MSDE and MSB shall enter into a written agreement pertaining to MSDE:
 - Monitoring MSB Enhanced Services budget criteria.
 - Consulting on issues related to education of students who are visually impaired.
 - Assisting in improving MSB programs and services.



Statutory Authority and Governance

- Statute 8-309 provides that MSB teachers and other professional personnel shall be paid an annual salary that is at least equal to the salary received by public school teachers and professional personnel of similar training and experience of the county in which the school is located.



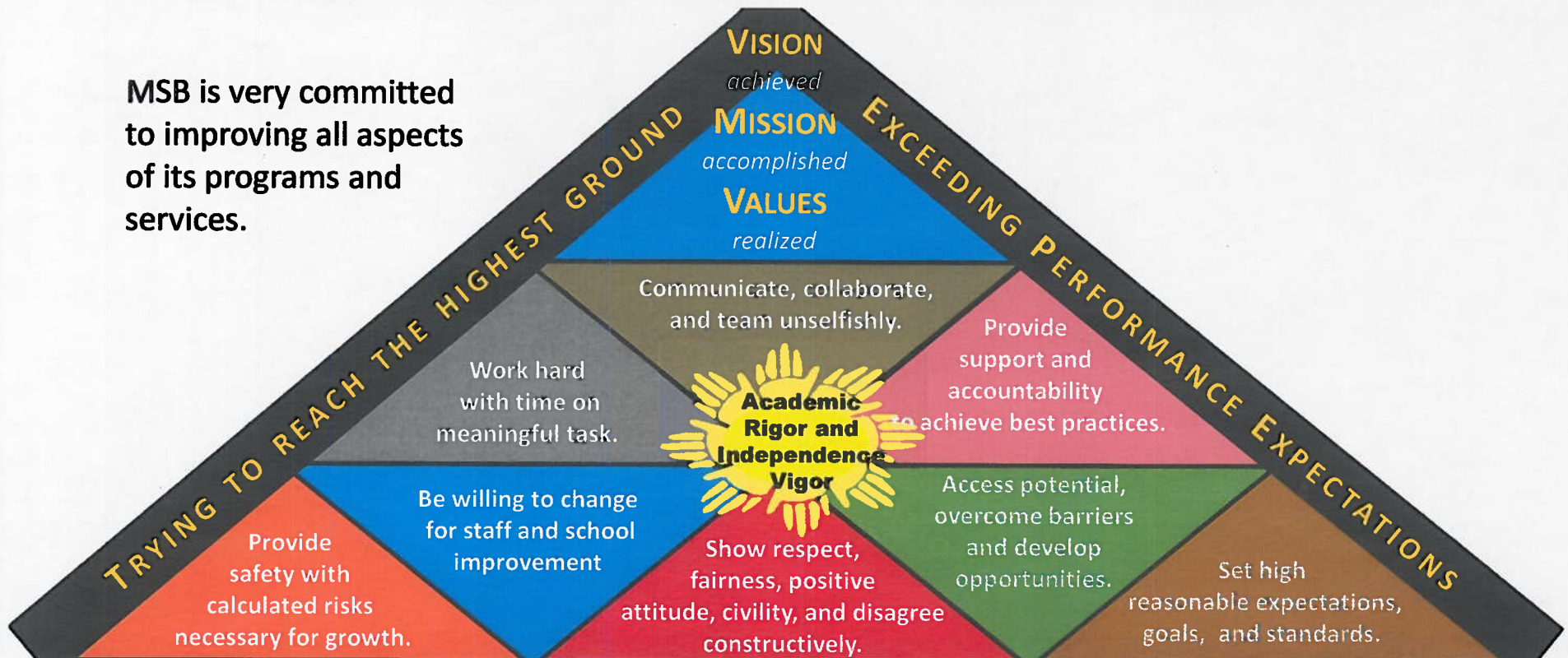
Statutory Authority and Governance

- Statute 8-307.1 “The Parent’s Right to Know” of all special education placement options provides that each Maryland LSS shall annually notify the parents or guardians of each blind or visually impaired child at the IEP meeting of the availability of educational programs offered by The Maryland School for the Blind.
- There is not full compliance with the statute necessitating MSDE on a periodic basis reminding the LSS of this requirement.



THE MSB ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

MSB is very committed to improving all aspects of its programs and services.



"SHOW TENDERNESS FOR WHO THEY ARE AND RESPECT FOR WHAT THEY CAN BECOME." —DR. LOUIS PASTEUR

Improve safety	Improve student and staff wellness	Improve systems and planning	Improve programs and services	Improve communication, support and accountability	Improve financial position and stakeholder collaboration
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QUALITY EVERYWHERE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

VALUES	To achieve its multiple responsibilities, the School is committed to seeking continuous improvement of safety, wellness, program quality, professionalism, customer service, personal appearance and demeanor, ethical standards and stewardship of funds.
MISSION	As a statewide resource center, the School provides outreach, educational and residential services for students to reach their fullest potential by preparing them to be as successful, independent, and well-rounded contributing members of their communities as possible.
VISION	The Maryland School for the Blind, serving as an integral part of Maryland's special education continuum, will exceed student-achievement expectations by setting high standards and providing best-practice programs in state of the art facilities.

THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

VISION

Vision

The Maryland School for the Blind, serving as an integral part of Maryland's special education continuum, will exceed student achievement expectations by setting high standards and providing best practice programs in state of the art facilities.

RESPECT FOR WHAT THEY CAN BECOME

Improve safety

Improve student and staff wellness

Improve systems and planning

Improve programs and services

Improve communication, support and accountability

Improve financial position and stakeholder collaboration

QUALITY EVERYWHERE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

VISION

Mission

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HOW THEY CAN BECOME

and staff wellness	improve systems and planning	Improve programs and services	Improve communication, support and accountability	Improve financial position and stakeholder collaboration
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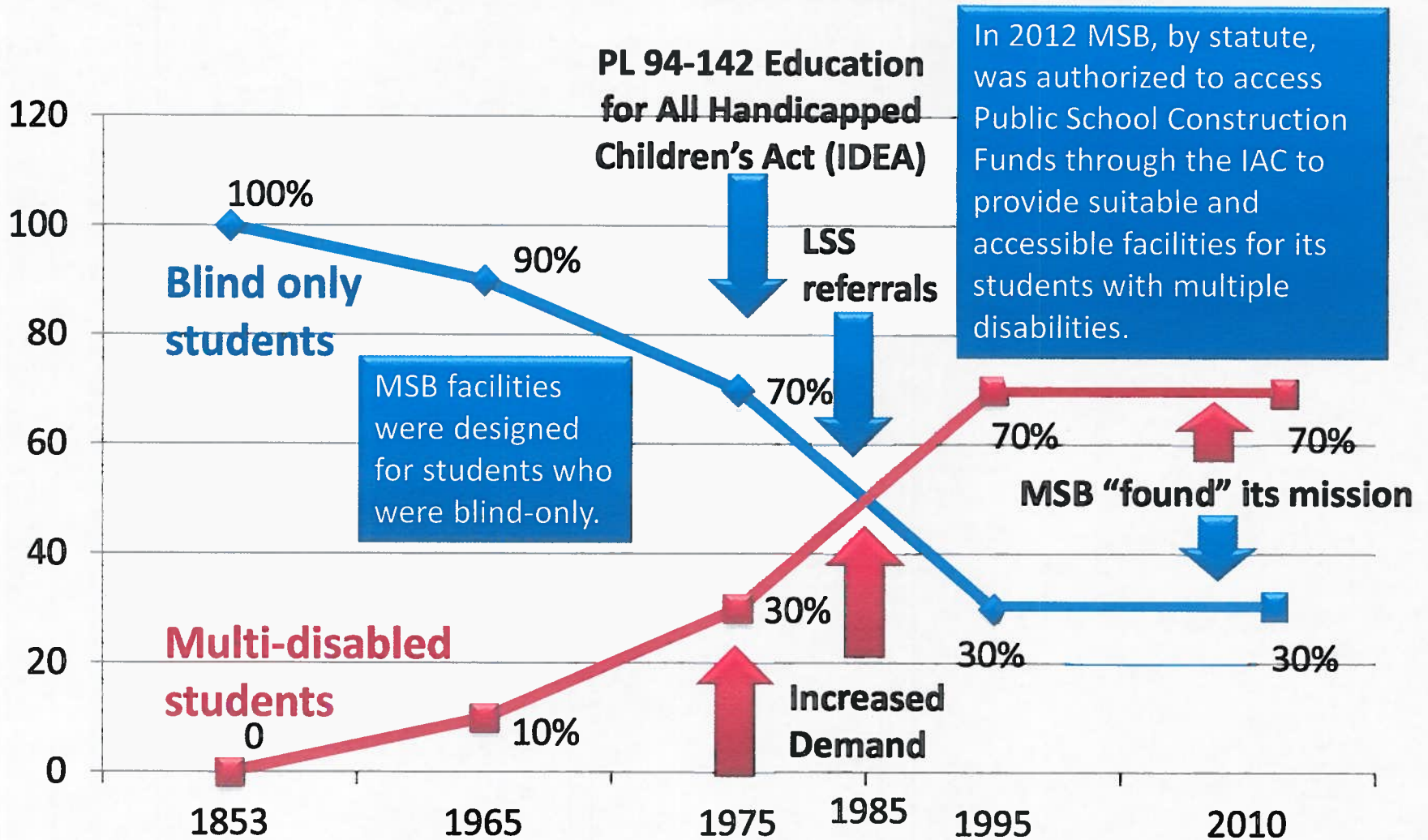
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MSB Mission has Evolved

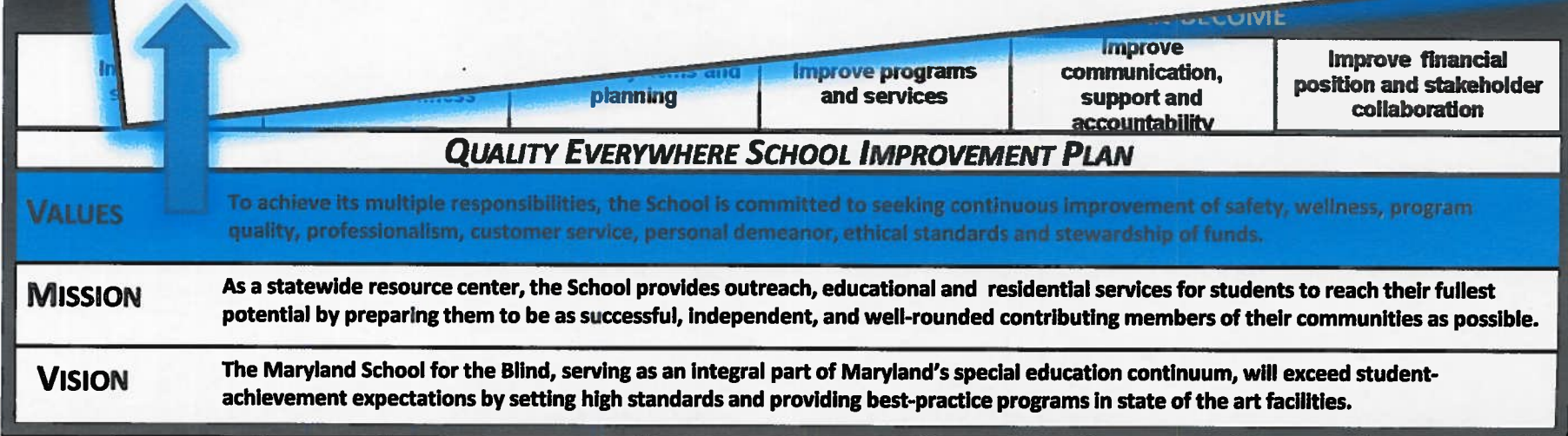


THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

VISION
achieved

Values

To achieve its multiple responsibilities, the School is committed to safety, wellness, fairness, respect, personal responsibility and continuous improvement of program quality, professionalism, customer service, ethical standards and stewardship of funds.



THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

The MSB Quality Everywhere School Improvement Plan is MSB's focused effort to continually improve in six key areas.

1. Improve safety.
2. Improve student and staff wellness.
3. Improve systems and planning.
4. Improve programs and services.
5. Improve communication, support and accountability.
6. Improve financial position and stakeholder collaboration.

growth. attitude, civility, and disagree constructively. opportunities. Set high reasonable expectations, goals, and standards.

TENDERNESS FOR WHO THEY ARE AND RESPECT FOR WHAT THEY CAN BECOME

Improve safety	Improve student and staff wellness	Improve systems and planning	Improve programs and services	Improve communication, support and accountability	Improve financial position and stakeholder collaboration
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MSB's Rich Diverse Student Body

- MSB serves a very diverse group of students ranging in
 - Age from birth to 21.
 - Functional levels from fully independent college-bound to highly dependent students needing life-long 1:1 assistance for their personal needs.



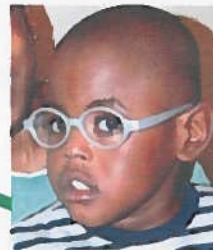
Multiple
Disabilities
Blind



General
Academic

Functional
Academic

Early
Learning



Autism
Blind





Play is not an escape
from learning. It is
learning.

Future diploma earning
students (excelling in recess)
achieving above the bar

MSB's Five On-campus Programs

1. Early Learning Program

- Infant & Toddlers services provided in the home communities for students ages 0-3 or 4, for those with an extended IFSP
- Preschool and kindergarten program (ages 3-5) learn with typical non-disabled peers in the program on the MSB campus.

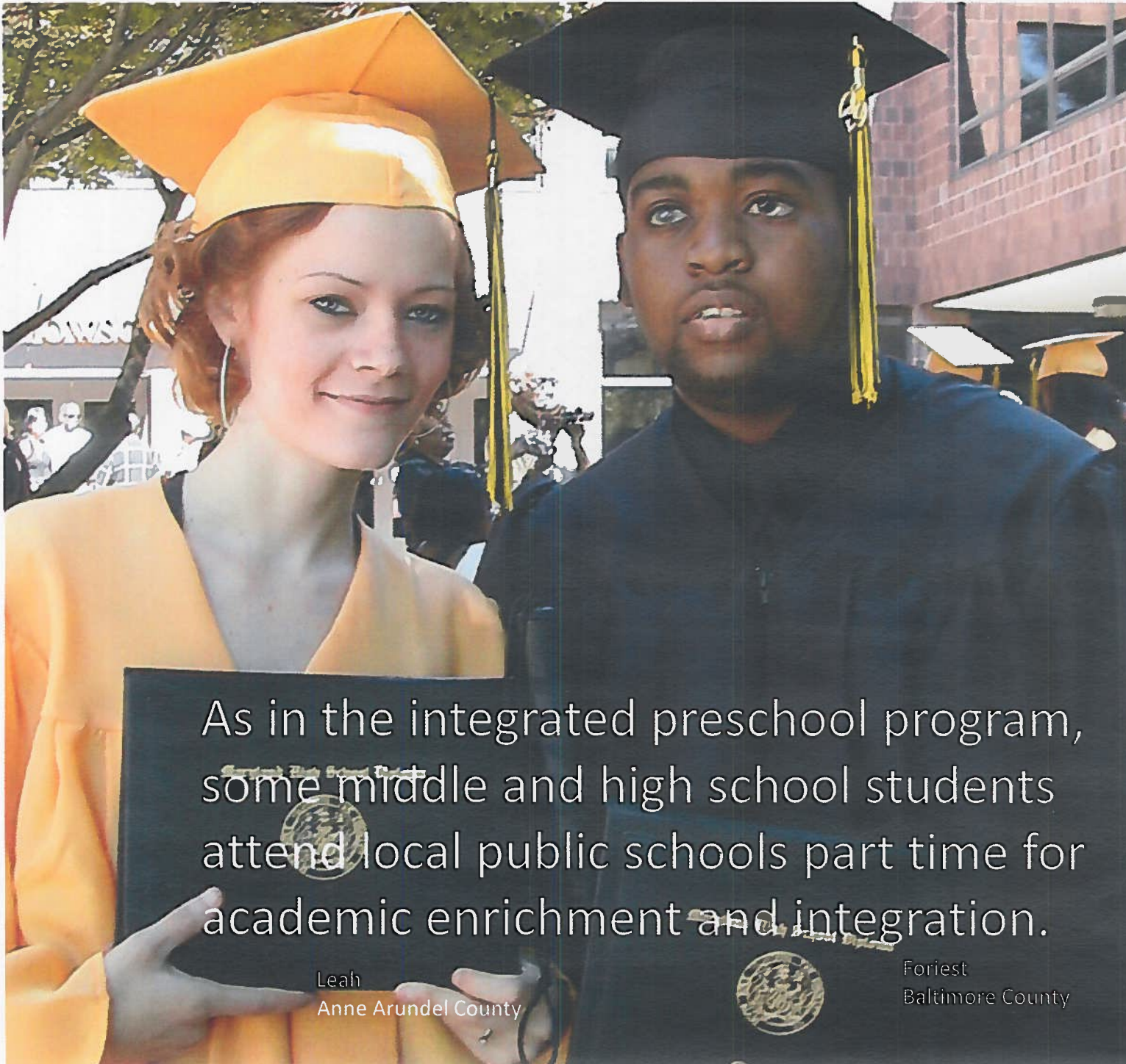
2. K-12 Multiple Disabilities Blind (Alt-MSA/certificate earning students who are typically non-ambulatory, medically fragile, and require extensive supports)

3. K-12 Autism Blind Program (Alt-MSA/certificate earning students)

4. K-12 Functional Academic (Diploma or certificate earning students who are approximately two or more years below grade level)

5. K-12 General Academic (Diploma earning students slightly below to significantly above grade level)





As in the integrated preschool program, some middle and high school students attend local public schools part time for academic enrichment and integration.

Leah
Anne Arundel County

Foriest
Baltimore County

One of MSB's Budget "Management for Results" (MFR) goals is "zero drops."

Given the students' success as a result of the intensity and comprehensiveness of MSB's services, annually we report zero drop outs.

MSB is a day and residential school

- One half of MSB's on-campus students attend school on a "day school" basis and are transported to and from their homes daily.



- The other half are "residential" and are transported to their homes Friday after school and return to MSB Sunday evening or Monday morning.
- Transportation for both day and residential students is provided by Local School Systems.

MSB Residential School Status

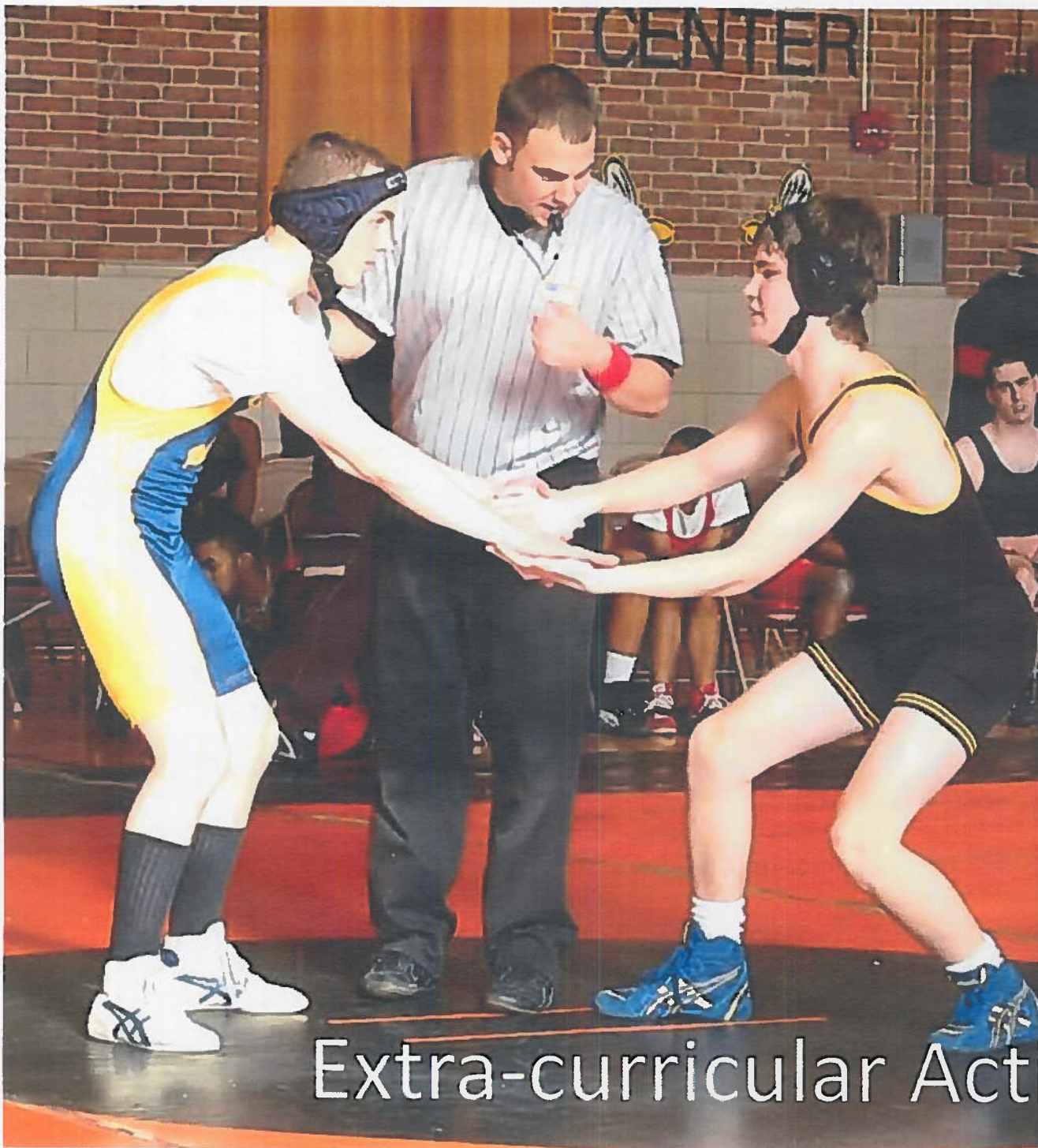
- Residential status on a part or full time basis
 - Is determined by each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team comprised of his or her parents and the LSS and MSB staff.
 - Is granted if daily transportation is not feasible due to the distance from home to school or if the student has an IEP learning need that can be met in the residential setting.
 - Can be provided on an extended school day basis for instruction in daily living skills and/or participation in recreational and social activities.



MSB's Curriculum-based Residential Program

- The residential program, coupled with the day school program, allows MSB to provide a “24 hour IEP.”
- Residential staff provide disability-specific “Expanded Core Curriculum” instruction in daily living, social, hygiene and recreational skills.
- This instruction is essential for students who most typically do not learn these skills incidentally as their peers with vision are able to do.
- Residential and teaching staff have “cross shift” meetings and communicate regularly with parents to ensure continuity of programming and generalization of skills in the home, school and community.





A very high percentage of MSB students participate in confidence-building extra-curricular activities that include:

1. School plays and musicals
2. Instrumental and choral music concerts
3. Athletics (wrestling, cheerleading, track and field, goal ball, and swimming)
4. Service organizations such as the Lions Leo Club and the MSB Student Ambassadors

Extra-curricular Activities



Big challenge

High hopes

Maximum effort =

Success!

MSB State Championship Lego Robotics Teamwork 1st Place Team

UMBC competition against 60 teams



STEM



**THE MARYLAND
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

Out50 Dogs

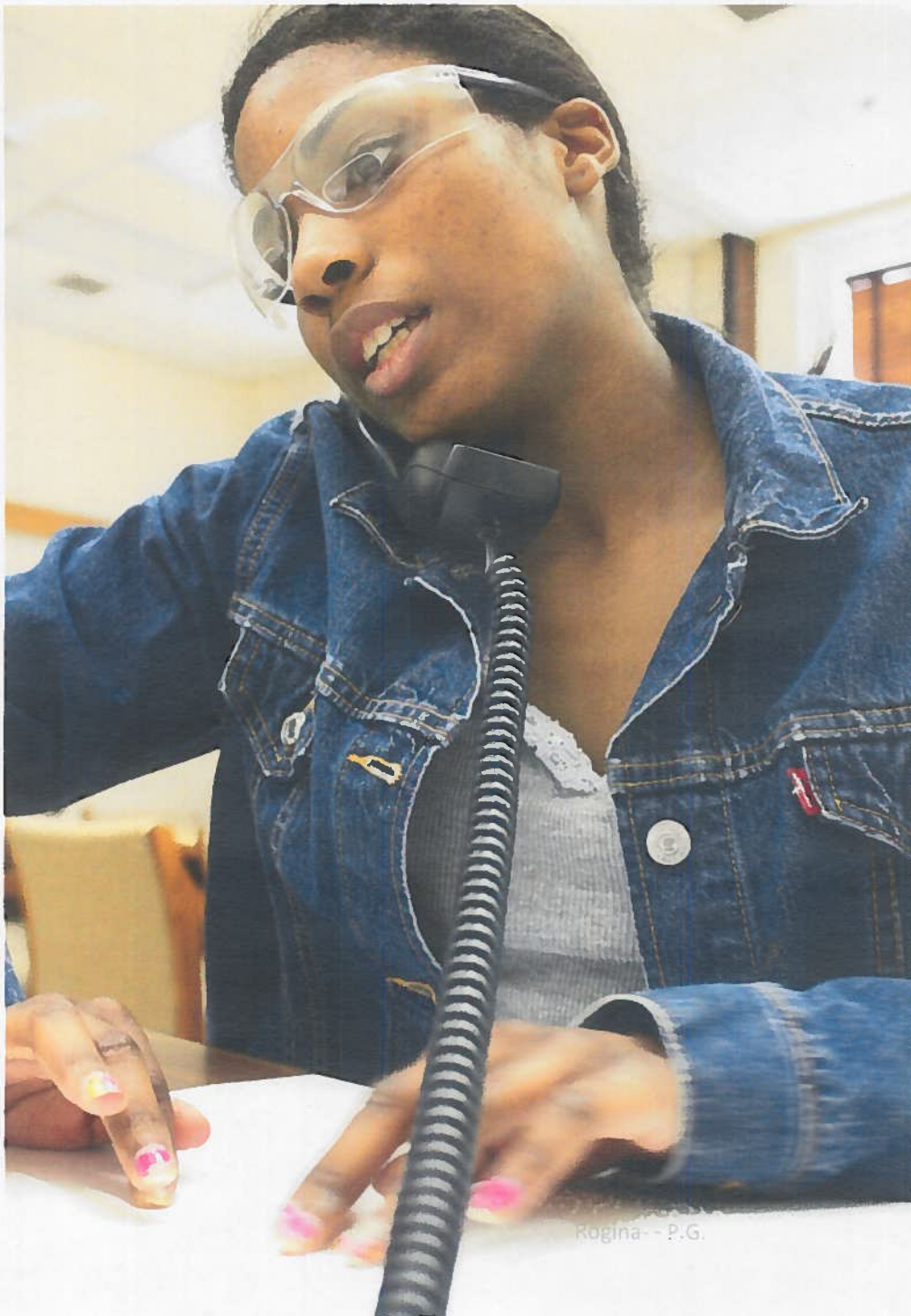
**THE MARYLAND
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

Out50 Dogs

Ben and Brian

Course in Computer
Programming

Science Technology Engineering & Math



Rogina-- P.G.

Career education, which includes on- and off-campus jobs, are critical instructional and experiential opportunities for MSB students.

National statistics indicate that over 70% of adults who are blind or visually impaired are unemployed with some under-employed.

MSB Outreach Programs to all 24 LSS

- In 1980 MSB established its Outreach Program in response to a request from the mid-shore counties and in 1985 expanded the services statewide.
- MSB's statewide Outreach Program is designed to enhance students' success in their "least restrictive" home schools by bolstering and supplementing the Local School System capacity.



MSB Outreach Programs to all 24 LSS

Statewide Outreach Services include:

- Professional staff development and consultations/coaching/technical assistance
- Short courses for LSS students on weekends and during summer focusing on technology, daily living and social skills, physical education, career education, etc.
- Student assessments include functional vision and print and/or braille learning media, psycho-educational, academic, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, social/emotional and daily living skills.
- Parent training and support



Appreciative Parents



Jackie is a Baltimore County deafblind student.

Joint MSDE – MSB Partnerships

The Maryland Instructional Resource Center (MIRC):

- Provides braille and large print textbooks and other supplementary learning materials to 210 or 12% of the 1,714 students who are blind or visually impaired in Maryland.
- Is a joint MSDE-MSB partnership formalized through an MOU.
- State Statute 8-408 requires that MSDE provide MIRC funding and also that \$150,000 be included in the Governor's budget.
- In FY 2015 MSDE provided \$385,000 for the MIRC operation.
- Is housed on the MSB campus and was established in 1996 following the 1992 passage of the Maryland Blind Students Literacy Rights and Education Act.
- The MIRC Director, braille transcribers, tactile graphic specialists, and braille proof readers, are supervised by MSB.

Joint MSDE – MSB Partnerships

State Vision Consultant:

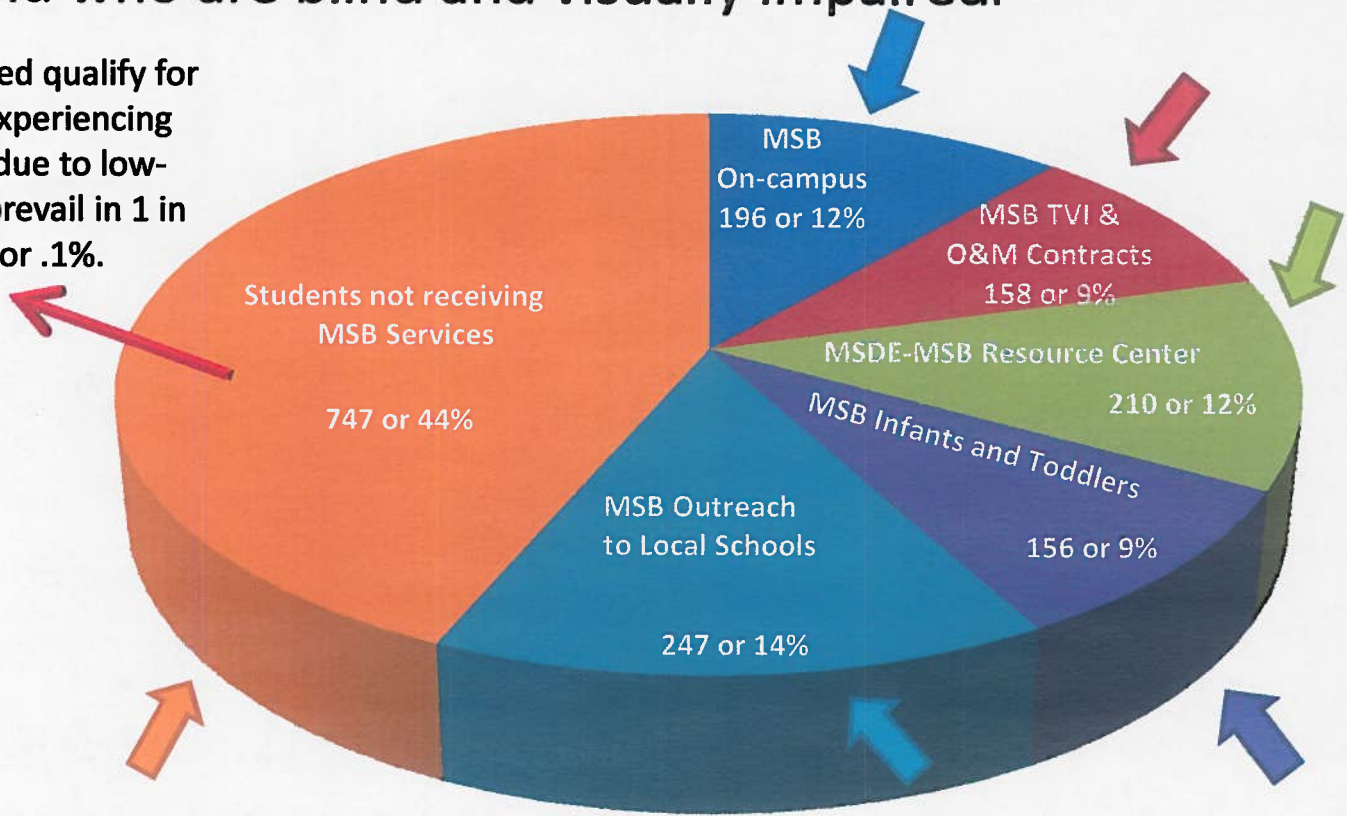
- Is a joint MSB-MSDE position through an MOU.
- Provides guidance and support to LSS professionals to enhance and improve services for students who are blind or visually impaired statewide on matters pertaining to:
 - Statewide testing
 - Accessibility of learning materials and assessment
 - Statewide professional staff development
- Introduce Josh Irzyk



MSB's Multiple Service Delivery Options

MSB serves 967 or 56% of the 1,714 students in Maryland who are blind and visually impaired.

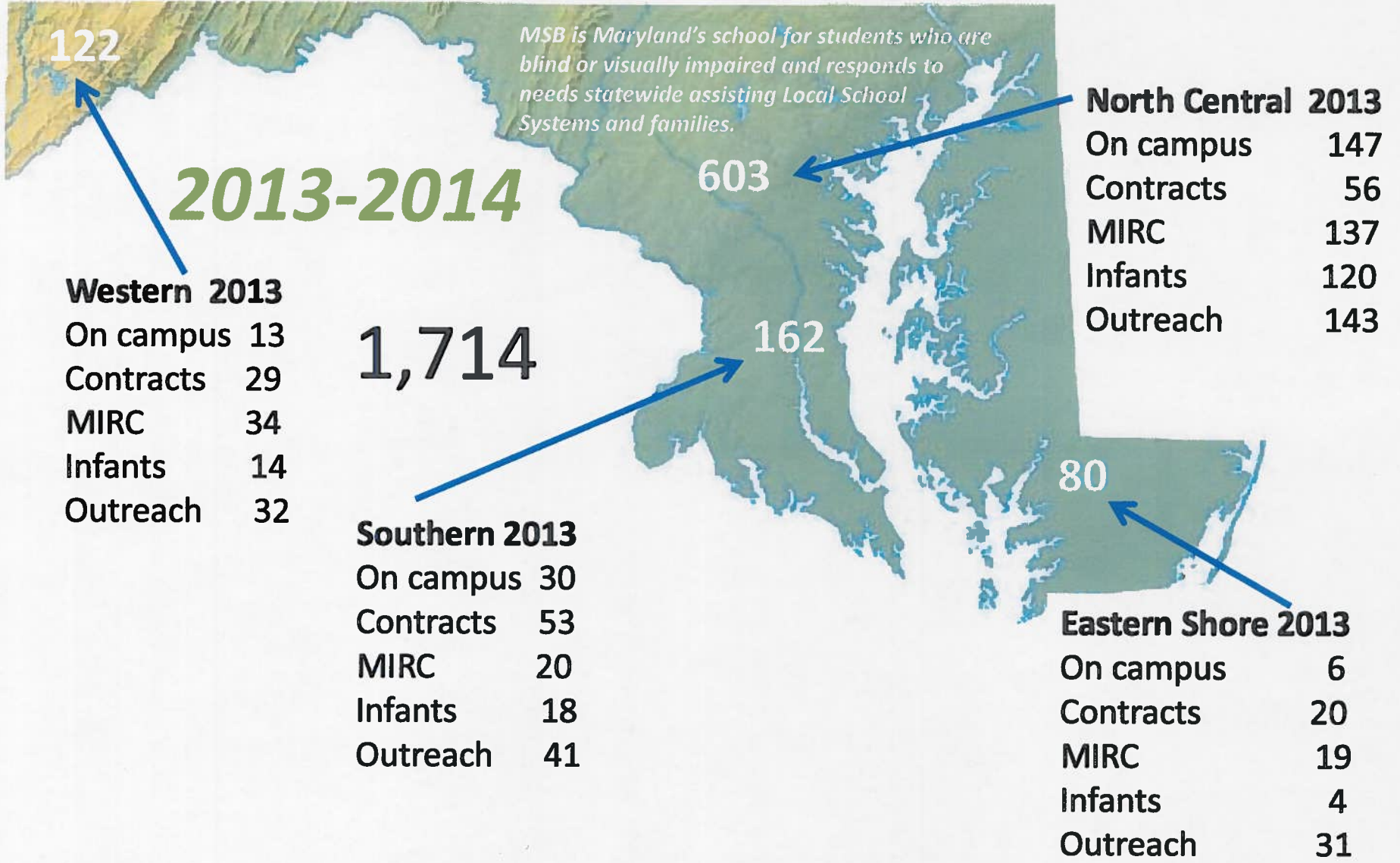
Students who are visually impaired qualify for special education as a result of experiencing difficulty in school achievement due to low-incidence visual diagnoses that prevail in 1 in every 1,000 school age students or .1%.



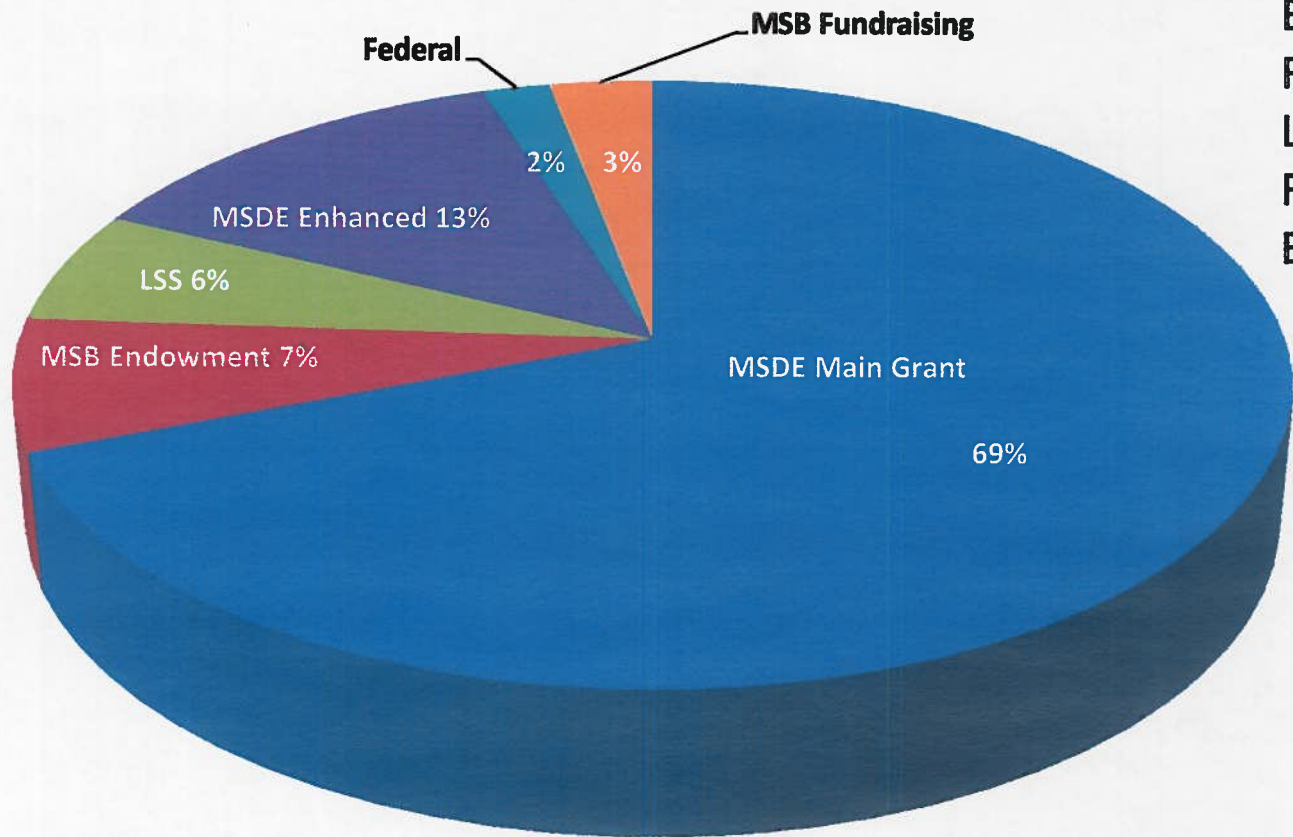
1. Student may have received services previously. *Revolving door*
2. LSS program is meeting student needs.
3. Student may need services in the future.
4. Family may not know about services.

In addition 855 or 50% of the 1,714 students in the state listed above are served through the MSDE-MSB MIRC American Printing House for the Blind Quota registration process that provides adapted learning materials.

MSB serves students in all 24 Local School Systems



MSB Source of Funds 2015



Main Grant	\$20.2M
Enhanced	3.8
Federal	.7
Local Schools	1.8
Fundraising	.9
Endowment	2.1
<hr/>	
	\$29.5M

MSB self-funds 10% of its operating budget through endowment draws and fundraising revenues.

MSB Operating Budget Funding Sources

1. Main Grant (§8-317)

- Established in 2000.
- Per pupil “foundation” amount set by MSDE.
- Includes a four year rolling average and an inflation adjustment; however, for FY 2008-2012 it was flat funded and for FY 2013-2015 it increased only minimally.



MSB Operating Budget Funding Sources

2. Enhanced Services (§8-315)

- Established in 1999.
- Provides supplemental funds for students who have “high and intensive needs” and are at risk of requiring out-of-state placement for services required above what the “average” MSB student requires.
- Examples of services include the need for:
 - One-to-one assistance
 - Higher than average use of related services
 - Extended summer program
 - Specialized training for teachers
 - Equipment for students



MSB Operating Budget Funding Sources

3. Local School System Formula (§8-310 & §8-415)

Provide that each LSS must pay MSB the “basic cost” of educating a “non-disabled” student from that county as provided from county, state and federal funds.

- MSDE calculates the amount for each county.
- These amounts vary dramatically from year to year and with many LSS payments having decreased.
- LSS submit payments to MSB, as calculated and required by MSDE; however, in many cases the amounts are less than the LSS generate and retain locally per pupil.



FY 15 LSS Share Payments

County	Payment	Students	Total from LSS	County	Payment	Students	Total from LSS
Worcester	9,314	0	0	Charles	4,027	1	4,027
Kent	6,566	0	0	Calvert	4,813	2	8,196
Montgomery	6,168	7	43,176	Washington	3,066	8	24,528
Talbot	7,212	0	0	St. Mary's	3,860	0	0
Howard	6,381	2	15,386	Dorchester	2,722	0	0
Anne Arundel	5,408	9	48,672	Wicomico	1,344	3	7,248
Frederick	3,667	4	14,708	Cecil	2,697	2	5,376
Queen Anne's	4,698	0	0	Somerset	2,356	0	0
Garrett	5,143	0	0	Caroline	1,606	2	3,212
Prince George's	2,545	19	48,365	Allegany	892	0	0
Harford	3,686	16	58,976	Baltimore City	423	44	<u>18,612</u>
Carroll	4,711	2	9,422	Total		186	601,202
Baltimore Co.	4,658	68	316,744				

Operating Budget Subsidy from MSB's Endowment

Fiscal Year	Subsidy
2003	\$1,357,750
2004	1,029,000
2005	1,147,000
2006	1,095,600
2007	1,732,595
2008	1,237,092
2009	1,308,000
2010	1,712,520
2011	816,000
2012	1,001,245
2013	880,000
2014	2,127,760

**Average
\$1,287,047**

MSB Operating Budget Funding Sources

4. MSB Endowment and Fundraising

In spite of significant cost saving measures that include reducing staff by 12% in 2010 for a \$1.6M saving and “hard freezing” the MSB defined benefit pension plan saving \$2.1M, the school finds it necessary to subsidize its budget by drawing on its endowment and raising funds because of inflation, increased benefit costs and the mandate that it match Baltimore County Schools professional salaries.

The school’s endowment and private-philanthropy fund raising are MSB’s only sources of revenues for the required 7% IAC Public School Construction Program match and provide for “soft costs” given that it does not have taxing authority.

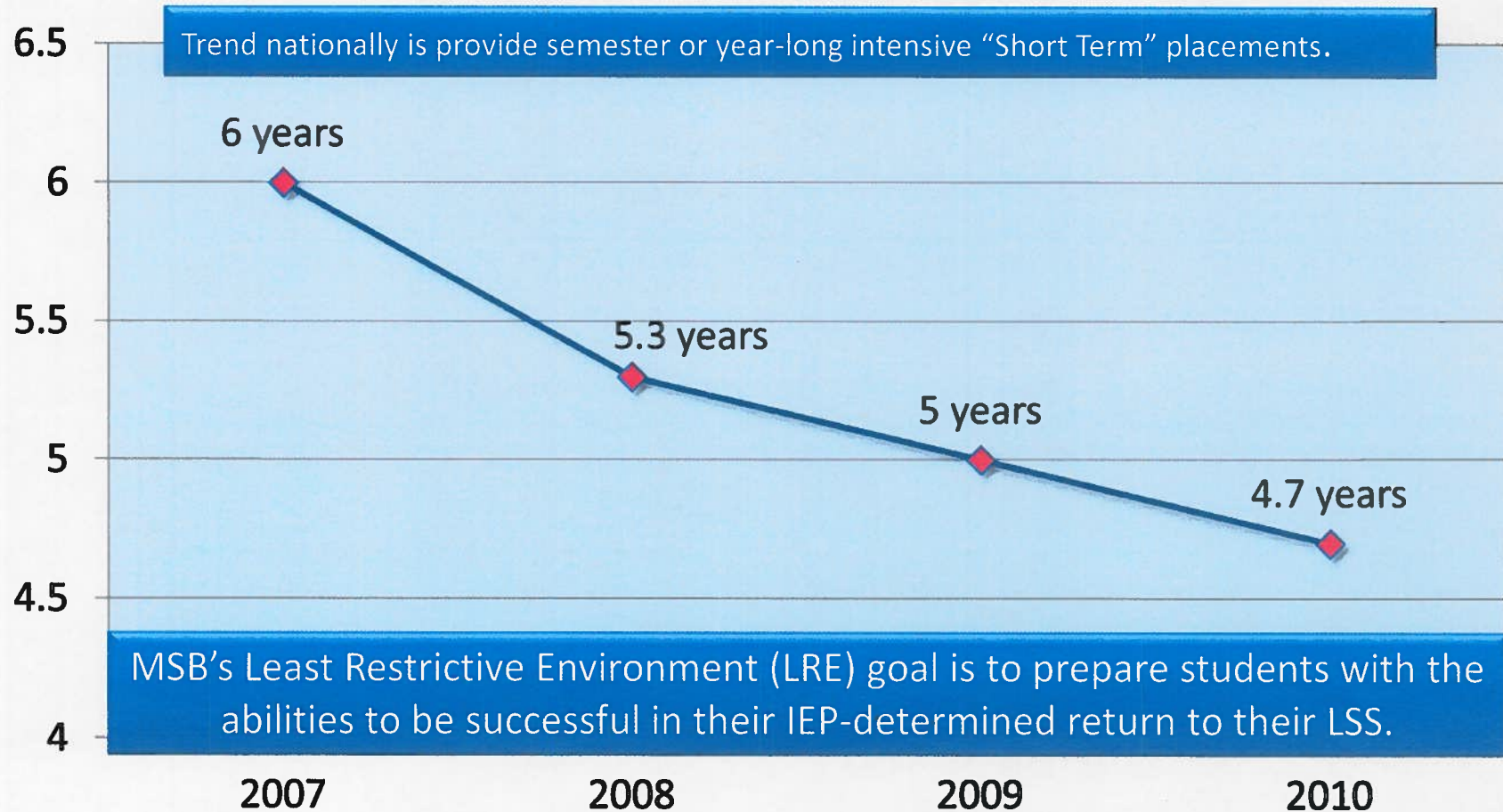
MSB Student Per Capita Costs 2013-2014

	Day School	Residential and Day
Preschool	\$129,000	<small>Preschool students are not residential</small>
Academic	92,000	\$132,000
Multiple Disabilities	81,000	\$175,000
Autism Blind	113,000	\$190,000

- Out-of-state 7-day-a-week placement costs range from \$350,000 to \$500,000 annually.
- One state leader stated, “MSB is a critical cost-effective alternative for Maryland. Without MSB, many of Maryland’s most vulnerable children would be sent to expensive out-of-state placements— with parents needlessly ‘divorced’ from their children— at more than twice the cost.”

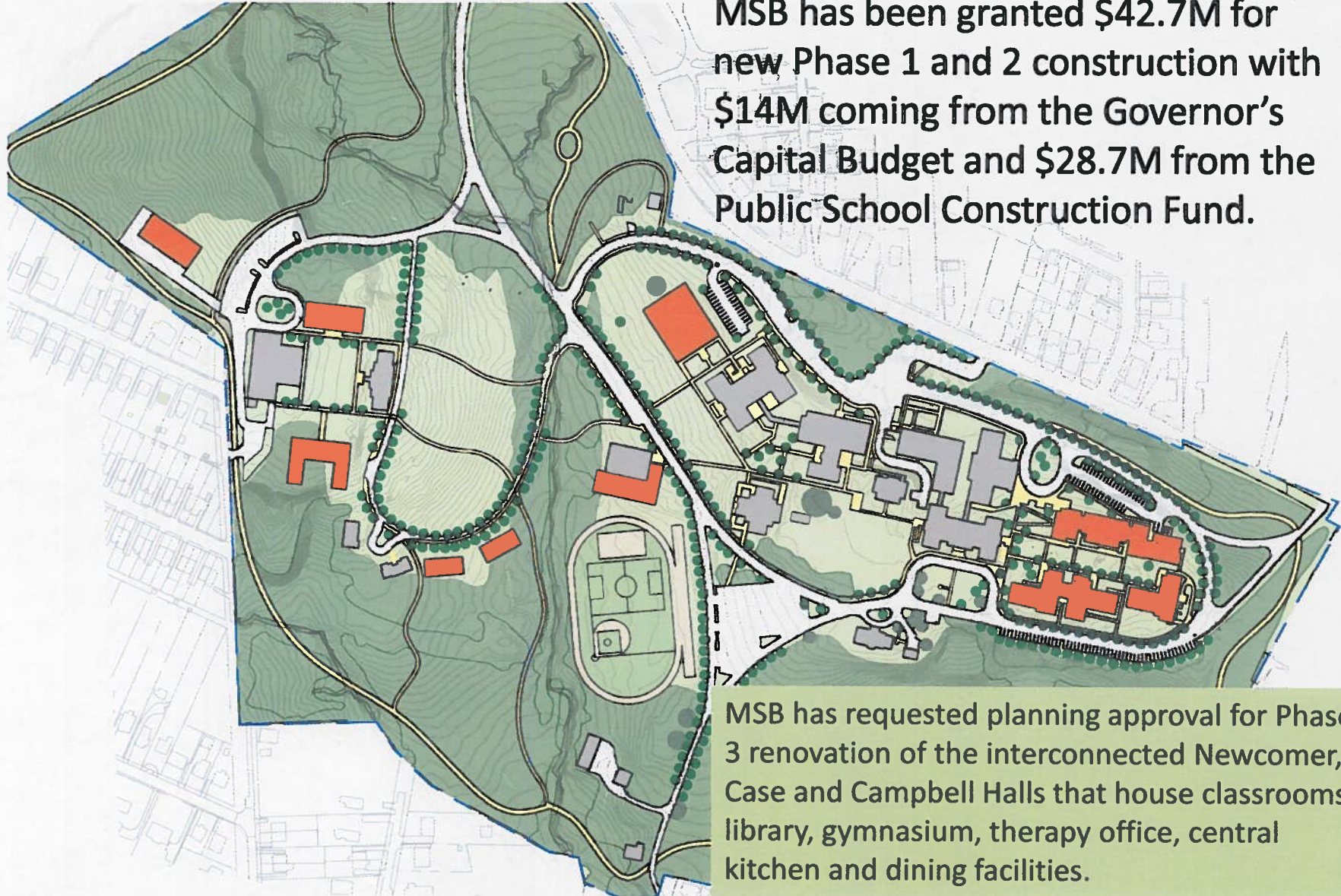
The Maryland School for the Blind

Average Enrollment Length



MSB 2010 Board-approved Updated Campus Master Plan

MSB has been granted \$42.7M for new Phase 1 and 2 construction with \$14M coming from the Governor's Capital Budget and \$28.7M from the Public School Construction Fund.



MSB has requested planning approval for Phase 3 renovation of the interconnected Newcomer, Case and Campbell Halls that house classrooms, library, gymnasium, therapy office, central kitchen and dining facilities.

Campus Master Plan

Taylor Avenue

Phase 1

Occupied new
MDB Cottages
in Aug. 2014

Occupied MDB
Classroom facility
in Nov. 2014

Case Hall

Campbell

Renovation

Newcomer

Phase 2

Construction
began Nov.
2014 on
Autism-Blind
Classroom and
Cottage facilities

Phase 3

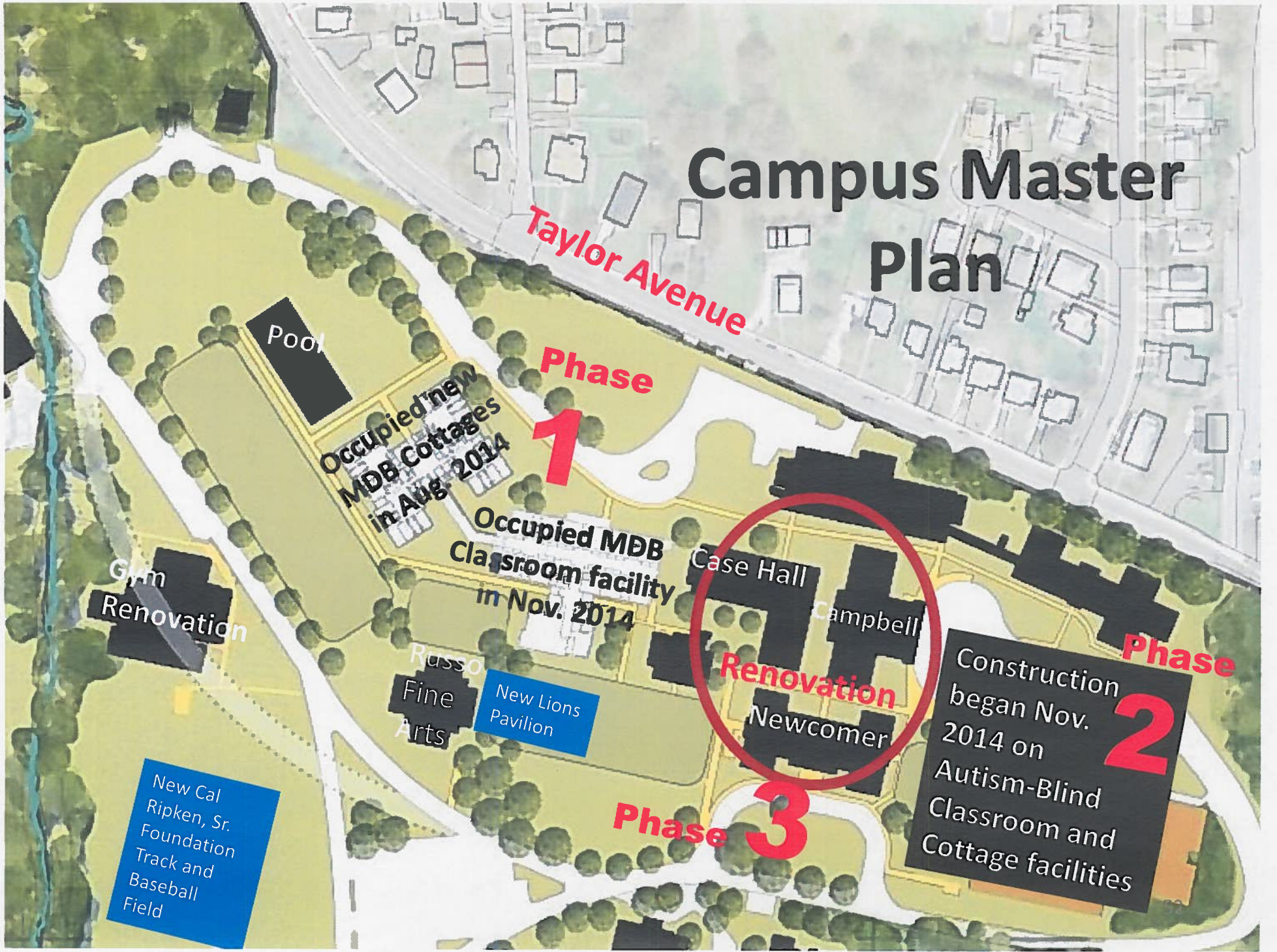
Pool

Gym
Renovation

Russo
Fine
Arts

New Lions
Pavilion

New Cal
Ripken, Sr.
Foundation
Track and
Baseball
Field





New Lion Pavilion



Cottages

Multiple Disabilities
Blind Classroom
Building

Taylor Avenue

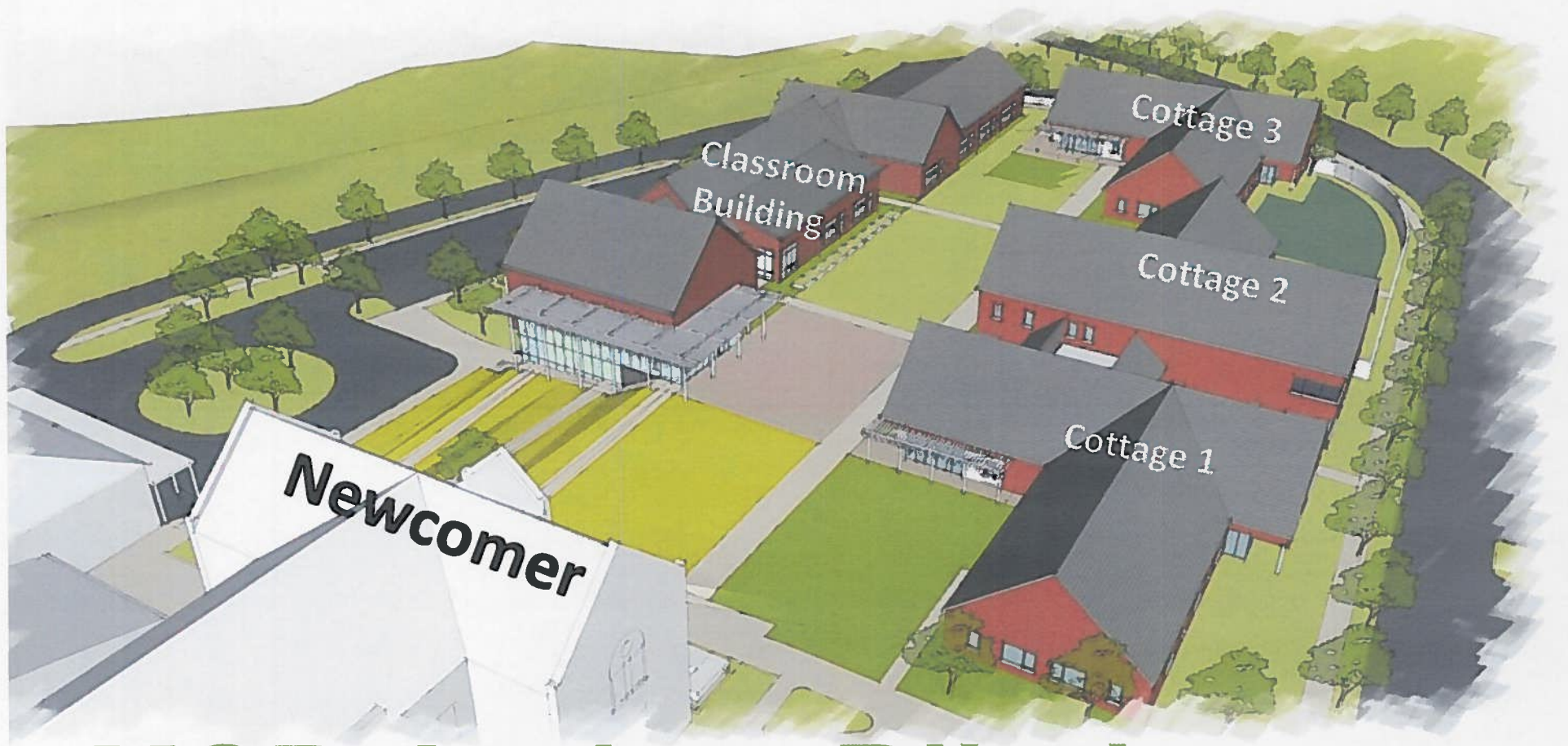
New Cottages for Students in the Multiple Disabilities Blind Program





THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Multiple
Disabilities-
Blind Cottages



MSB Autism Blind

Construction has begun with occupancy in August 2016

Opportunities and Challenges

- Comprehensively meeting students' complex unique needs and ensuring safety on a 24 hour 5 day a week basis.
- Managing with an operating budget revenue shortfall.
 - Main Grant has had very minimal Foundation amount increases for the past 7 years
 - LSS Grant issue
- Having the resources to keep pace with changing technology.



Opportunities and Challenges

- National shortage of Teachers of the Visually Impaired, related services staff, and Orientation and Mobility Instructors.
- Accessibility issues of curricular learning and test materials in braille or electronic formats for students who are blind or visually impaired, which MSDE is addressing.
- Many parents not being aware of on-campus and outreach MSB services available in spite of “Right to Know” legislation.



Opportunities and Challenges

- Parents and graduates often experiencing challenges transitioning from school-age IDEA entitlement to eligibility services after graduation.





So often you find that the students you're trying to inspire are the ones that end up inspiring you.

A. J. and Carrie