

II. F. Agency Workforce Plan, and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Overview

Vision

The Texas School for the Deaf aspires to be a premier leader in bilingual education that challenges each student to reach their full potential.

Mission

- Texas School for the Deaf ensures students learn, grow and belong in a language-rich environment while supporting students, families and professionals through statewide outreach services.

Beliefs

- Education is a responsibility shared by the students, family, school and community.
- The development of the whole person socially, physically, intellectually, culturally, and emotionally is imperative to a positive identity, self-worth and lifelong success.
- American Sign Language and English are woven into the fabric of TSD life building healthy Deaf identities and positive self-worth.
- An interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates technology in academically engaging learning environments prepares students to become critical thinkers, collaborators and decision makers.
- Outreach Services provide resources and support to the State's deaf and hard of hearing students, their families and the professionals that serve them.
- Treating students and staff with dignity and respect in an inclusive community that values diverse abilities, needs and interests is crucial to creating a healthy and productive environment.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Functions

TSD provides a continuum of direct educational services to students, birth through twenty-two, who are deaf or hard of hearing; some of these students may have multiple disabilities. TSD also directed to serve as a statewide educational resource. Through the Educational Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD), TSD provides a variety of educational services to programs and professionals throughout the state working with and for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. (Texas Education Code, §30.051.)

Anticipated Changes to the Mission, Strategies, and Goals Over the Next Five Years

- TSD's two primary functions—serving students on the Austin campus and providing statewide outreach services—are expected to continue without change over the next five years.
 - TSD will continue to provide educational, residential support and related services to TSD's on-site population of deaf and hard of hearing students. TSD is experiencing, however, and expects to continue experiencing, a change in the nature of the population of students TSD serves. If current trends continue, we will serve an increasing number of students with complex additional disabilities including medically fragile children. TSD will likely also serve students who have a history of abuse, neglect and serious behavior issues. At the same time, TSD's population of "traditional" deaf children will grow as a result of the quality of the School's reputation nationwide, the attraction of TSD as an employer for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing, and the general strength of the Austin area economy.
 - The same is true for TSD's outreach and resource mission. Although the mission will remain the same, the need for services will expand. As a "center" school for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, TSD has the centralized resources and expertise to share with school districts, families, and professionals involved in the education of deaf and hard of hearing students. As TSD builds staff in the Educational Resource Center on Deafness, TSD's outreach activities will increase. TSD has also begun to work more collaboratively with Texas Education Agency statewide deaf services as well as statewide partners in the Education Service Centers charged with providing technical assistance in specified areas to professionals in deaf education. Recently TSD has assumed a statewide leadership role in services to families. TSD

expects to see growth in that role over the next five years including the establishment of a Family Resource Center on the campus in Austin.

Additional Considerations

Key Economic and Environmental Factors.

- **The Employees Retirement System (ERS) continues to reduce health benefits and increased employee contributions.** In years past, health benefits for State of Texas employees were a valuable recruitment tool that helped to offset salaries that were lower than the local market. As economic challenges have persisted throughout the state and the nation, employers everywhere, including the State of Texas, have had to reduce employee benefits and shift more of the cost for the remaining benefits to their employees. The once strong benefits package offered to state employees is losing ground each year. Higher costs for children and spouse health insurance coverage, co-pays for medical and drug services make the benefits package less of a selling point for recruitment and retention purposes.
- **Scarce Teacher Talent Pool.** Well-qualified deaf educators are in short supply and high demand and that shortage is expected to continue to worsen in coming years. Teachers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing require specialized training to obtain the skills to meet the complex needs of the students, including competency in American Sign Language. At present, there are 63 colleges and universities that offer deaf education teacher training programs in the United States, seven of which are offered in Texas. TSD currently competes with 50 Residential Schools for the Deaf across the nation and 38 Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf in Texas for teachers with the skills necessary to educate our students.
The status of teacher retention is equally dim. Every year, thousands of new teachers enter the teaching field. Within the first five years, nearly half of those teachers will transfer to a new school or leave the profession altogether.
- **Uncompetitive Salaries.** Texas state salaries are simply not competitive with the rest of the nation. The reduction in employee benefits and increased costs have adversely impacted employees. As a result, we are unable to compete with the private sector and other states for qualified staff resulting in shortages in critical positions such as Educational Diagnosticians, Counselors, Nurses, Interpreters, Residential Educators, Teachers, and Teacher Aides.
- **Housing Costs.** From 2005 to 2013, an estimated 5.9 million people have moved to Texas. This population migration has resulted in a dramatic increase in the cost of housing, making it more difficult to recruit from outside the area. The average cost of homes has increased dramatically. As a result, qualified applicants have declined job offers when they realized the high cost of living in Central Texas as compared to the salaries the agency can offer. Others have relocated to Texas only to learn that the income they earn is not sufficient to allow them to continue living in Central Texas.^{1, 2}
- **TSD Response to Economic Conditions.** To cope with the affect of past adverse economic conditions and limited resources, TSD has sought alternative methods of providing services. Distance learning classrooms have been established and the use of video conferencing is increasing. Resources are being shifted to provide services in communities across the state.
- **Current Customer Demands.** TSD's customers include students, parents, and professionals throughout the state. TSD's student population requires a level of services that the current number of professional and paraprofessional employees are unable to provide. Adding to this problem, the student population has continued to become increasingly multi-impaired and has complex needs for more intensive services related to the multiple impairments.
- **Parents of TSD students as well as parents of deaf children throughout the state require intensive training in sign language and parenting skills necessary for effective parenting of deaf children.** They require information about all services to which their child is legally entitled or otherwise needs including educational services (e.g.—the Individual Educational Plan and Admission, Review and Dismissal Process) and health services. Additionally, as the population of TSD students living in Austin increases, their parents require increased levels of daily transportation.
- **Long Range Business Plans.** TSD's long-range business plan includes a variety of restructuring efforts to maintain a quality continuum of educational services for TSD students. We need to continue to represent innovative strategies and proven methods for learning for deaf and hard of hearing students. We need a comprehensive design for effective school functioning that aligns the School's curriculum, technology and professional development into a coordinated plan to improve achievement. We must develop and maintain a continuous professional staff development and training program to meet the current workforce demands. We need new areas of business and community support to implement school activities and programs. TSD needs new sources of federal, state and local funding to sustain school reform efforts. Lastly, and most importantly, TSD needs to have measurable goals for student performance and benchmarks for meeting those goals.

¹ Shaping Texas: The Effects of Immigration, 1970 – 2020, CIS.ORG

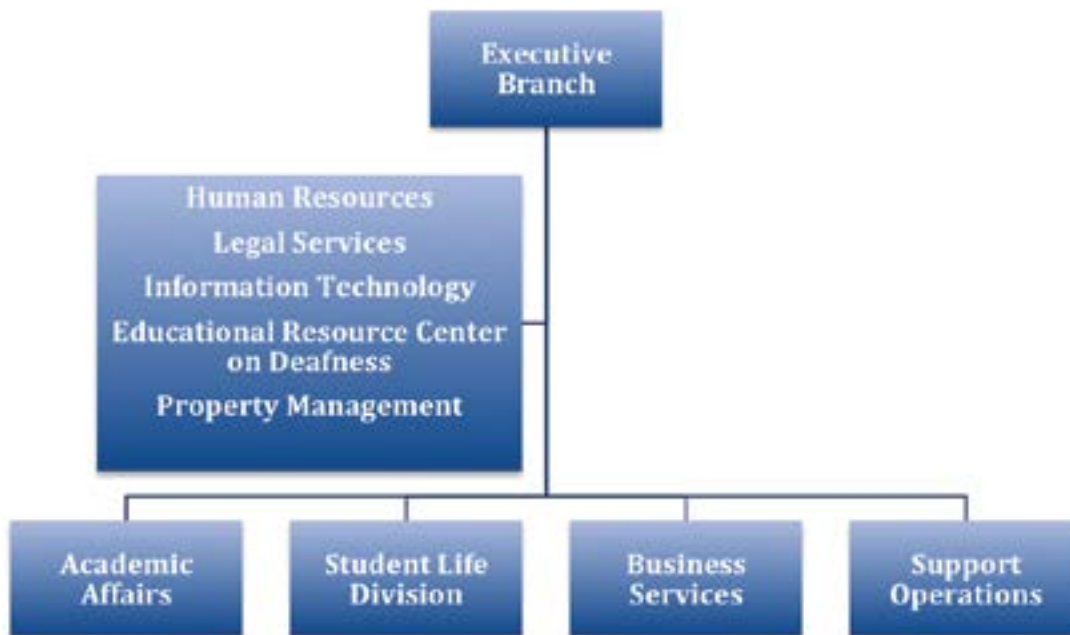
² 2014 Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis, City of Austin

Organizational Structure

TSD has recently reorganized its organizational structure. TSD will grow into this structure over the course of this strategic plan.

The Executive Branch is administered by the Superintendent and includes Legal, Human Resources, Educational Outreach Center on Deafness (ERCOD), Information Technology, and Facilities/Property Management.

- Business Services is managed by the Chief Financial Officer and includes Accounting, Budget, Purchasing, and Risk Management.
- The Academic Affairs Division is administered by the Director of Academic Affairs and includes responsibility for all academic school programs including Student Support Services, Related Services and Curriculum and Assessment.
- The Director of Student Life is responsible for student programs after school and includes responsibility for the Residential Program, and the Student Development Programs.
- The Support Operations Division is administered by the Director of Support Operations and includes responsibility for Athletics, Food Services, Health Services, Home-going Transportation, Interpreting Services, Security, Transportation, and the coordination of maintenance and construction with the Texas Facilities Commission.

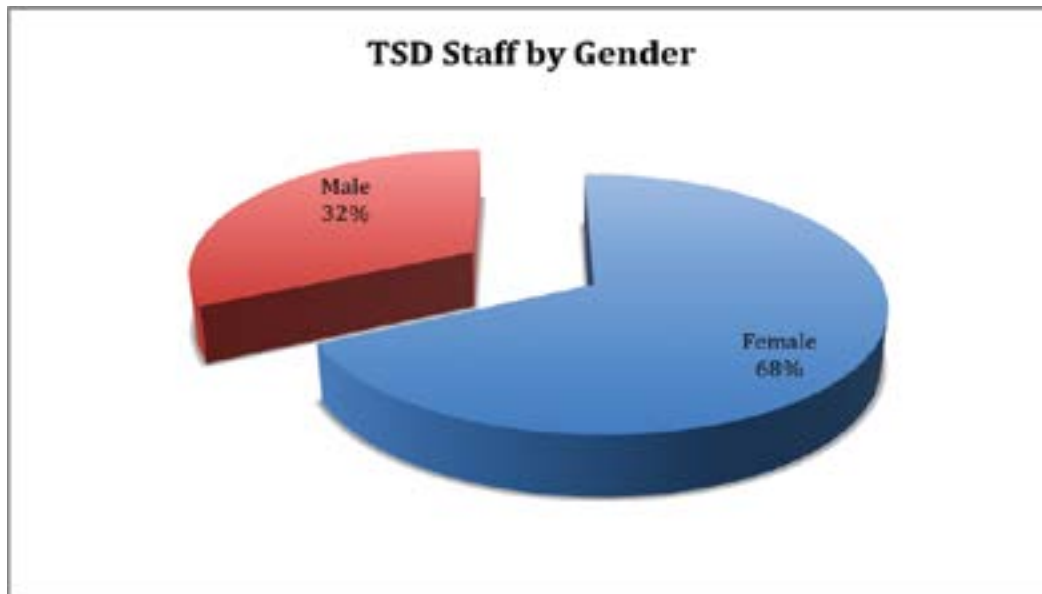


Current Workforce Profile

TSD's talented workforce of teachers, staff, and administrators is one of its greatest resources. Every year, however, it becomes more difficult to nourish, retain, and replace this resource. As a state agency that functions similarly to an independent school district, we are constantly asked to do more with less. Paperwork overloads, compliance issues, and poor salaries challenge enthusiasm and commitment. The salaries of classified staff are non-competitive and the demands of their jobs far exceed their compensation. TSD's professional faculty members, while paid on the same scale as Austin Independent School District teachers, are still experiencing high burnout.

Demographics: Gender, Ethnicity, Age, and Tenure

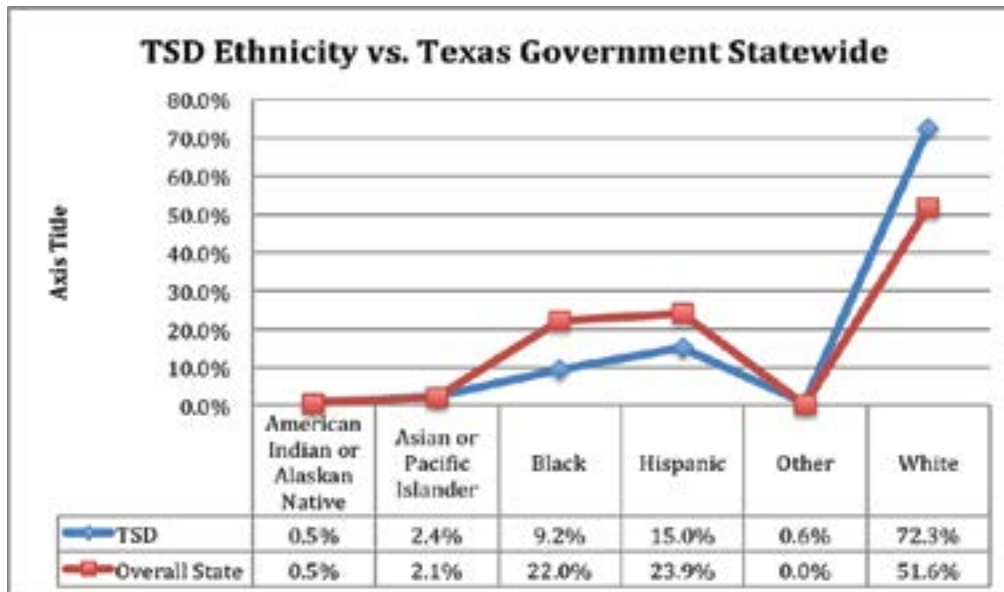
Approximately 57% of TSD's workforce is deaf or hard of hearing. There is a higher percentage of deaf or hard of hearing staff in departments that provide direct care to TSD's students. Support functions generally have a lower percentage of deaf or hard of hearing staff. The workforce data presented does not include substitute employee information.



Approximately 68% of TSD's workforce is female and 32% is male. This is a higher percentage of female employees compared to the overall Texas State Government workforce in which 53% is female.

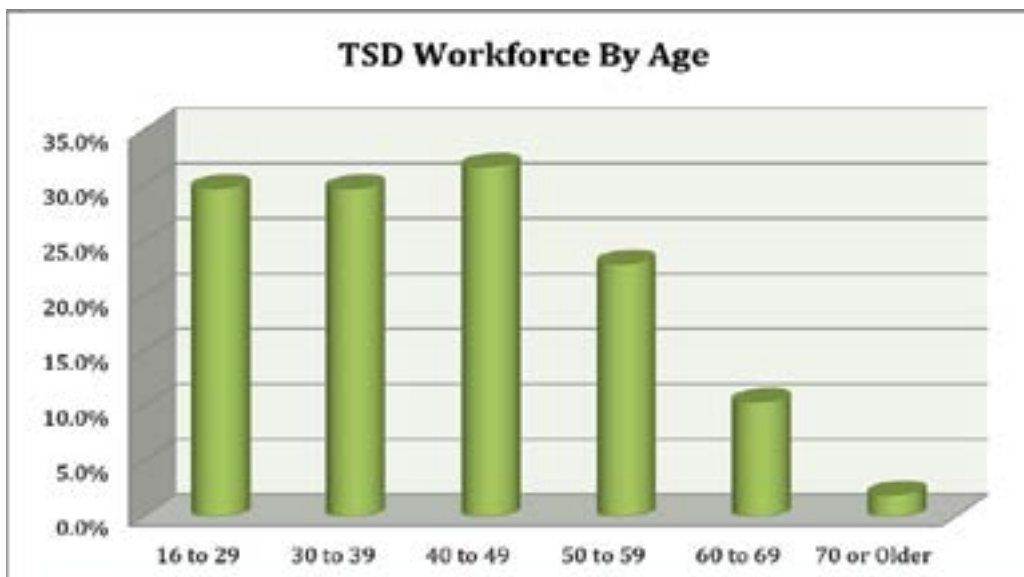
The breakdown of employees by gender at TSD has remained relatively constant over the last five years.³

³ Texas State Auditor's EClass system, FY2016



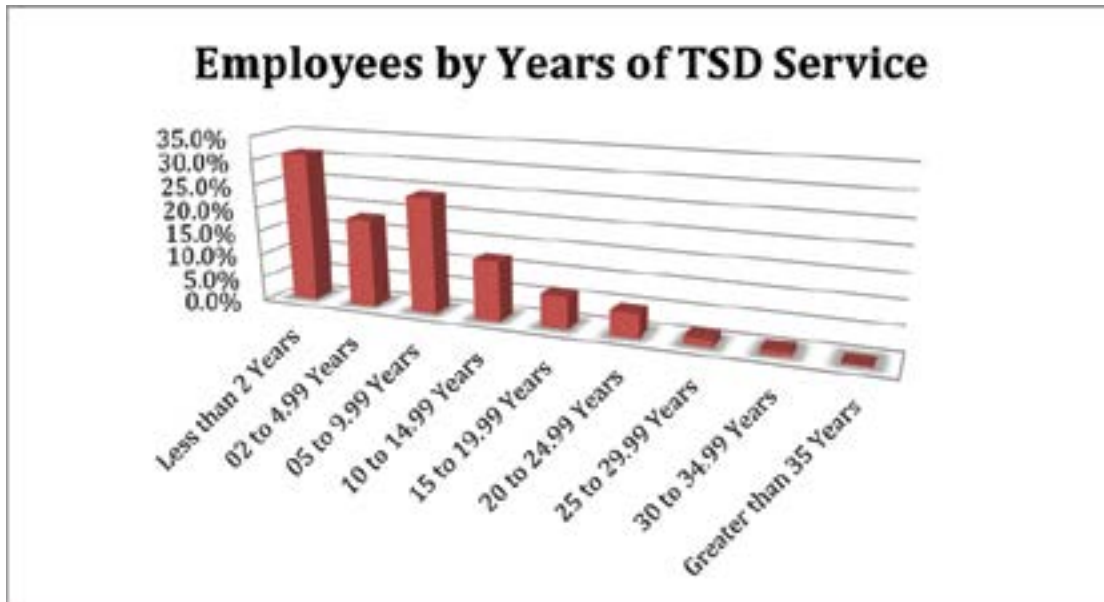
72.3% of TSD employees are White, 5% are Hispanic and 9.2% of employees are Black. In Texas State Government overall, 51.6% of employees are White, 23.9% are Hispanic, and 22% are Black. It is important that TSD identify means of recruiting and retaining minority employees.

TSD employs staff of widely varying ages. The majority of TSD employees are in the 40 to 49 year range. The percentage of employees under 40 at TSD has gradually increased in the last two years; whereas the percentage of employees over 50 has decreased.⁴



⁴ Texas State Auditor's EClass system, FY2015

Approximately 49% of TSD's employees have fewer than five years of work experience with TSD. More than 40 employees have worked for TSD for at least twenty years¹. This breakdown of employee length of service is comparable to service time at other agencies in Texas State Government.



Employee Turnover

The Texas State Auditor's Office reports TSD's turnover rate as 23.9%¹ (including agency transfers), however, this percentage includes substitute employee turnover. When TSD removes substitute and temporary staff data as well as data for staff moved to Texas Facilities Commission under Legislative mandate, we calculate the turnover rate for 2015 as 17.0%. The turnover rate for the last three years indicates a trend shifting to higher turnover.

¹ Source: Texas State Auditor's Office, E-Class System, Fiscal Year 2015

² Excludes substitute and temporary employee termination count, Includes agency transfers

The 2 percent increase in turnover rate may be attributed to a more positive outlook in the economy, and the low Austin unemployment rate. As the economy continues to improve, it is important that TSD has programs in place to retain employees.



The turnover rate includes all employees other than substitutes. The turnover rate for classified and contract staff, excluding substitute employees is 14.5% and 9.4%, respectively.

The agency anticipates that the turnover rate for the next five years will remain at 17% due to low salaries across the agency and the competitive nature of the educational field.

Workforce Skills Critical to the Mission and Goals

TSD continually searches for individuals who are proficient in American Sign Language, are aware of issues related to deaf culture, and who possess quality education, experience, and qualifications particularly in the areas of education and child development.

Technological skills for employees are also desirable as TSD continues to develop technology education programs, advance the technological base of the agency, and to explore the best uses of technology to support the deaf culture in Texas.

Other critical skills include sign language and interpretation skills, interpersonal skills, management skills, and skills in working collaboratively to resolve workplace problems and issues.

Additional Considerations

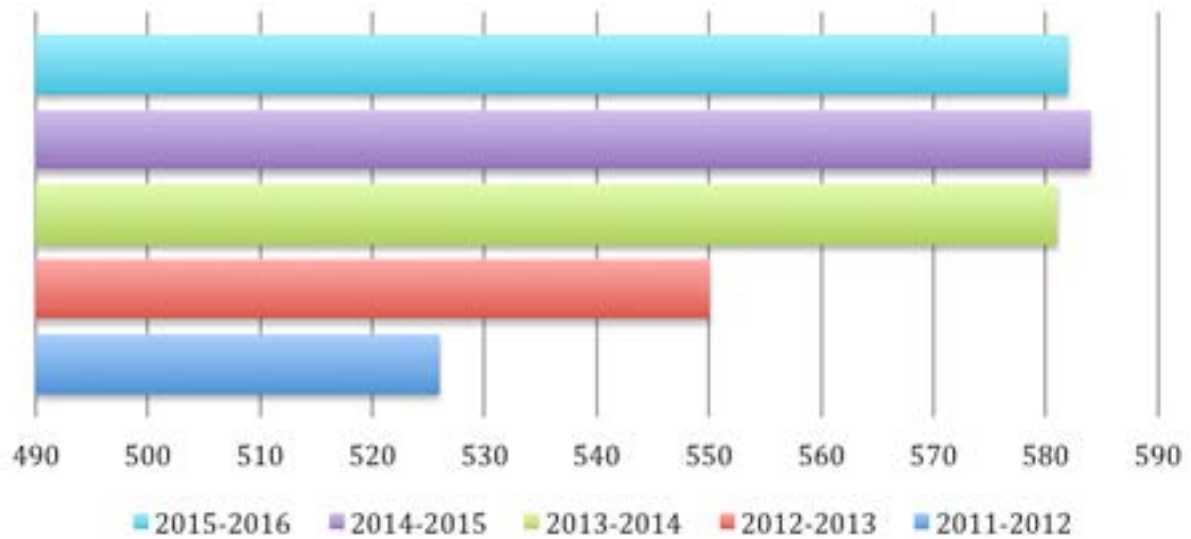
TSD has a growing customer base, both in the Austin area and throughout the state of Texas. As this population increases, the need for specialized skills and increased numbers of administrative, support, and outreach staff will be a growing workforce issue. The need to recruit, train and retain competent and qualified support staff may become a central issue for workforce planning, due to the special skills necessary to serve the deaf community throughout the state.

Future Workforce Profile

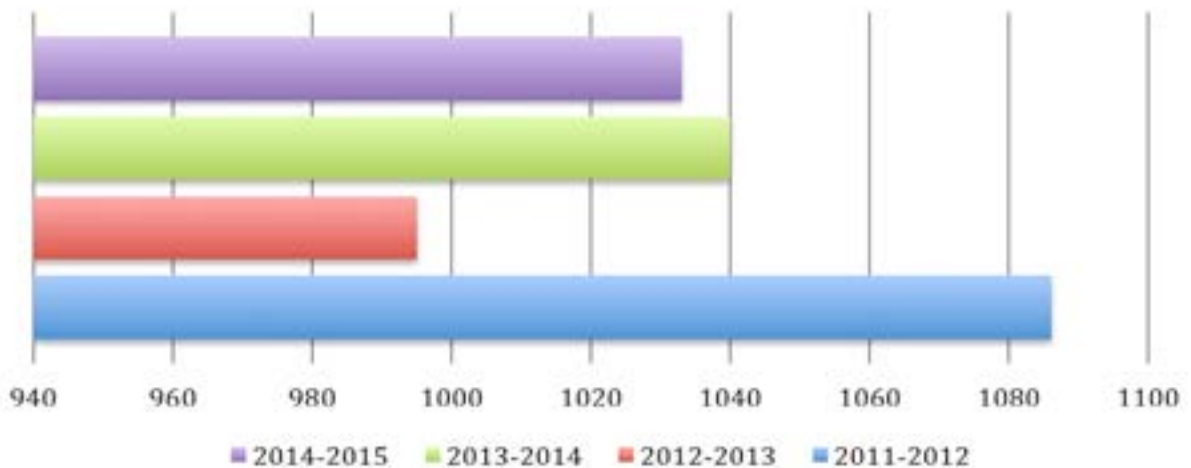
Expected Workforce Changes

Our workforce is dedicated to helping students learn and grow. For the past years, the school's service load for on campus and short-term student programs have increased. For the 2015-2016 school year, TSD's student enrollment is 582 and we are anticipating in excess of 450 students in our Summer Program for an overall total of 1032 students served. While TSD is fortunate to have this kind of viability when many schools for the deaf are struggling for their survival, our limited resources are causing us concern about providing an appropriate education for growing enrollment. We are experiencing an increase in referral of students with complex medical, behavioral and educational needs. The impact of this type of student on the budget is exponential and we find ourselves unable to provide the related and support services necessary for this type of student to access the general curriculum and receive a quality education. We are left with no options but to seek additional resources to serve these growing needs.

Student Enrollment Regular School Year Programs



Student Enrollment Regular and Summer School Programs



Future Workforce Skills Needed

TSD's dual mission is expected to remain stable for the foreseeable future. TSD provides comprehensive educational and residential services to school-age students throughout Texas at the School during the regular school year; and serves as a primary statewide resource center promoting excellence in education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing through research, training, and demonstration projects.

To achieve the goals supporting this mission, TSD will need teachers and other staff members with training from universities, colleges, Educational Services Centers or other training sources in:

- Auditory Impairment
- Early childhood, handicapped
- Generic special education
- Seriously emotionally disturbed and autistic
- Severely and profoundly handicapped
- Math
- Science
- English as a Second Language
- Cochlear Implants
- Management of students with behavior problems and disorders
- Management with students with complex health needs
- Instructional and administrative technology

Additionally, TSD will need staff who have certification from the State Board of Educator Certification in the areas listed above.

We will continue to need certified or licensed professionals in the related services areas, but with particular emphasis on psychological support and assessment personnel because of anticipated attrition through retirement in this area, and the need for more intensive services related to student behavioral disorders.

TSD also anticipates changes in key administrative positions in the next five years. Schools for the deaf across the country are seeking qualified, experienced administrators for their programs and the available pool of candidates is dwindling at an alarming rate. Many of TSD's current Principals and Administrators, including the Superintendent have retired and been rehired and may consider leaving TSD entirely.

The complexity and time demands and the conditions of the work itself have caused many talented people to not enter the field of deaf education. For instance, stress, low pay, increased demands from unfunded mandates, higher student performance requirements, greater public expectations, Board turnover, diminishing prestige, fear of poor Superintendent/Board relationships, and inadequate school funding are just a few of the issues that may be discouraging viable candidates from entering the field. We will continue to address these issues to develop leaders who are prepared to advance into TSD leadership positions.

Anticipated Changes in the Number of Employees Needed

Because TSD students require smaller classes and more services, TSD does not have adequate staff for the students we currently serve, and assuming that both the number and complexity of students TSD serves increases, as anticipated, TSD will become more insufficiently staffed. As enrollment rises, more staff will be needed, but that increase in staff will not necessarily be proportionate to current staffing needs. The students referred to TSD by their school districts have more complex, multiply disabling conditions that require greater numbers of staff members for effective and safe service to these students.

TSD also anticipates growth in outreach and resource services. TSD anticipates providing more outreach through technology innovations and expanding statewide videoconferencing consortium.

As distance learning requests increase, so will the need for dedicated faculty positions to support these requests. Videoconferencing is an effective, but a complex initiative. TSD already projects a need to expand the technology workforce to include experts on managing and maintaining videoconferencing services. Public school programs and Regional Day School for the Deaf Programs would like TSD to provide more diagnostic and assessment services for their students and families. We currently have only three Educational Diagnosticians to serve over 500 on-site students.

TSD is currently not adequately staffed to perform the second prong of its mission: serving as a primary statewide resource center promoting excellence in education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing through research, training, and demonstration projects. Statewide requests and needs far surpass the resources currently available to serve the state and additional employees are now needed to perform this part of the School's mission.

Workforce Gap Analysis

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Employees

We anticipate shortages of employees in the following areas:

- Teaching and related services.
- Supervision, safety and instruction in the residential program of the School.
- Statewide outreach services through the Educational Resource Center on Deafness.

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Skills

We anticipate a shortage of skills in the following areas:

- An insufficient supply of teachers certified to teach deaf students, educational administrators, and related and support service professionals. This insufficient supply largely due to increased demand, retirement, attrition, and the closing of university training programs for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- The lack of staff knowledge and skills in behavior management required working with students who are presenting increasingly challenging disabilities.
- The lack of staff necessary to provide supervision, safety and instruction in the residential program of the School.
- A gap between the technological skills necessary to support innovation and integrate technology into the curriculum and the current staff skill set.

Strategy Development

Through its Strategic Five-Year plan, TSD has set the following objectives to be completed in the next five years.

- Develop a plan to recruit a well-qualified staff that includes focus on skills, diversity, and potential.
- Increase employee satisfaction by establishing programs and services that support short- and long-term personal and professional goals.
- Implement standardized policies and procedures; and develop strategies to maximize employee compensation.

SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

TSD utilized the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) in 2015 as a means of assessing employee perceptions of the School as an employer, an educator, its strengths and weaknesses and areas needing improvement.

Response Rate

Seventy-eight percent of agency employees responded to the survey. This is well above the acceptable response level of 30%. Rates above 50% indicate that employees are invested in the agency, generally having a sense of responsibility to the organization and believe that Leadership will act on the survey results.

Benchmark Groups

TSD's SEE results were compared with Size Category 4 organizations (301-1000 employees) within the Education mission which includes Universities, Colleges, Institutes and other agencies involved with students, teachers, administrators and families throughout many areas of learning.

Scores

The School's overall survey score was 376. Overall scores typically range from 325 to 375.

Construct Analysis scores were provided. As noted in the report, scores above 350 suggest that employees perceive the issue more positively than negatively, while scores of 375 or higher indicate areas of substantial strength. Conversely, scores below 350 indicate that employees perceive the issue less positively and scores below 325 indicate a significant source of concern for the School.

In the Construct Analysis, the School received the following:

Supervision	405
Team	391
Quality	381
Pay	230
Benefits	368
Physical Environment	383
Strategic	396
Diversity	376
Information Systems	374
Internal Communication	375
External Communication	375
Employee Engagement	395
Job Satisfaction	369

TSD staff reported only one area of significant concern – Pay.

Additionally, the survey completed a Climate Analysis of the survey data. The climate in which employees work does, to a large extent, determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the School. A workplace that is a combination of a safe, non-harassing environment with ethical abiding employees who treat each other with fairness and respect with pro-active management and thoughtful decision making capabilities that produces the most efficient and effective organization.

As with the Construct Analysis, above 350 suggest that employees perceive the issue more positively than negatively, while scores of 375 or higher indicate areas of substantial strength. Conversely, scores below 350 indicate that employees perceive the issue less positively and scores below 325 indicate a significant source of concern for the School.

Atmosphere	405
Ethics	381
Fairness	360
Feedback	366
Management	365

Plans for Continued Improvement

Survey results were shared with all employees. In addition, as a part of the School's CEASD Accreditation process, TSD is developing a Five-Year Plan. The results of the SEE, along with results from additional surveys, were provided to the School's Strategic Goals Planning Group who reviewed staff and community responses to identify areas of concern. These concerns were translated into Strategic Goals which will be addressed by the agency over the next five years.

Conclusion

TSD management considers the School's participation in the survey as a valuable tool for improving School operations. TSD will participate in future surveys with a goal to increase participation and improve key indicators. Comparison of current and future results will enable TSD to further define methods for addressing the needs of the School and its employees.

