



A G E N C Y W O R K F O R C E P L A N 2 0 2 1 - 2 0 2 5

June 1, 2020

www.tsd.state.tx.us

Facebook/Instagram: @texasschoolforthe deaf • Twitter: TSD_Main

Table of Contents

Overview

Anticipated Changes to the Mission, Strategies, & Goals Over the Next Five Years ..47

Additional Considerations48

Current Workforce Profile

Demographics: Age, Gender, Race, and Tenure.....51

Percentage of Workforce Eligible to Retire Within the Next Five Years52

Projected Employee Attrition Rate Over the Next Five Years.....53

Workforce Skills Critical to the Mission and Goals.....54

Additional Considerations54

Future Workforce Profile

Expected Workforce Changes.....54

Future Workforce Skills Needed.....55

Anticipated Changes in Number of Employees Needed.....55

Workforce Gap Analysis

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Employees.....56

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Skills56

Survey of Employee Engagement

Response Rate.....57

Benchmark Groups.....57

Scores57

Plan for Continued Improvement.....58

Conclusion58

Overview

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 is also directed to serve as a statewide educational resource. Through the Statewide Outreach Center (SOC), TSD provides a variety of educational services to programs and professionals throughout the state working with and for persons who are deaf or 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, 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 continues to expand year over year. 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 a leader in deaf and hard of hearing education, TSD continues to build staff and resources in the Statewide Outreach Center to meet the growing need for TSD's outreach activities. TSD works collaboratively with Texas Education Agency's statewide deaf services and statewide partners in the Education Service Centers charged with providing technical assistance in specified areas to professionals in deaf education. In addition, TSD has established a Family Resource Center on our Austin campus and continues to build the services we provide to our TSD families, including such areas as American Sign Language education for parents and siblings to facilitate familial communication. TSD expects to see growth in this role over the next five years.

Overview

Additional Considerations

Key Economic and Environmental Factors

Scarce Teacher Talent Pool. Texas continues to experience a shortage of qualified teachers as noted in the January 2020 communication from the Texas Education agency (TEA) titled 2020-2021 Teacher Shortage Areas and Loan Forgiveness Programs which includes special education teachers for elementary and secondary levels in the approved state-level shortage areas. Further complicating this factor for TSD is a shortage in educators for the deaf. The Council on Education of the Deaf (CED) noted in a February 2019 communication that the nation has experienced a decline in qualified teachers of the deaf. The largest group of deaf educator graduates was in 1985 and numbered 1680. This number has consistently declined over the years with only 737 graduates in 2009, and 450 in 2018 and 2019. It is estimated that 300 will graduate in 2020. With well-qualified deaf educators in short supply and high demand across the nation, a shortage that is expected to continue to worsen in coming years, competition for these valuable teachers is great. TSD currently competes with 50 Residential Schools for the Deaf across the nation and 53 Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf in Texas for teachers with the skills necessary to educate our students.

Shortage of Deaf Education Training Programs. 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 56 colleges and universities that offer deaf education teacher training programs in the United States, down from 63 in 2018, seven of which are offered in Texas. This shortage of programs further impacts TSD's ability to hire the deaf educators needed for 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. Exacerbating these trends are teacher retirement rates. Employment demographics indicate that baby-boomers made up approximately 40% of the labor market in 2008 with retirements between 2010 and 2020 expected to be the largest since WWII (Aronson & Meckel, 2008).

Noncompetitive Salaries. TSD teacher and professional contract salaries are tied to Austin ISD in state statute. While the recent changes to the state's school finance laws have helped to improve teacher salaries, the dire state of teacher salaries in Texas and specifically within AISD due to their budget concerns continues to have a severe negative impact on TSD salaries. Though we are tied to AISD compensation strategies, we must compete for qualified staff with other deaf schools, not local independent school districts and our teachers and professional contract staff must possess a much more complex skill set. TSD teachers and professional contract staff must be certified in both special education for deaf and hard of hearing students, have subject and grade level certification in accordance with state guideline, be fluent in American Sign Language and pass rigorous state certification tests. As a result, TSD is unable to compete for staff with either other deaf schools across the nation or local school districts outside of Austin ISD to ensure that TSD provides needed services for our students and meets our obligations under state and federal Special Education related laws, the school must employ teaching and non-teaching staff with ASL skills. Salaries that are below the market

value compromise our ability to attract and retain critical qualified staff. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists the annual entry-level salary for an occupational therapist as \$55,490. Under the AISD salary scale, which TSD is required to follow, the entry-level salary for an occupational therapist is \$52,674. The median salary for this position in the BLS is \$84,270 while the median within AISD's scale is \$54,724. As a result, we are unable to attract and retain the skilled staff needed, forcing the agency to utilize temporary staff through contracts at rates higher than those provided by AISD or risk costly lawsuits when compensable services are not provided. 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.

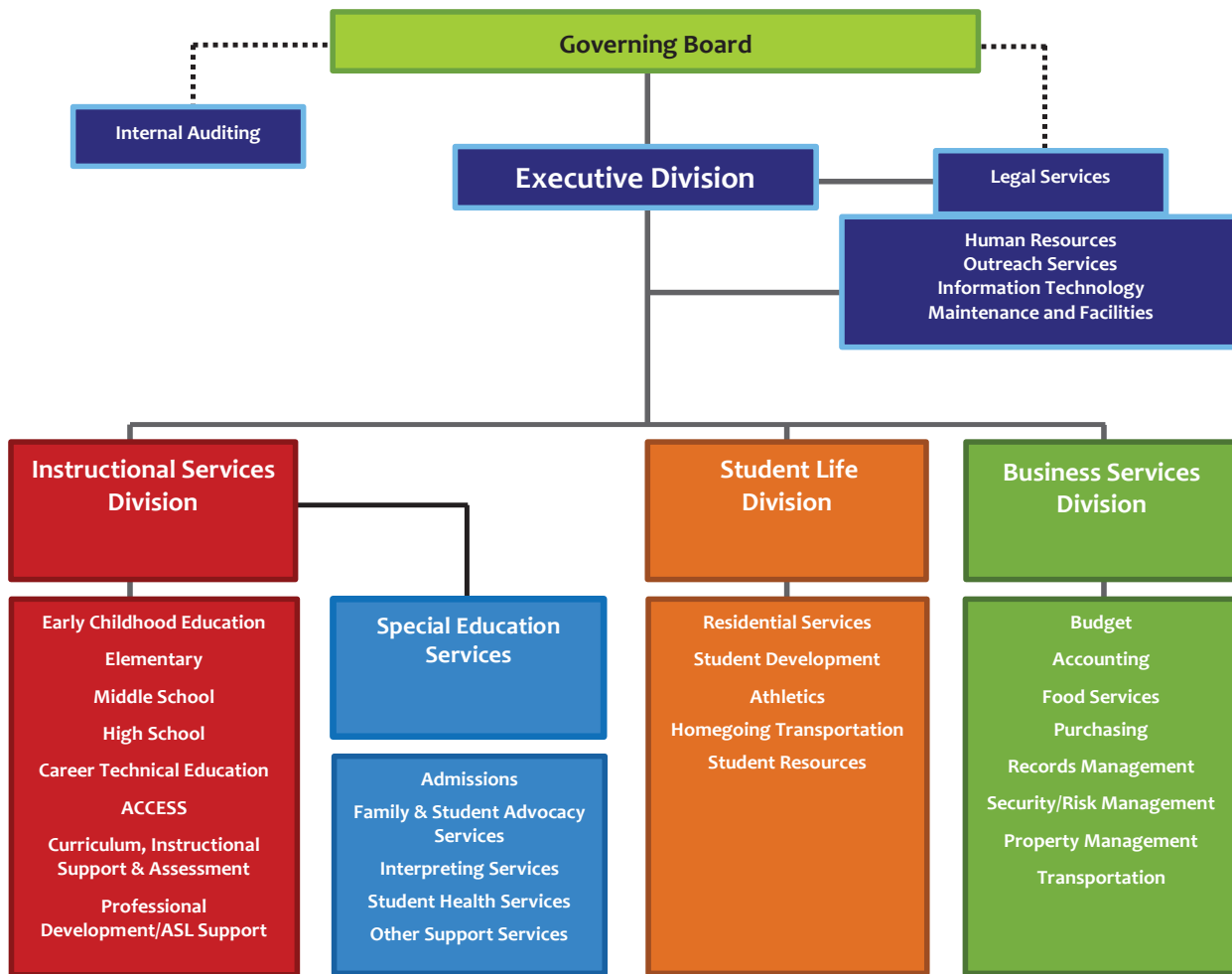
Housing Costs. Housing costs within the Austin metro area have continued to rise. The Austin Board of Realtors has reported a 12.8% increase in the median sale price for the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area. Average rent statistics indicate that the fair market rent (FMR) prices for the Austin-Round Rock area are more expensive than 99% of the state. The FMR for a two-bedroom apartment in Austin-Round Rock is \$1,315 per month, a 5.12% increase from the year before (rentdata.org). 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.

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 para-professional employees are unable to provide. Adding to this problem, the student population has continued to become increasingly complex and diverse with increased numbers of students with additional disabilities requiring many more related and support services.

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.

Organizational Structure



TSD is organized into four divisions: Executive, Instruction, Student Life, and Financial Operations, with the Superintendent overseeing all.

- The Executive Division is administered by the Superintendent and includes Legal, Human Resources, Statewide Outreach Center (SOC), Parent Infant Services, Information Technology and Support Operations.
- The Instructional Division is administered by the Director of Instruction and includes responsibility for all academic school programs including Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, High School, Career Technology Education, and Transitional Services as well as curriculum and assessment services. The Director with the assistance of the Special Education Director is also responsible for Related and Support services, Admissions, Interpreting and the Health Center.
- The Student Life Division is administered by the Director of Student Life and includes responsibility for dorm programs for students in Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Special Needs. The division includes programs for students who need more structured services, such as the 18+ transitional program (ACCESS). The Student Life division includes Student Development, and Athletics.
- The Financial Operations Division is administered by the Chief Financial Officer and includes Accounting, Budgeting, Purchasing, Records Management, Internal Auditing Liaison, and Facilities/Property Management. The Division also includes Security and Risk Management services as well as Food Services and Transportation.

Current Workforce Profile

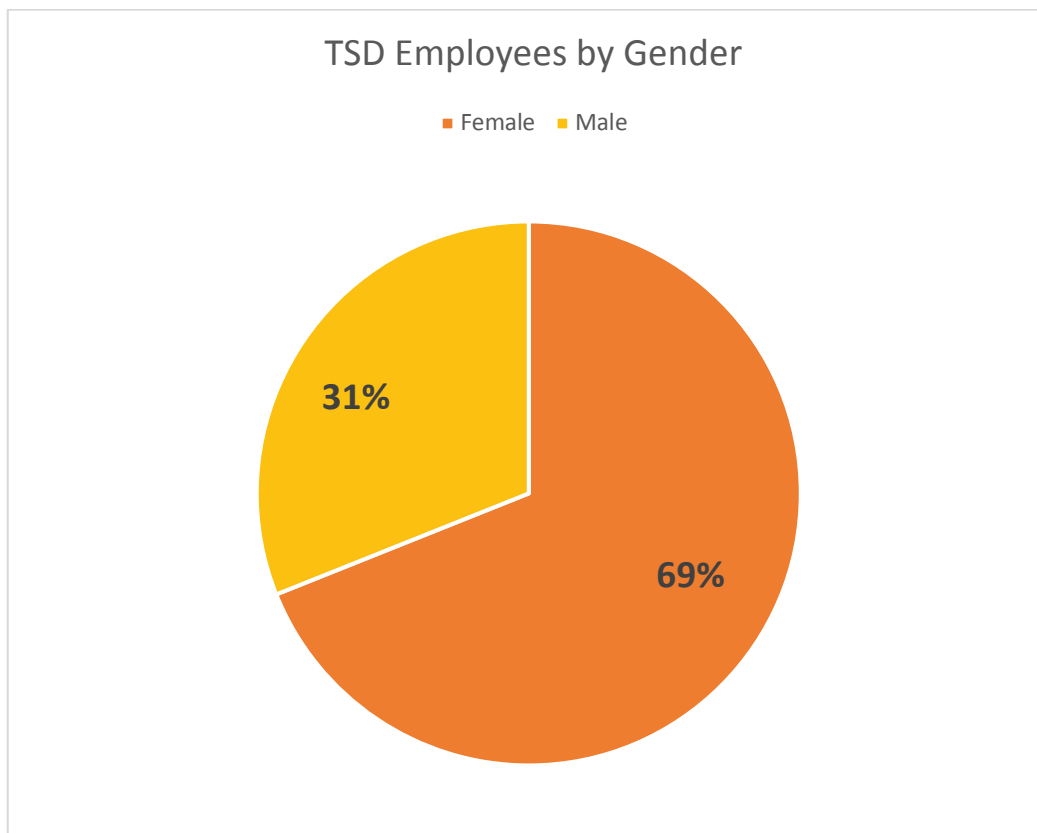
TSD's talented workforce of teachers, staff, and administrators is one of its greatest resources. Every year, however, it becomes more difficult to nourish, retain, and replace this resource. As a state agency that functions similarly to an independent school district, we are constantly asked to do more with less. Paperwork overloads, compliance issues, and poor salaries challenge enthusiasm and commitment. The salaries of 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 and in some instances, are paid well below the market rate for their discipline.

Demographics: Gender, Ethnicity, Age, and Tenure

Approximately 63% 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.

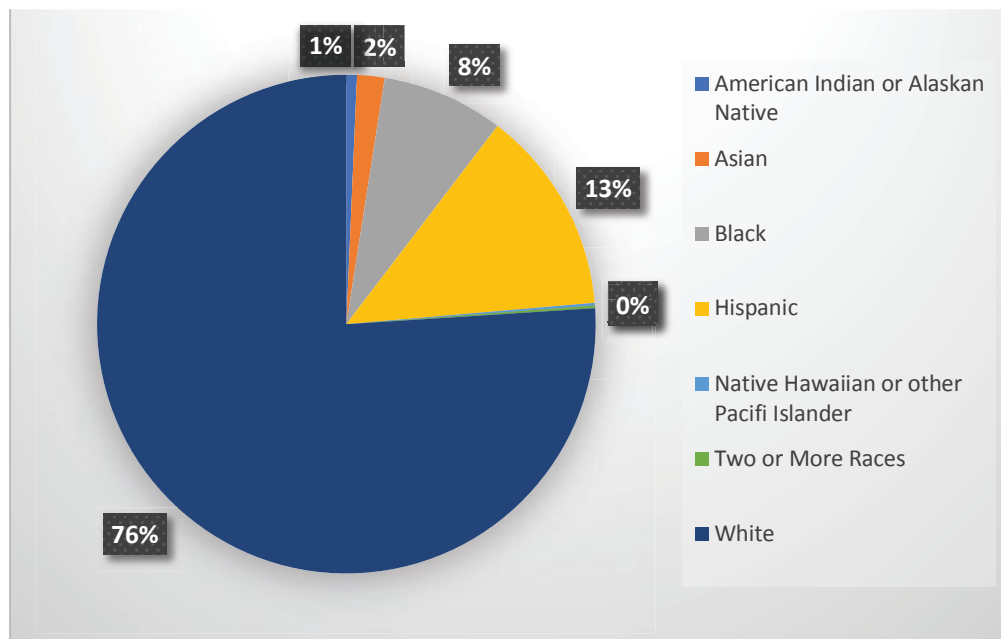
Approximately 70% of TSD's workforce is female and 30% is male. This is a higher percentage of female employees than the overall Texas State Government workforce in which 53.3% is female.

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

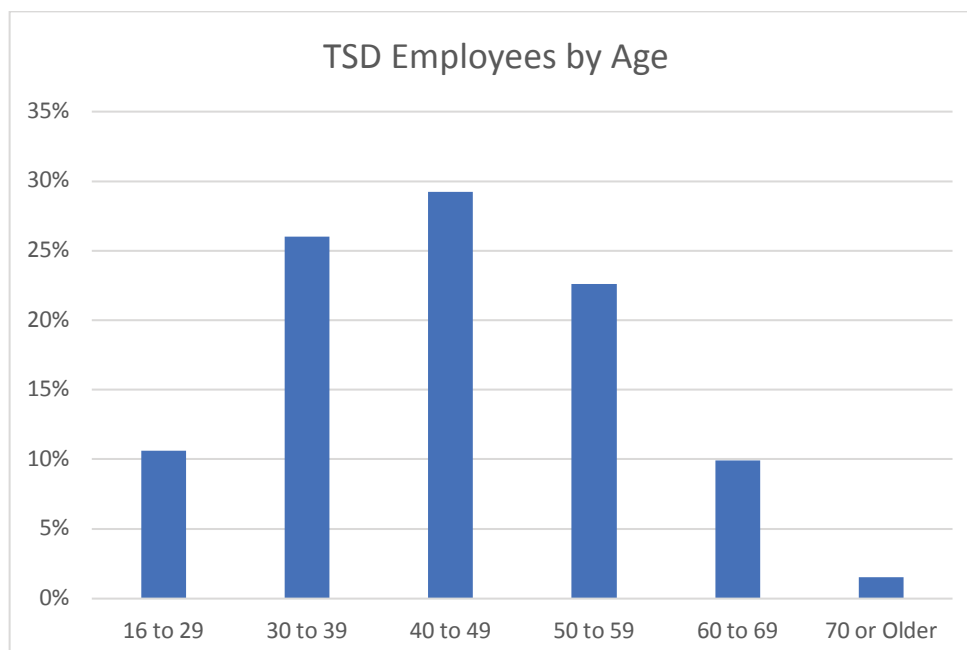


TSD Employees by Ethnicity

76% of TSD employees are White, 13% are Hispanic, 7% of employees are Black, .2% of employees are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, .2% of employees are two or more races and .7% are American Indian or Alaskan Native. In Texas State Government, overall, 50% of employees are White, 24% are Hispanic, and 22% are Black. It is important that TSD identify means of recruiting and retaining minority employees.

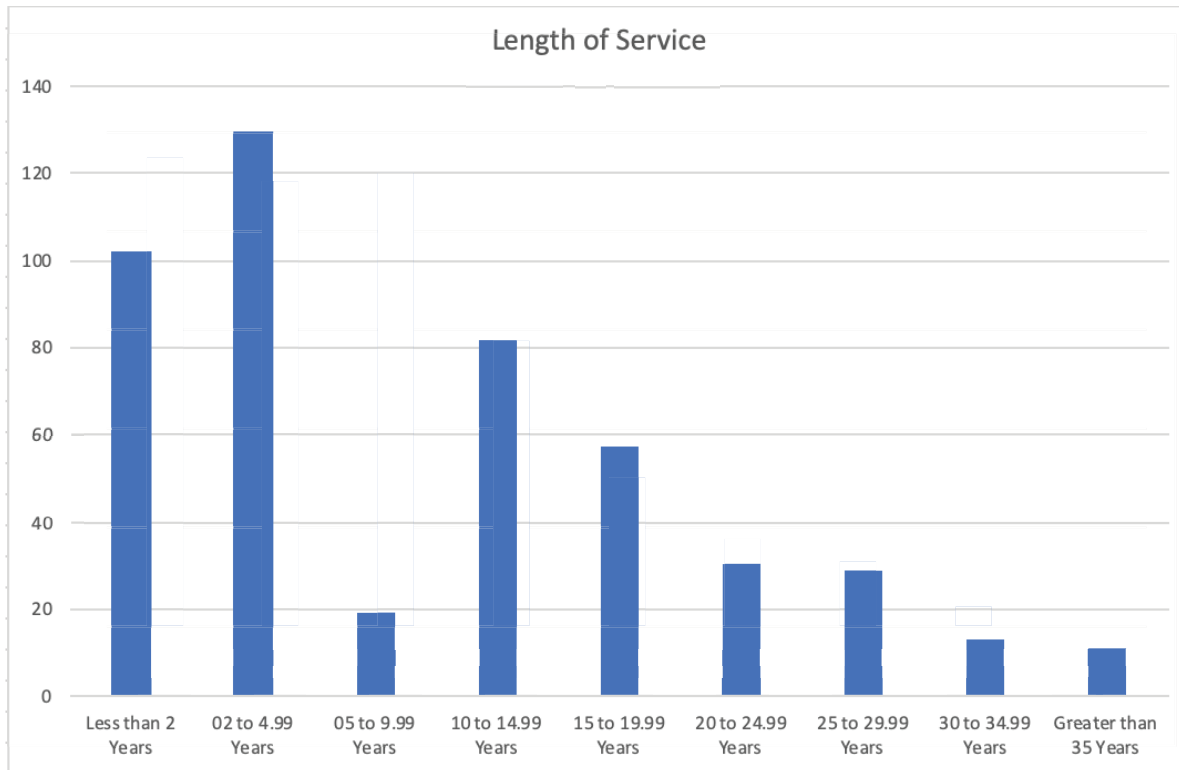


TSD employs staff of widely varying ages. The largest segment of TSD employees is in the forty to forty-nine year-old range. Both the current breakdown of employees by age and the trend of more employees over 50 are comparable to the overall breakdown in Texas State Government.



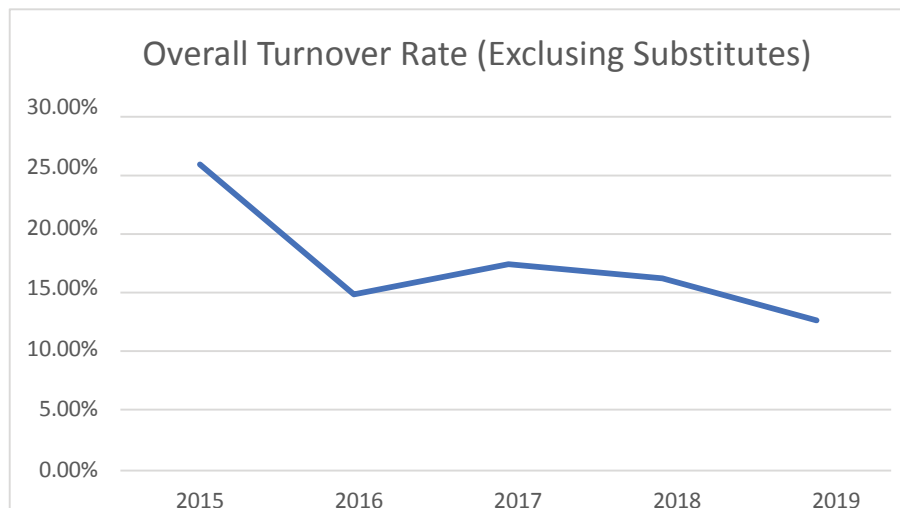
TSD Employees by Length of Service

Approximately 41% of TSD's employees have fewer than five years of work experience while 9% of our employees have at least twenty years. This breakdown of employee length of service is comparable to service time at other agencies in Texas State Government.



Employee Turnover

The TSD turnover rate for 2019 without including substitute employees is 12% which is lower than the overall State turnover rate of 21%. However, TSD continues to struggle with turnover rates within specific job classifications. For FY 2019, the agency's turnover rate in our lowest paid positions included 12% for Teacher Aides, 16% for Resident Specialists, 20% for Security Officers, 14% for Food Service Workers and 22% for Vehicle Drivers. Exit interviews indicate that the higher turnover rates within specific job titles is due to low salaries.



The turnover rate includes all employees other than substitutes. The turnover rate for classified and contract staff, excluding substitute employees is 13.1% and 8%, respectively.

Workforce Skills Critical to the Mission and Goals

TSD continually searches for individuals who are proficient in American Sign Language, are culturally competent related to deaf culture, and who possess quality education, experience, and qualifications particularly in the areas of education and child development. We also seek individuals with skills necessary to support early language acquisition for both students and families as well as skills to support students with additional issues such as autism.

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 is 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, grow and belong in a quality educational environment. Over the years, the school's service load for on campus and short-term student programs have increased. For the 2019-2020 school year, TSD's student enrollment is 571. TSD also provides Summer Programs to both TSD and non-TSD students. While TSD is fortunate to have this kind of viability when many schools for the deaf are struggling for their survival, our limited resources cause us dire concerns 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.

| REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Parent Infant Program | 18 | 19 | 18 | 28 | 20 | 23 | 21 | 22 |
| Pre-Kindergarten | 10 | 19 | 19 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 18 | 11 |
| Pre-School | 12 | 22 | 18 | 19 | 25 | 22 | 26 | 30 |
| K-5 Elementary | 98 | 94 | 104 | 120 | 115 | 110 | 118 | 124 |
| Special Needs | 81 | 59 | 64 | 61 | 54 | 57 | 72 | 75 |
| Middle School | 106 | 104 | 98 | 82 | 94 | 96 | 101 | 84 |
| High School | 173 | 178 | 208 | 197 | 201 | 192 | 201 | 185 |
| ACCESS | 28 | 55 | 52 | 66 | 65 | 44 | 44 | 40 |
| TOTAL | 526 | 550 | 581 | 584 | 583 | 562 | 601 | 571 |
| Residential Enrollment | 241 | 242 | 274 | 262 | 248 | 214 | 247 | 226 |

| SUMMER PROGRAMS | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017 - 2018 | 2018-2019 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Extended Year Services Program | 52 | 40 | 30 | 32 | 30 | 16 | 29 | 62 |
| Summer Camps and Programs | 248 | 203 | 66 | 122 | 126 | | 67 | 69 |
| Summer Camps and Programs Non-TSD | 99 | 110 | 101 | 109 | 135 | | 53 | 82 |
| Early Childhood Education | 16 | 23 | 17 | 14 | 14 | | 16 | 9 |
| Parent Infant Program | 2 | 3 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 10 | 14 | 15 |
| Accelerated Instruction | | | | | | 17 | 7 | 27 |
| Other Short-Term Programs | 145 | 179 | 233 | 159 | 146 | 162 | 180 | 248 |
| TOTAL | 461 | 445 | 459 | 449 | 436 | 205 | 366 | 512 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| TOTAL SERVED | 1086 | 995 | 1040 | 1033 | 1019 | 767 | 967 | 1083 |
|---------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|

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:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- 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 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 Administrators, including the Superintendent, have retired and been rehired and may consider leaving TSD entirely in the near future.

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, multiple disabling conditions that require greater numbers of staff members for effective and safe service to these students.

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 Statewide Outreach Center.

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 for 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 2019 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

74.5% 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 family's throughout many areas of learning.

Scores

The School's overall survey score was 369. 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 | 389 |
| Workgroup | 386 |
| Strategic | 397 |
| Pay | 241 |
| Benefits | 354 |
| Workplace | 391 |
| Employee Development | 373 |
| Community | 370 |
| Information Systems | 378 |
| Internal Communication | 373 |
| Employee Engagement | 384 |
| Job Satisfaction | 384 |

Additionally, the survey completed a Climate Analysis of the survey data. The climate in which employee's 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.

Climate Analysis scores below 3.25 are of concern because they indicate general dissatisfaction. Scores above 3.75 indicate positive perceptions. The School received the following scores in the Climate Analysis:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Harassment not tolerated in workplace | 4.19 |
| Employees are generally ethical in my workplace Information | 3.81 |
| from survey will be used to improve workplace | 3.60 |
| Opportunities to provide feedback on supervisor's performance | 3.35 |
| Treated fairly in workplace | 3.73 |

Plan for Continued Improvement

Survey results were shared with all employees. In addition, as a part of the School's CEASD Accreditation process, TSD developed 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 through our Strategic Goals team process.

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.

