

REPORT OF THE VIRGINIA SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF
AND THE BLIND CONSOLIDATION TASK FORCE

PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATING SERVICES FOR
THE DEAF AND/OR BLIND AND MULTI-DISABLED
STUDENTS SERVED BY VIRGINIA'S TWO SCHOOLS
AT STAUNTON AND HAMPTON

TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE CHAIRMEN OF THE HOUSE
APPROPRIATIONS AND EDUCATION, AND THE SENATE
FINANCE AND EDUCATION AND HEALTH COMMITTEES



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2003



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Scott Goodman
Member

November 28, 2003

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Governor of Virginia
3rd Floor State Capitol Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Warner:

I am pleased to transmit the attached document, *Plan For Consolidating Services For the Deaf and/or Blind and Multi-disabled Students Served by Virginia's Two Schools at Staunton and Hampton*, which was authorized by Item 138, #6c of the Appropriation Act of 2003.

There was considerable public contribution through specially designed constituent meetings and public comment that provided assistance to the Task Force in its development of the plan.

An extension was requested and granted to submit the report by December 1, 2003, in order to complete additional focus group meetings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Goodman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott Goodman, Chairman
Consolidation Task Force

SG/kt
Enclosure

The Honorable Mark R. Warner

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November 28, 2003

cc: The Honorable John H. Chichester, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Russell H. Potts, Jr., Chairman, Senate Education and Health Committee
The Honorable Vincent F. Callahan, Jr., Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable James H. Dillard, II, Chairman, House Education Committee
Thomas M. Jackson, Jr., President, Virginia Board of Education
Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sarah Dickerson, Legislative Analyst
Susan Hogge, Legislative Fiscal Analyst

PREFACE

Item 138#6c of the Appropriation Act of 2003 directed the Board of Education to convene a Task Force to develop a plan for consolidation of services of the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. The Task Force was directed to include in the plan an examination of appropriate academic programs, staff requirements, facilities requirements, student transportation requirements, and individual arrangements necessary for all students currently receiving services to continue receiving services. All options for serving students were to be considered and the plan must include the steps necessary to achieve consolidation, funding requirements and/or savings, alternative uses of the facilities, and a suggested timeline for achieving consolidation. A complete copy of the Act is provided in Appendix A.

The membership requirements for the Task Force were contained in the Appropriation Act. The specified agencies were asked to designate an appropriate staff member as required. The membership of the Task Force is listed below:

Scott Goodman, Chair, Virginia Board of Education
Jo Lynne DeMary, Superintendent Public Instruction
Senator Emmett Hanger, Jr, Co-Chair, Advisory Commission, Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Senator W. Henry Maxwell, Co-Chair, Advisory Commission, Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Ronald Lanier, Director, Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
Glen Slonneger, Education Services Program Director, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Martha Adams, Director, Virginia Office of Mental Retardation, Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services
Mary-Margaret Cash, Deputy Commissioner, Virginia Department for Rehabilitative Services
Lisa Surber, Parent Representative, Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton
David Young, Parent Representative, Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton
Nancy Armstrong, Superintendent, Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton
Darlene White, Superintendent, Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton

The Department of Education staff included:

H. Douglas Cox, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services, Virginia Department of Education
Karen Trump, Director, State-Operated Programs
Independent facilitator: Judy Burtner, J. Burtner & Associates

Malinda Washington served as the designee for Dr. Darlene White until August of 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Consolidation Task Force proposes a plan to the Governor of Virginia and the General Assembly to build a new facility designed for the instructional needs of children with sensory impairments in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The new school shall replace the two current Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. The Task Force attempted to reach consensus for its consolidation option. The Task Force was able to narrow the options from four to two options using consensus; however, the Task Force used a simple majority vote approach to select the final consolidation option. The options that were voted on were: leave both schools open with changes and build a new school, thus closing both existing schools. See Appendix B for a summary of the Task Force votes and each member's reason for choosing that option.

The Task Force agreed that a recommendation about the specific location of the new school be left up to the discretion of the Board of Education because the process used to initiate the building of the new school includes the conduct of a feasibility study. A feasibility study evaluates the costs of constructing new buildings on either of the existing sites and compares it to the costs of building a new school on a new location. The Task Force agreed that the location should be a central one in the state and have easy access to interstate travel systems. The selection of the location should also consider the travel time for parents from the Hampton Roads area including military personnel and their spouses.

The need for a new facility that combines programs is soundly based on fiscal and programmatic concerns. The two schools currently serve approximately 200 students combined. The division of 200 students between two sites has resulted in reduced quality for both programs, particularly in recent years. Arbitrary division of a low-incidence population has diverted needed resources from the classroom. Thus, the instructional needs of children are not met as effectively as they could be in a combined school.

The need for consolidation of the two state schools for the deaf and blind has been recognized and considered repeatedly since 1979. Implementing this change has been subject to different opinions and political positions about which campus merits selection as the combined program site. Providing a combined program to one of the existing sites presents logistical barriers and may reflect elevated campus renovation costs compared to new buildings on a new campus. The continuation of two schools is not cost effective because it requires duplication of service in every area (e.g., teachers, equipment and specialized devices, two residential programs, two health centers, two food services teams, two buildings and grounds teams and two transportation fleets). The current capital outlay and operational costs required for maintaining two campuses is disproportionate to a desired ratio between instructional and administrative costs. The current annual budget of approximately \$7 million, for each school, falls below the budgets of other state schools similar in size to the two schools in Virginia. Although a comprehensive analysis was not completed, a review of several state schools shows that they tend to serve more students, have larger budgets and offer additional services that are needed in Virginia.

The renovations needed at either existing site are costly and, if completed, would not result in a facility designed for the needs of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or visually

impaired, including blindness. An energy efficient, state-of-the-art facility that provides day and residential services to all eligible students with sensory impairment is considered a better use of state dollars. Locating the school in close proximity to an institution of higher education will facilitate the development of the needed partnership between the DOE, the new school, local school divisions, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, adult rehabilitative services, and other appropriate entities to achieve the goal of improved state coordination of services. A well-established partnership with a university would facilitate the implementation of needed outreach services, teacher preparation liaison activities, paired technical assistance to school divisions, interfacing with child development clinics, inter-agency initiatives, and development of a needed post-secondary services for students.

The intended benefits through consolidation of programs at a new facility include the following:

- Improved instruction for children, a single point of admission and a better range of program options for students
- Improved support to parents and communities (American Sign Language (ASL) instruction, parent training, counseling)
- Increased support to school divisions (more students admitted, less termination of services)
- Coordination of services in the state through partnerships with appropriate agencies
- Provision of needed teacher training to increase the pool of qualified teachers
- Leadership from the new school to provide state wide technical assistance
- Reduction of the current operating costs associated with duplication of service
- Increased allocation of fiscal resources to instruction
- Improved climate for teacher recruitment and retention

INTRODUCTION

The Appropriation Act of 2003, directed the Task Force to develop a plan for consolidation of services for the two Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and to include in the plan an examination of appropriate academic programs, staff requirements, facilities requirements, student transportation requirements, and individual arrangements necessary for all students currently receiving services to continue receiving services. All options for serving students were to be considered and the steps necessary to achieve consolidation, funding requirements and/or savings, alternative uses of the facilities, and a suggested timeline for achieving consolidation were to be included. The report presents the plan for consolidation under the aforementioned headings of the areas specified in the Act. The report also describes the information that the Task Force used in developing the plan.

Mr. Scott Goodman, Chair of the Task Force, convened the first meeting over a two-day period of June 3 and June 4, 2003. The Task Force conducted five more meetings on the following dates:

- June 23, 2003
- July 31, 2003
- August 27, 2003
- October 2, 2003
- October 30, 2003

The meetings consisted of gathering and reviewing relevant information about the two schools in order to develop a plan for consolidation. The Task Force received public comment, received and discussed background information, considered additional consolidation options, identified additional data/information needs and narrowed the options. The information selected for the report that is relevant to the Task Force's consolidation plan included the following:

- A description of the two schools, programs and services, enrollment figures
- A state and national perspective of state schools
- Regulatory requirements for state schools
- Budget/funding for the two schools
- Staff credentials required for the two schools
- Employee and student ethnic status at the two schools
- A summary of previous studies about the two schools
- The physical accessibility of both campuses/current building conditions
- The fiscal impact of closing the schools
- The emergency funded projects to VSDB-Staunton
- School division models of service for students with sensory impairments
- Reasons why students leave the two schools, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2003
- State assessment performance results for students with sensory impairment
- Building space at each school and considerations for serving all students at either site
- Transportation methods, schedules, and routes
- The residential experience at each school

- Vocational rehabilitation outcomes - Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program, Department of Rehabilitative Services
- The Sign Communication Proficiency Interview - a staff evaluation instrument

At the meetings held on June 3 and 4, 2003, seven possible options for consolidating services were identified by the Task Force in keeping with the directive to consider all options for serving students at the two schools. The options are listed below.

- Leave both schools open but with changes (downsizing, opening up space for other entities, upgrading the schools for certain groups of students)
- Consolidate the programs to one of the current facilities
- Close both schools and relocate a combined program to another location
- Close both schools and download functions to regional and local divisions
- Close the high schools at both sites and consolidate the elementary schools
- Eliminate the blind/visually impaired program and serve only deaf and hard-of-hearing students
- Have the schools serve as technical education centers to divisions for the provision of services

The Task Force agreed that public and stakeholder input into the task of developing a plan for consolidating services was important to their deliberations. As a result, it was decided that public and stakeholder comments would be collected through the following means:

- A public comment period at Task Force meetings
- A public comment mailbox on the Department of Education's Web-site
- Focus groups
- Public hearings

Nine focus groups were conducted between July 17 and August 18, 2003. A total of 73 invited persons participated. The director of State-Operated Programs, working with the superintendents of the two schools, identified the participants based upon the person's ability to:

- Represent a particular disability area
- Represent a geographic region where the students live
- Represent one of the two schools
- Represent a particular professional group

The following groups participated in a focused discussion about consolidation of services for the two schools:

- Parents (Hampton - 8 participants, Staunton - 4 participants)
- Personnel from the two schools (Staunton - 12 participants, Hampton - 12 participants)
- Alumni (Richmond - 5 participants, Hampton - 5 participants, Fairfax - 3 participants)
- Public school special education administrators (Richmond -12 participants)
- Consumer organizations (Fairfax - 12 participants).

All groups were asked questions targeted to the seven options that had been developed by the Task Force at their June 3-4 meeting. In addition to those questions, participants in all groups were asked to contribute additional options for the Task Force to consider about consolidation of services. They were also asked to suggest criteria the Task Force could use to make a decision. The Task Force applied the criteria that the selected option was to be in the best interest of the children. All participants were asked a question about the appropriate length of time for a student to travel from his or her home to the school to receive services. See Appendix C for a summary of the findings obtained through the focus groups.

At the October 2, 2003, meeting, the Task Force determined that public hearings would not be conducted. The Task Force wanted to use the remaining time to continue its deliberations regarding the consolidation plan. There was considerable public contribution to the Task Force through the focus groups, through the mailbox established by the Department of Education and persons speaking during the public comment period established at the beginning of each meeting. The public comment overwhelmingly supported the continuation of services for the students at both schools.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Board of Education is charged with the operational control of the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton and the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton (Code of Virginia, Title 22.1, Chapter 19). Requirements for program compliance by the schools are found in the State Code, the 1999 Implementing Regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97), Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, March 27, 2002, and the Standards for Interdepartmental Regulation of Children's Residential Facilities (Interdepartmental Regulations). The schools' operating licenses are provided by the Department of Education. Overall regulatory responsibility for any student's placement remains with the placing school division for the duration of time a student spends at either of the schools. A special education administrator, or qualified designee is expected to participate in all IEP meetings for students placed at the two schools.

The Task Force reviewed the definitions of least restrictive environment, individualized education program, special education, and specially designed instruction to ensure that these terms were understood when referenced during meetings. The definitions are found in the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, March 27, 2002, and are provided in Appendix D.

Historically, the two schools were developed separately for purposes of racial segregation. In 1972 concern was expressed by the Office of Civil Rights that the two schools could be identified by race. In 1973, the two schools drew a north-south boundary line, which generally parallels I-95. The boundary line separated attendance zones for the two schools east and west of the interstate highway. The elementary blind and deaf children in grades 1 through 7, who lived east of the highway were transferred to the school in Hampton. At the same time, those elementary blind and deaf children attending the school at Hampton, living west of I-95 were transferred to the school in Staunton. Beginning in 1974, the high school program for blind

students was transferred to Hampton and the high school program for deaf students was transferred to Staunton. The I-95 boundary was eventually abolished and the practice of separating the two schools' secondary programs was not maintained over time.

In 1995, the schools were directed by the Board of Education to begin a program separation whereby the Hampton school would only serve students with multiple disabilities. The separation resulted in two different programs whereby diploma-bound students were provided an academic program at one site and a more vocationally oriented program was provided at the other campus. That program separation has not been completed due to barriers in agency structure that preclude proper distribution of fiscal resources for that purpose. Today, the schools continue to evidence racial disproportionality in staff and student enrollment and run dual programs at both sites. See Appendix E for graphs illustrating the current ethnic composition of the two schools. A combined program facilitates the development of plan to correct racial disproportionality. Staff training in cultural diversity will be needed as an ongoing training effort once the programs are combined.

The Task Force reviewed information about the two schools to develop a common working framework of information to make the best decision possible for consolidation of services. The following information illustrates the unique nature of the two schools and the services provided to students with sensory disabilities.

Characteristics of the VSDB-Staunton

- The school was founded in 1839 and has 28 buildings on 72.8 acres
- Serves students who are deaf, hearing impaired, blind, or visually impaired, ages birth through 22
- Using specialized equipment, the school provides hearing screenings for infants who have failed hospital screenings
- Nonresidential services are provided to infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) and comprise home-based direct services and consultation with parents
- Center-based regional day preschool program for deaf children
- Enrollment for the 2002/03 school year was 120 school-age students, grades pre-k-12, graduating seniors removed
- Instruction parallels the Standards of Learning, but is also tailored to meet the unique needs of each student's disability
- The program offers standard, modified standard, and special diplomas
- Students are encouraged to develop comprehensive communication skills using American Sign Language (ASL), speech, speech reading, and written English

- Blind or visually impaired students receive instruction in Braille and abacus skills, and orientation and mobility on a daily basis
- Technology is available for instruction at all levels, including close-captioned videos, talking calculators and computers, immediate Braille services and large-print devices, personal recorders, enlarging devices, and the Kurzweil reader
- Students participate in vocational evaluations at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center and direct training through classes at the Valley Vocational Technical School
- Technical assistance and outreach across the state are provided to school divisions, parents and students, including evaluations

Characteristics of the VSDBM-Hampton:

- The school was founded in 1906 and has 16 buildings on 75 acres. In 1977, legislation was enacted mandating the provision of services for children with multiple disabilities at the school
- The school was renamed the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind, and Multi-Disabled effective July 1, 2000
- The school serves students who are deaf, hearing impaired, blind or visually impaired and students with “sensory impaired multiple disabilities” pre-school through age 22
- Enrollment for the 2002/03 school year was 74 students, pre-K-12, graduating seniors removed
- Center-based regional day preschool program for deaf children with a focus on intervention for children with cochlear implants
- The provision of services at the VSDBM-H results in a special diploma or certificate of completion and students may not receive a standard, modified standard, or advanced diploma unless there is a specified partnership with a school division for mainstreaming for required secondary content courses
- Students at the VSDBM-H receive instruction with an emphasis on functional academics, vocational and career preparation, assistive technology, and independent life skills development to complete a special diploma
- Students participate in vocational evaluations through the New Horizons Education Center

Characteristics of Both Schools:

- Both schools have the same policies and procedures
- Both schools have admission criteria, and school divisions may not develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifying placement for a perspective student without prior approval through the admission process
- Both schools provide special education and related services as defined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Both schools provide residential services, Sunday evening through Thursday evening
- Both schools provide students with specialized equipment
- The majority of students live on campus during the week in a dormitory and are transported to their homes for weekends
- In the state code, the schools are not defined as school divisions for constitutional purposes because they are not governed by a local school board
- Both schools provide health services to students including emergency medical and hospital services, dispensing of medication, first-aid, mental health services, and consultative services through health care professionals
- There is an Advisory Commission that monitors the operations of the two schools and advises the Board of Education regarding the maintenance of a high-quality and cost-effective program of study
- The Advisory Commission is comprised of three senators, five members of the House of Delegates, three citizen representatives, the two superintendents of the schools and the Director of State-Operated Programs. See Appendix F for a listing of the Advisory Commission membership.
- Both schools have participated in the state assessment program since it began. The VSDB-Staunton primarily administers Standards of Learning Tests (SOL), the VSDBM-Hampton participates in alternate assessments
- Current assessment indicators for students at the two schools are below the standard for accreditation established for public schools

THE PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATION

The Task Force sets forth a plan for consolidation that calls for the design and building of a new school to meet the programmatic needs of students with sensory impairments. The new

school will serve all eligible students in the state from a central location. The premise for this plan is that the facility costs and duplication of administrative services currently reflected for the two schools detract from the provision of a cost-effective, state-of-the-art program for students with sensory impairment. Thus, money that can flow to classrooms and the provision of special education and related services is diverted and existing resources are not fully maximized.

The largest population served at the proposed new school will be students who are deaf or hearing impaired. It is well established with educators that there are critical periods of child development for spoken language. A number of studies have shown concrete evidence for a critical period for the acquisition of a signed language. Information gathered for the Task Force revealed that the majority of students at the two schools are in middle or high school and entered the program with significant deficits in reading and written language. One reason believed to have influenced lower achievement for the students is that they did not acquire proficiency in a signed language during their elementary school years. Deaf students require exposure to accessible language as early as possible combined with strategic educational efforts in reading and written language. A state-of-the-art program is needed to provide the best intervention possible for the students in need of placement. One goal of the program will be to close the achievement gap a child may experience at the time of placement in the new school.

Students considered to have sensory impairment in combination with other disabilities (multi-disabled) are the second largest number of students served. They require more intensive intervention and assistance with the tasks of academic skill development, self-care and post-secondary transition to employment. Many students require specialized equipment for educational purposes and may also require more individual help to complete schoolwork independently. Assigning the education of students with multiple needs to the new school will facilitate consultation among a larger pool of support and related services staff and improve the quality of cross disciplinary intervention for the children.

Visually impaired and blind children are the third largest number of students served. Visually impaired (including blind) students require extensive training to learn Braille, personal travel, independence and the use of assistive technology for communication. The services of a state school for students with visual impairment or blindness provides needed accessibility to educational resources and intensive orientation and mobility services that many school divisions in Virginia find impossible to provide. Continued services to visually impaired children at the new state school can also contribute to coordination of state services for all visually impaired and blind children.

APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

An examination of the current academic programs at the two schools and discussion about the unmet needs of children suggested that the following components are needed:

- Three levels of service: Hearing Impairment/Deafness; Visual Impairment/Blindness, Sensory Impaired Multiple Disabilities (including Deaf-Blind)
- Low-vision services

- The ability to address three modalities for deaf students: auditory-oral for children with cochlear implants, cued speech and ASL
- Instruction at the preschool level (deaf only)
- Instruction for students from kindergarten through high school
- Academic course offerings that range from functional life skills to college preparation
- Support for adaptive equipment and assistive technology evaluations, orientation, and training
- Instructional technology
- Career exploration and vocational evaluation
- Community-based work experience and vocational training
- Job placement
- Transition to adult life
- Independent living skills
- Post-secondary education
- Related services (PT, OT, speech, audiology, psychological services, social work services, orientation and mobility)
- Health services coordination with family doctors, health departments, school systems, private audiologists, and other agencies
- Advocacy services
- Self-advocacy training
- Preparation for students and families to access outside support services (MHMRSAS, SSI, etc)
- Parent training (parenting, counseling)
- Services for deaf children from birth to age 3 (infant service provider)
- Continuation of statewide infant hearing screening clinic
- Instruction in American Sign Language (ASL)
- Evaluation of staff proficiency in ASL using the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview
- Resource materials center/loaning library (i.e., hearing aids, assistive listening devices while selection and funding for personal amplification devices are being investigated)
- Summer programs for school-age students with sensory impairments in the state
- Professional training - conferences and workshops on campus
- Intern site for institutions of higher education
- Interpreter training site
- Assessment and outreach services

A discussion about the technology needs of students with sensory impairment suggested that the program will need updated state-of-the-art equipment and resources to secure and explore new technologies as they become available. Some examples of such needed technology include the following:

- New technology (Sound Field FM Equipment, iCommunicator software)
- Calculators and computers with voice output (Voice Note, Jaws)
- Personal recorders and enlarging devices

- Braille readers and printers
- Electronic surveillance cameras
- Specialized beds
- Adapted equipment for teaching activities and living skills to children with physical limitations
- Modern adaptive devices (portable magnification – JORDY, desktop CCTV)

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

The two schools currently employ 273 classified staff as illustrated below. Support staff includes the superintendent, human resources, budget, facilities, food services, and health services. This area includes the largest portion of service duplication for the two schools. The education staff includes principals, teachers, vocational education staff, interpreters, and related services providers. There is considerable overlap in this area with the exception of classroom teachers. Residential staff includes supervisors, administrative assistants, direct care staff, recreation specialists, and transportation assistants. There is some overlap in this area with the exception of direct care staff. The current staff complement is illustrated below:

	Current VSDB-Staunton	Current VSDBM-Hampton	Total
Support Staff	39	49	88
Education Staff	68	50	118
Residential Staff	37	30	67
Total	144	129	273

**Figures do not include hourly positions.*

An analysis of hourly and contractual services personnel is needed to determine whether continued use of hourly positions is better than adding classified positions. Currently, some services are appropriately provided in the hourly or contracted service model; however, in some instances, hourly positions have been used due to the lack of full-time positions or insufficient funding for existing positions.

An estimate of the staff complement for the new school is 205. The number was determined by adding the current classified positions from direct-care residential staff and classroom teachers from the Hampton program to the Staunton program. Then, 20 percent of the total educational staff numbers and 20 percent of the total support staff numbers from the Hampton program were added to the Staunton program. This approach addresses the number of staff needed to implement a larger program that includes students with multiple disabilities by using the total number of teachers at both schools and adding additional staff members that would also be needed in administrative and educational areas (e.g., additional supervisors, social workers, behavior specialists, counselors). The need for these added positions was determined through conversations with the two superintendents.

The estimated staff requirements is a reduction of 68 classified positions for the combined number of staff for both schools. It is recommended that a formal staff analysis be completed by a transition planning team closer to the opening of the new school. The superintendents of the two schools report that insufficient staffing and reduced fiscal resources have reduced the quality of services provided to the children. Information gathered for the Task Force indicated that there are more staff employed at the VSDBM-Hampton in all areas except classroom teachers. This staffing comparison supports that the program with more students is not sufficiently funded. Recruitment of appropriately qualified staff has been an area in need of improvement for the two schools. Proper staffing ratios can be improved by combining the two programs.

FACILITIES REQUIREMENTS

The construction of a new academic education building, dorms, and other campus buildings will meet the needs of deaf and blind students more effectively than continuing to spend money with extensive renovations to the existing buildings that are outdated at both locations. A new education building allows for a tailor-made environment that provides excellence in education service for the next half-century. The new campus requires the following:

- Classrooms
- Therapy rooms or centers
- Administrative offices
- A specialized health services center
- Cafeteria
- Media center
- Video conferencing center
- Computer labs
- Student center
- Auditorium
- Gymnasium
- Outdoor athletic fields and track
- A dormitory specially designed to house all students (boys and girls), and provide specialized rooms for children needing them, appropriate office space for staff, meeting rooms, laundry rooms, and leisure areas for evening activities
- Vehicle supervision
- A building for bus parking and maintenance
- A building for grounds equipment and storage

A significant duplication of effort currently exists between the two schools with regard to the use of facilities and needs to be reduced. More space is available than needed. Analysis of this allocation of space at the VSDB-Staunton reveals the following:

- The location of services is spread across several buildings that will not be necessary in a specially designed facility

- The current configuration increases operational costs, physically separates the teaching and residential staffs, impedes communication, and creates a physical barrier to coordinating care between the day program and the evening dormitory program
- Duplication of services occurs in several areas: classrooms, dormitories, libraries (one in each department) auditoriums, and gymnasiums (separated for deaf vs. blind). Four buildings (Bass, Battle, Carter, and Price) are partially used for dormitory space when one appropriately designed building would suffice.
- Four other buildings (Healy, Strader, Peery, and Swanson) are used for education when one appropriately designed building would suffice
- The historical “dual program” approach has physically separated deaf children from blind children into two schools
- The open campus style requires students to travel across 70 acres up and down a steep incline on a daily basis, reducing teaching time (educational services are downhill; the dorms, infirmary and cafeteria are at the top of the hill)
- Some students require adult supervision while traveling
- Providing services to students with physical limitations or medical concerns on this campus is not advisable with regard to student travel
- Dormitory rooms are not set up for the needs of students with physical disabilities and medical conditions
- Many dormitory bedrooms are too small for the number of students assigned to them
- The maintenance required for unused buildings and the use of multiple buildings inflates the schools’ operating budgets
- The campus does not meet accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Analysis of this allocation of space at the VSDBM-Hampton reveals the following:

- At least three buildings are currently leased and the rent does not defray the cost to the school for maintaining the buildings
- The education building is too small for the current population of 80 students, space is needed for a computer lab, a clinic, and staff offices
- Services are spread across buildings for convenience of service delivery rather than best use of space considerations

- The open structure of the campus requires travel and movement across a large area for students who are medically involved or have mobility limitations
- An open campus poses environmental barriers during inclement weather, requires adult supervision for traveling children, and encumbers valuable teaching time during the day, for example, it can take up to 15 minutes to get some students from the Palmer Education Building to the gymnasium for physical education instruction
- The two dormitories have a bed capacity that well exceeds the number of children served
- The dormitories have small student bedrooms
- The current renovation project for Bradford Hall (built in 1951) involves repair to the existing structures and new paint. The current capital project does not include the renovation required to address the programmatic needs of a population of students with sensory impairments. This is the largest education building on campus and is currently leased to Hampton City schools to serve non-disabled students
- The campus does not meet accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The design for today's schools for children with sensory impairments is changing. Across the nation, state governments and school agencies are upgrading facilities and expanding programs to meet new standards, including the ADA, and the U.S. Department of Education's "Special Education Facilities 2001" guidelines. Advances in technology demand that schools provide new and effective visual and functional communication access for sensory impaired students. The new campus building requirements will include the following:

- Appropriate lighting systems designed for educational classrooms
- Acoustical performance criteria
- Efficient energy systems
- Proper heating and ventilating systems
- Air conditioning
- Automatic temperature controls directed by digital control
- Building insulation
- Water usage
- Mechanical systems to reduce noise
- Updated window and curtain wall systems
- Classrooms of appropriate size, shape, and materials
- Appropriate size corridors
- Design that provides for visual needs such as monitoring all areas
- Access to two-way video throughout the campus
- Full-time monitors in classrooms and dormitories
- Computers and associated computer equipment

- Carpeting, special paint colors
- Specialized equipment to include smart boards, communication devices, special equipment for libraries and media centers, special furniture to suit small group instruction or special study
- Meeting current building codes

The estimated student capacity of the new school is 250 residential students. The estimate was determined by combining the current license capacity of the two schools. It is recommended that the school be located near a career and technical education center, hospital services, and an institution of higher education.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

Student transportation has been discussed by previous study teams due to the concern for students with multiple disabilities or physical conditions. Long periods of travel time in a vehicle for this group of students can be uncomfortable or undesirable from a medical standpoint or a parent’s perspective. Transportation routes need to be carefully orchestrated and implemented with consideration of the medical needs and physical limitations of students. Ongoing supervision and training requirements for staff traveling in vehicles with children will be needed but is currently not provided.

Transportation will continue to be a combination of charter buses, school buses, and individual transportation provided by school divisions in certain instances for day students. The current transportation routes for both schools is provided in Appendix G. These documents were created to describe the current transportation configuration at both schools to the Task Force. Transportation costs will be reduced by eliminating the overlap in the current routes. For example, buses currently travel to the Virginia Beach and Norfolk area and return students to the Staunton campus. Similarly, buses from the VSDBM-Hampton are transporting students from Virginia Beach and Norfolk to the Hampton campus. A combined school reduces the need for overlapping travel routes.

The total combined cost of transportation for both schools is \$568,825. The individual cost of transportation per school is listed below:

VSDB-Staunton

Richard’s Bus Service, Luray VA	
3 buses	\$160,000
1 VSDB bus	\$12,464
Total:	\$182, 464

VSDBM-Hampton

Road Burner's Tour Company, Hampton VA
3 buses \$185,082

Auto Rent Company, Hampton, Virginia
1 bus \$28,815

Total: \$386,361

New transportation routes will be developed at the time the new school opens based upon enrollment. A reduction in the current allocation of eight buses is anticipated.

INDIVIDUAL ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARY FOR ALL STUDENTS TO CONTINUE RECEIVING SERVICES

The development of a transition plan for students is necessary to ensure a smooth transfer of all students to the new school. A team of personnel consistent with the current admissions team structure is recommended to develop the transition plan. Parents may choose to not have their child participate in the new school program for a variety of reasons. This choice is true for anyone contemplating placement at a state school for the deaf and the blind but may have more impact for those families who do not support a change in the VSDB programs to a new combined school. Students placed at the two schools are eligible to receive services from their local school divisions. Regulatory responsibility for the education of students is always with the placing school division. Thus, any parent who chooses to not have their child participate in the new program may work with school division personnel to effect a change in placement for the child. Input from special education administrators and parents suggests that local school divisions may not be prepared to receive a student if the school division has no other students with a similar disability. Recruitment of qualified staff has been identified as the primary barrier to be expected for some school divisions.

A mechanism is needed to assist school divisions with program development for those children who will not continue at the new school. It is also anticipated that case management services through community services boards for a small number of students returning to their home school may be necessary to ensure a smooth transition from the school to full-time home placement. The extent of individual arrangements will not be known until the transition team begins reviewing each child's needs. The identification of children in need of assistance should be finalized by March 1 of the year preceding the opening of the new school to allow school divisions' adequate time for staff recruitment as appropriate and to permit community services boards sufficient time to initiate services to families.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND/OR SAVINGS

Most of the schools' funding comes from General Fund appropriations and is established through the Department of Planning and Budget. The schools also receive funds from school

divisions, federal grants, funds from the Department of Education and revenue and interest from the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind Foundation, Incorporated. The Foundation raises funds for the schools and aids in existing and future enterprises involving the schools. The Department of Education deducts annually from the locality's share for the education of pupils with disabilities, a sum equal to the actual local expenditure per pupil in support of those students placed by the school division in either of the two schools. The majority of the schools' expenses are for payroll, campus maintenance, and capital projects. All of the real estate and personal property of the two schools has been transferred to and under the control of the Board of Education.

It is not possible to determine the cost of the new school without a capital needs assessment and feasibility study. An estimate can be determined by adding the combined biennium budgets of the two schools and the appraised value of the campuses that results in a figure of approximately \$49 million. Another estimate can be obtained from considering the sum of the biennium budgets over a four year period (\$56 million).

It can be anticipated that the projected operating budget after completion of the new school will be significantly reduced. Revenue from the sale of the existing campuses could offset the costs for new construction. The long-term operational cost savings for the new school is significant but will not be fully realized until the program is established. Revenue from the sale of the existing campuses could offset the costs for new construction if applied in its entirety to the project. The value of the campuses (listed below) is taken from the records maintained by the Bureau of Real Property Management in the Department of General Services.

- VSDB-Staunton: \$17.2 million
- VSDBM-H: \$ 3.9 million
- Total: \$21.1 million

The properties may actually be sold at amounts that exceed the appraised values.

There will be Workforce Transition Act (WTA) costs associated with the closure of the schools depending on how many staff opt to transfer to the new school. The Hampton campus fill rate for positions has totaled about 120 positions, The Staunton fill rate has totaled about 138 positions. The total staff fill rate has totaled about 258 positions. The 2003 Fiscal Impact Statement developed by the Department of Planning and Budget in response to House Bill 2553 reported that the estimated WTA costs for 108 positions (VSDBM-Hampton) at 12 years of service with an average salary of \$32,000 is almost \$2.4 million (FY03). Exact WTA cost figures resulting from the new school are difficult to determine until the new staff complement is established. The Office of Planning and Budget developed a draft fiscal impact statement at the request of the Task Force about the closing of both schools. This statement estimates the costs for transferring equipment, computers, and educational supplies if both schools were closed at a one-time total of \$500,000.

While actual savings cannot be determined without further evaluation, the Task Force estimates that the plan for a new school would provide better instructional programs and facilities. A 40 percent reduction in facility costs and a 10 percent reduction in education costs could save the state approximately \$7.3 million per biennium or \$3.6 million annually as illustrated below:

2003-2004 Biennium Budget for Both Schools

Projected Facilities Costs		Projected Education Costs		Total
199 Funds:	\$15,458,062	197 Funds:	\$12,037,970	\$27,496,032

Possible Savings from Both Schools

Facilities	Education	Possible Savings
40% reduction: \$ 6,183,224	10% reduction: \$ 1,203,797	\$ 7,387,021

Closing the Staunton school will allow all existing capital funded projects to be terminated. Because these projects have active contracts and are under construction, estimated savings cannot be determined. Additional savings may be realized from the recoupment of emergency funds assigned to the VSDB-Staunton for energy and lead-based paint abatement and currently approved capital projects. For a number of years, the school has purchased steam from the Staunton Correctional Center for heating purposes. With the closing of the correctional facility, a study was completed to determine the best energy cost option for alternative heating to the school in April 2002. The best option selected is currently under way to provide dedicated boilers to individual buildings. The projected cost of alternative heating (air conditioning not included) was prepared by Versar Global Solutions as listed below.

Construction Cost:	\$1,765,000
Annual Fuel Cost:	203,109
Annual O&M Cost:	97,200
25-yr Life Cycle Cost:	\$8.8 million

Industrial Training Company (ITC) was contracted by the VSDB-Staunton to prepare a management plan for lead-based painted materials on buildings at the campus in February of 2002. The plan requires approximately \$336,000 for abatement of Level 4 and Level 5 Hazard Rankings. Cost analysis of Hazard Ranking Levels 1-3 was not conducted. A Level 1 Hazard Ranking is one that needs no attention, rather monitoring for deterioration over time. Hazard Rankings of Level 3 and Level 4 require consideration of their accessibility to contact from people in addition to their potential for deterioration. A complete copy of the plan is available for review upon request.

ALTERNATIVE USES OF FACILITIES

Previous studies have addressed the alternative uses of the facilities, however these studies are out dated. The Department of Education could assist in determining more current alternative uses for the Staunton campus in accordance with the new consolidation plan. It is recommended that the two campuses be declared surplus for disposal and sold to generate revenue to replace building costs of the new facility if the results of the feasibility study support building a new school in a new location. To achieve maximum benefit from this revenue, it is requested that the total proceeds be directed to the new school building project rather than the normal route of distribution of 50 percent to the Conservation and Recreation fund. The Hampton City schools currently leases several buildings for educational programs and the administration has expressed a need for the Hampton campus to house programs. This alternative could be explored in greater detail with the school division. The buildings currently identified as historical landmarks at the VSDB-Staunton include the original school (Main Hall). It is recommended that the Staunton Historical Society and representatives of the Virginia Association for the Deaf, and the Virginia Association for the Blind be involved in discussions about possible alternative uses of these buildings.

STEPS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A WELL-PLANNED CONSOLIDATION

The building of a new school requires a comprehensive implementation plan. A planning team is needed to complete this task. The steps presented below provide an outline of the major activities that need to occur.

- Completion of a capital needs assessment and feasibility study
- Development of a planning team with representatives of both schools
- Development of a school building plan and timetable
- Analysis of staffing needs and development of budget requirements
- Review of student profiles by a transition team to identify the number of classes and staff positions needed
- Development of a plan for transferring students to the new school
- Provision of technical assistance to students returning to school divisions
- Recruitment of an administrative team to provide leadership to the project
- Development of a legislative package for needed changes to the state code
- Development of an information package for dissemination to the state regarding the new school

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR ACHIEVING CONSOLIDATION

The timeline for building a new school can be anticipated to span four or five years, depending on the time needed to complete the required processes. The following timeline is a broad outline that needs to be expanded and refined by the planning team into a formal implementation plan. The following highlights of a timeline establish a period of approximately four years to complete the new school and is considered to be a rapid progression of the project.

- Complete a capital needs assessment and feasibility study
*Identify a new location as needed September 1, 2004
- Establish the planning team membership October 1, 2004
- Develop a legislative package per required deadline
- Complete building plans Fall, 2005
- Begin Construction Project Spring 1, 2006
- Recruit Administrative team July 1, 2006
- Establish transition team for staff and students September 1, 2006
- Began new staff recruitment October 1, 2006
- Establish school budget per required deadline
- Purchase needed materials Spring, 2007
- Completion of facility January 1, 2007
- Transfer equipment from two schools February 1, 2007
- School opens: September 1, 2007

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The two schools have experienced a combined reduction in enrollment since 1980 from 498 students to 191 in the 2002/03 school year. See Appendix H for a detailed comparison of dropping enrollment by campus from 1980 to the present. For purposes of examining current enrollment, the figures used were for the 2002/03 school year with graduates removed. The enrollment considered by the Task Force is illustrated below:

	VSDB-Staunton	VSDBM-Hampton
Deaf:	58	16
HI:	35	19
Blind:	4	6
VI:	21	32
Pre-School:	2	1
Total:	120	74

The Hampton students are reported by sensory impairment. There are 21 students are reported on the December 1, 2003, child count as “multi-disabled”. The group of students described with multiple disabilities comprises a diverse group ranging from mild disabilities to severe disabilities. Further analysis of the students’ records is necessary to determine the number of students in this group with severe impairment. For example, in the mild range, some students reported as multi-disabled may have the following disabilities: deafness , learning disability, speech and language impairment. Other students in a more severe range may have the following disabilities: deafness, mental retardation, and orthopedic impairment.

Seventy school divisions (50%) have students placed at the two schools. See Appendix I for a listing of the school divisions. The unduplicated number of placing school divisions at each school is illustrated below:

	Number of School Divisions
VSDB-Staunton	35
VSDBM-Hampton	17
Shared Schools	18
Total	70

STATE PERSPECTIVE OF SERVICES

Sensory impairments comprise a disability group considered to be “low incidence” with regard to frequency of occurrence in the population. The total numbers of students with sensory impairments reported to the state served by all school divisions in Virginia in 2003 are as follows:

Hearing Impaired:	2,142
Multi-Disabled	2,803
Visually Impaired	1,203

For the 2002/03 school year, approximately 6 percent of all students in Virginia who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and visually impaired including blindness were served at one of the two schools. Determination of a percentage of multi-disabled children served is not appropriate since

it is not known how many of the multi-disabled students reported from the school divisions may or may not have a sensory impairment.

NATIONAL PICTURE OF STATE SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

There are at least 64, residential schools for the deaf listed in a directory for the national superintendent's list. Two states are not included in this list: Nevada and New Hampshire. Of these schools, 14 also serve blind students. Seven states have more than one school. There are 39 schools listed in the national directory serving blind students only. Three states have more than one school. The Task Force recognized that the provision of services for deaf and blind students in a residential state school continues to be a valued, needed placement option for some students with sensory impairments in Virginia. Many students are successfully integrated in public school programs. The most successful programs have a critical mass of students that permits the development of appropriate language immersion programs for deaf students and provides comprehensive technology and mobility and orientation services for blind students.

STAFF CREDENTIALS/SCHOOL LICENSES

The VSDB-Staunton currently holds a three-year renewable license with a residential student capacity of 150 students. The VSDBM-Hampton currently holds a provisional one-year license with a residential student capacity of 100 students. The recruitment of appropriately qualified staff has been an area that needs improvement for the schools. Many times, special education teachers are hired and required to add the needed endorsements to their teaching license. This problem is shared by school divisions in Virginia due to the low-incidence rate of deafness and blindness as a disability and due to the scarcity of special education teachers with the required endorsements. Combining the programs eliminates competition between the schools for recruiting qualified teachers.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY OF BOTH CAMPUSES

The Task Force requested that a site and building accessibility survey be performed at both campuses. As required under Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), all programs, services, or activities offered by a public entity must be accessible to persons with disabilities. In an effort to understand each schools current ADA status, Hunter Barnes, architectural consultant for the Department of Education, made a site visit to each school. Every major building used for school programs, staff offices, or being used by another public agency was surveyed. Closed buildings and maintenance storage buildings were not surveyed. A standard survey form was used to evaluate each building. This one page form was developed by the Virginia Department of Education as a way to evaluate public school buildings with regard to ADA accessibility. The survey is an architectural barrier checklist that evaluates both site conditions and a building's interior. One purpose of the survey was to verify that each building has at least one accessible route from outside parking areas to all interior spaces where programs or activities are conducted.

VSDBM - HAMPTON

The VSDBM-Hampton was surveyed on August 21, 2003. The 75-acre campus has 13 buildings listed on the building inventory. All buildings were surveyed with the exception of the garage, central storage building and the superintendent's residence. The majority of these buildings are typically 30-50 years old and are low-rise, multi-story brick and block structures. During the 1980s, projects were begun to make the school accessible to students, parents, and staff in wheelchairs. The projects that were typically completed during this period included exterior ramps being added at building entry points and the installation of the ADA required emergency audible and visible alarm systems. During the 1990s, elevators were installed in the Palmer Education Building and Ritter Hall (a dormitory). Recently, major toilet upgrades have been completed in Butler Hall, Palmer Hall, Bradford Hall, Price Hall, and Ritter Hall. Based upon these upgrades, the following general findings can be noted for the Hampton school.

- With the exception of two buildings (Price, Genevieve Whitehead) all buildings have been provided with marked handicapped parking; parking is remote in some cases due to distance to buildings
- Exterior ramps have been provided at building entrances to overcome steps
- Electric door openers have been provided at main entrance door locations, one door opener was noted as not being operational at Genevieve Whitehead Hall
- Emergency audible and visible alarm systems are provided in all buildings. It is reported that these building alarm systems have all been recently tested and are in good working condition

VSDB - STAUNTON

The VSDB-Staunton was surveyed on September 4, 2003. The campus site contains 72.8 acres of land and the building inventory listed 20 buildings on the Staunton campus. All buildings were surveyed with the exception of the maintenance building, paint shop, and closed buildings (Byrd Hall, Darden Hall, Stuart). There is a wide range in the type of construction and in the age of the buildings. Main Hall, the oldest building, was built in 1839. The newest building is Strader Hall, constructed in 1972. The types of construction range from multi-story wood frame to multi-story brick and block structures. In the 1980s, accessibility projects were first begun to allow the school to have a greater accessibility to persons in wheelchairs. These projects included providing handicapped parking and ramps to allow persons with disabilities to have access to the school buildings. During the early 1990s, an elevator and a system of covered walkways was constructed to allow for wheelchair access to the central campus buildings of Bass Hall, Main Hall, Perry Hall, Swanson Hall and the Chapel. In 1999, an elevator was added at Healy Hall and a ramp system was added for Strader Hall. By using the Healy elevator and ramp, persons with disabilities may gain entry to the Strader building. When a disabled person has to use an elevator then go outside to gain access to a building, the building is not considered to be accessible. In recent years, toilet upgrades have been completed to Strader Hall, Healy Hall, and Carter Hall. Also, funding for two more toilets to Battle Hall has recently been

approved. Based upon the surveys of the buildings, the following general findings can be noted for the Staunton school.

- With the exception of three buildings (Watts, Price, Carter) all buildings have been provided with marked handicapped parking, but in some cases this parking is remote due to distance to the building
- Exterior ramps have been provided at all building entrances to overcome steps and topography
- Emergency audible and visible alarm systems are provided in all buildings. It is reported that these building alarm systems have all been recently tested and are in good working condition

Based upon the assessment, neither campus is compliant with the ADA requirements. The Hampton campus has several advantages to the Staunton campus that helped it fair better in its overall rating. These include a level topography and a larger percentage of one-story buildings that are not as old as the wood frame structures that exist at Staunton. A complete copy of the report is available for review upon request.

CURRENT BUILDING CONDITIONS

The facility manager at each campus was asked to complete a survey describing the conditions of the buildings for review by the Task Force. The managers used the same survey form to assign their ratings. The results of their ratings illustrate that the Staunton campus has several buildings in need of extensive repair such as new roofs, while the Hampton campus evidences the need for minor repairs associated with routine maintenance activities. The historic architecture and structure of the Staunton building is expensive to maintain compared to the Hampton campus. Capital project funding for the Staunton campus has not been sufficient to address the extent of the needed renovations over time. In addition, the school's operating budget for proper maintenance is not sufficient to keep abreast with routine activities that would prevent continued deterioration of the buildings. A concern discussed at the Task Force meeting is that the Hampton school currently does not have any maintenance funds assigned to the agency. Please refer to Appendix J for summaries of the building conditions at both schools.

Color photographs and floor plans for each building on both campuses were reviewed by the Task Force and are available for review upon request. The members of the Task Force also toured both facilities.

SCHOOL DIVISION MODELS OF SERVICES/CONCERNS

Because a significant number of school divisions in the state place students at one of the two schools, the Task Force wanted additional information from special education administrators in order to develop the best consolidation plan. Forty special education administrators were interviewed by the director of State-Operated Programs (57%) via telephone. At times, special education administrators referred the director to staff more familiar with the child. The results

were analyzed by a member of the special education evaluation team at the Department of Education. The interview questions are provided in Appendix K.

The most frequent response from special education administrators about why a child is placed at one of the two schools was that the school division was unable to meet the child's needs. The next most frequent response was that the parent had requested placement. Although the majority of respondents indicated that the school division had not had a student discharged and returned to the school division for services by the VSDB, 45 percent indicated that they had. Among those who had experienced a service termination, the primary reason was the child's behavior or emotional difficulty that the school could not address. Information provided by the VSDB-Staunton indicates that over a three-year period, the school returned 46 students to school divisions for services. The Hampton school discharge rate for a similar time period was nine students. It is desirable for the new school program to include services for students with sensory impairments and emotional difficulties. This need was identified in the Report of the Department of Education and the Disability Commission, *Educational Needs of Emotionally Disturbed Students with Visual and Hearing Impairments*, Senate Document No. 20, 1999. Subsequent changes to the state code were completed to permit the VSDB-Staunton to begin a program to address this need. However, the renovation of building space and subsequent funding has not yet been appropriated for this purpose.

Special education administrators were asked what concerns they might have if the currently placed students at the two schools were no longer able to receive services at the schools. The concerns special education administrators expressed about students returning to the school division for special education and related services included the following:

- Lack of resources to develop programs
- Lack of qualified interpreters for deaf students
- The child's history of placement in a residential school
- No concerns
- No information available to respond
- Lack of an HI population for immersion
- Parental opposition

Special education administrators were asked how other students in their school divisions with deafness or hearing impairments and visual impairments including blindness were receiving services. The types of services being provided to children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing included the following, most frequent to least frequent:

Full-time HI teacher (40%)	Inclusion (27%)
Itinerant (20%)	Resource (20%)
Self-contained (20%)	Regional/other division (15%)
Center-based (7%)	No endorsed staff (7%)
Aide assigned to student (1 response)	
No students (0 responses)	

The types of VI services being provided in the placing school divisions included the following (most frequent to least frequent):

Itinerant (40%)	Resource (12%)
Regional/other division (12%)	No students (12%)
Full time VI teacher (10%)	Inclusion (10%)
Aide assigned to student (10%)	Self-contained (7%)
Center-based (2%)	Unendorsed staff (2%)

There was discussion during the Task Force meetings that declining enrollment may be impacted by school divisions not knowing about the services provided by the two schools despite the efforts required that every school division notify parents annually about the two schools and the availability of services with a document prepared by the Department of Education. Special education administrators were asked how they distributed the information and how the Department of Education might improve that process. There was no evidence to suggest that enrollment has been impacted by this concern. The special education administrators were knowledgeable of the materials. The majority of the administrators reported that they send the information packet directly to parents via the mail system from the central office. The second most popular method is the send it to teachers and ask them to deliver it personally to the parent. The suggestions for improving the process included sending the information more than once during the school year and that the Department of Education send the materials directly to families.

PREVIOUS STUDIES ABOUT CONSOLIDATION

There are 29 studies or documents about the two schools that were completed between 1973 and 1999. A brief synopsis is included of those studies that are specific to either the mission of the schools or the topic of consolidation.

A study of historical note was completed in 1979, coordinated by the President of the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, the Superintendent of the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Director of the North Carolina Schools for the Deaf. The team's conclusions have shaped the structure of the two schools and provided recommendations about topics still valued today that included the quality of learning environments, the need for technical assistance and assessment services to the state, the need for modern media departments, services to infants and toddlers, community education programs, admission practices, appropriate levels of funding, the need for a close working relationship with state agencies, establishment of the schools as teacher training sites, and the need for adequate high school services.

The In-Depth Study Committee Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind) completed in 1983, addressed the topic of consolidation specifically and suggested that a decline in enrollment on either campus below 170 students should be used as the criteria for preparation of a formal one-year consolidation plan (site selection, staff reorganization, program planning, and related activities). The recommendation was to combine both schools onto one of the existing campuses or develop a new site. It was noted that neither campus was capable of serving as a consolidation site without extensive capital improvements being involved and that any final

consolidation study should cost out the feasibility of building a new campus at a central location versus the upgrading of one of the existing campuses.

The Report of the Transition Team Assigned to Study Merger of the Staunton and Hampton Schools for the Deaf and Blind with the Virginia Department of Education was conducted in 1984. This study recommended improvements needed at the schools and stressed the need to clearly delineate the target populations to be served by the two schools. Improvements needed were reported in most areas of operation and included such areas as curriculum, textbooks, testing procedures, policies and procedures, staff in-service, needed equipment, vocational training funds, program evaluation procedures, a Department of Education staff member to supervise and coordinate plant operation and management of the two facilities, long range facility planning, safety procedures, transportation, food services, staff utilization, financial accounting, centralization of payroll, personnel functions, a centralized student information system, and maintenance of employee records.

The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Utilization of Facilities at the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind was conducted in 1985. The recommendation regarding consolidation was that the Board of Education consolidate all existing deaf, blind, and multi-disabled programs at one facility. The study further recommended that the facility not selected for consolidation should be considered for one of the following purposes: a gifted and talented residential program, a facility for another handicapped population, or use by another state agency or declared surplus for disposal.

The Department of Information Technology (Management Consulting Division) conducted a Cost Analysis for Operating One or Two State Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Virginia in 1987. This report provided cost-savings estimates for the closing of both schools. The estimates are outdated but the report contains relevant areas for consideration:

- School divisions will need at least two years for budget planning to prepare for those students who will return to the public schools.
- For curriculum planning, school divisions will want to evaluate the children while they are still attending the state schools.
- Consideration of peaks in graduation should be considered for timing of closure.

The next study to address the topic of consolidation was conducted in 1989. The Forum Report and Recommendations to the Board of Education by Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Advisory Committee recommended that both schools should be maintained and expanded because of their unique nature and ability to address students' needs according to geographic residence. They recommended that the two schools be designated as assessment centers for school divisions for visual, hearing, and multi-disabled students at no cost and that a formal program of technical assistance be established at both schools to serve local school divisions. An additional recommendation was that the schools establish regional centers to assist professionals for services to children from birth to age 5. It was recommended that the regional centers could also train deaf and blind individuals who wish to become teachers.

Plans for the Future Direction for the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, 1990 recommended program separation of the two schools with a transition period ending July 1, 1991 specifying that the Hampton campus would no longer accept any student except those considered

to be what they referred to as “deaf and/or blind multi-disabled”. After eight months of public discussion and comment, the Board of Education approved recommendations that the Staunton school would serve deaf and blind students and that the Hampton campus would serve only multi-disabled sensory impaired children. Both schools were to provide evaluation and assessment services to local school divisions, summer programs and comprehensive transition programs to prepare students for employment. The two schools began providing assessment services to school divisions and have continued that service to date. Summer programs are available and open to surrounding counties within travel distance of the schools.

The Report on the Proposed Future Programs for the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Hampton, 1991 concluded “there will always be a need for a residential facility in the Commonwealth to serve the unique and diverse needs of some of Virginia’s handicapped children” and that “although programming for multi-handicapped students was mandated by the General Assembly in 1978 at Hampton, funding for this program was never provided. The Hampton school continues to be funded as if only deaf or blind students are served. The facility simply absorbed this program into its existing budget, which in the view of many, diminished the effectiveness of program expansion for the multi-handicapped.” A follow up to this study in 1991 concluded that the facility should continue to provide direct services to students with special needs and that there was much support for the VSDBM-Hampton to serve seriously emotionally disturbed children and youth. However, Virginia Code §22.1-348-B specifies that “...the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton shall provide... an educational program children in preschool through grade twelve who have visual and sensory disabilities and who are identified as emotionally disturbed pursuant to Board of Education regulations”.

In May of 1991 the Board of Education approved a recommendation to establish the VSDB-Staunton campus as the statewide residential school for deaf and blind students and close the Hampton facility by 1994. This action was a direct result of the Board’s commitment to eliminate duplicative state-funded residential services and to promote the education of all disabled children with their non-disabled peers. As a result of this action, the Department of Education formed a transition team to facilitate the changes approved by the Board. The need for comprehensive information about the schools to develop a consolidation plan became evident. This report provides a good summary and history of issues regarding the two schools.

The Study of Potential Uses of the Facilities and Grounds of the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Hampton, 1997, is the most recent report addressing consolidation and the closing of the Hampton campus and provides a summary of actions leading up to the current situation. Their recommendations propose strategies for the coordination and operation of the current services of the VSDBM-Hampton through the regional consortium (New Horizons) serving Hampton Roads area and southeastern Virginia. New Horizons is the largest regional consortium in the Commonwealth and operates on a rate setting procedure based on the local composite index established for each school division. State money is appropriated to the Department of Education to reimburse local school divisions for regional programs. The New Horizons program at that time had reached capacity and was looking for an expansion site.

APPENDIX A
APPROPRIATION ACT LANGUAGE
ITEM 138 #6C

Education: Elementary & Secondary

Department Of Education, Central Office Operations

Language

Language:

Page 124, after line 58, insert:

“S.1. The Board of Education shall convene a task force to develop a plan for consolidating services for the deaf and/or blind and multi-disabled students served by Virginia’s two schools for these students. The task force shall include at least one member of the Board of Education; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Superintendent of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton; the Superintendent of the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind, and Multi-Disabled at Hampton; the co-chairmen of the advisory Commission of the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind; one parent of a currently enrolled student from each of the schools; and one representative each from the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.

2. The plan shall include an examination of appropriate academic programs, staffing requirements, facilities requirements, student transportation requirements, and individual arrangements necessary for all students currently receiving services to continue receiving services. All options for serving students shall be considered. The plan shall also include the steps necessary to achieve consolidation, funding requirements and/or savings, alternative uses of facilities, and a suggested timeline for achieving consolidation.

3. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the task force in its development of the plan, upon request. The task force shall submit its plan to the governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Education, and the Senate Finance and Education and Health Committees by November 1, 2003.”

APPENDIX B

TASK FORCE MEMBERS VOTES FOR CONSOLIDATION OPTIONS

<i>Voting Results</i>		
Name	Vote	Reasoning
G. Slonneger	Option 4	This option would provide improved services to students.
D. White	Option 1*	A continued presence at the Hampton site as a day program should be included with the new school being the umbrella for comprehensive, uniform services across Virginia.
H. Maxwell	Option 1	Necessary changes can be made to give a “big bang” for the dollars spent on both schools. This option can be worked with to meet the needs.
MM Cash	Option 4	The charge from the General Assembly is to consolidate services for students, thus Option 1 is not an option. Options 2 and 3 continue to alienate groups and continue the hurt feelings. Option 4 is in the best interest of the children.
D. Young	Option 4	The statements made by MM Cash could be repeated. The focus needs to be on the children. Options 2 and 3 only serve one half of the state.
E. Hanger	Option 1	This Option has the ability to do the required consolidation without offending both parties and meets the children’s needs.
D. Cox	Option 4	Option 1 is not an option from the General Assembly’s mandate. Option 4 is what best meets the needs of the children. It is ethical to build and not renovate and allows the opportunity to address the issue of choosing one school over the other.
S. Goodman	Option 4	Option 1 is not an option because the children cannot be broken into two groups that will provide effective educational opportunities for both groups. The location of the new site should be in the best possible place to be determined by what land is available. The alumni should provide input into the development of the new plan, and the heritage of both schools should be treated with equal importance by combining the best of both with buildings being named for key persons from both locations. In addition, pictures, statues, etc. from both sites can be represented.

L. Surber	Option 4	How can both schools change anymore? The new site should include the history from both schools. There is a need to stop the negative actions of one school against the other.
R. Lanier	Option 1	The resources are already in place on both campuses with well-established reputations in the community. There are no guarantees that the staff at the new school would have the credentials needed and there is a need for credentialed staff at both sites.
N. Armstrong	Option 1	I can live with Option 1 with changes.
S. Ricks *designee for Martha Adams	Option 4	It is in the best interest of the children who are to be served.
Total		Option 4 – 7 votes Option 1 – 5 votes

* D. White's vote was first recorded as being in support of Option 4 but she asked, after the completion of voting, that her vote be changed to Option 1.

It was agreed that as the result of the above vote, that Option 4, build a new school and close both existing schools, would be sent forward as the plan of the Task Force.

APPENDIX C

VSDB CONSOLIDATION TASK FORCE FOCUS GROUP REPORT - THE FINDINGS

The Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind (two schools) Consolidation Task Force, at their June 3-4, 2003 meeting, agreed that public and stakeholder input into their task of developing a plan of implementation for consolidating services for the deaf and/or blind and multi-disabled students served by Virginia's two schools for these students was important to their deliberations. As a result, it was decided that public and stakeholder comments would be collected through the following means: a public comment period at Task Force meetings, a public comment mailbox on the Department of Education's website, public hearings, and focus groups. This report is a summary of the findings obtained through the focus groups.

Nine focus groups were conducted July 17 through August 18, 2003. A total of 73 participants participated. The director of State-Operated Programs, working with the superintendents of the two schools and through other means, identified the participants and extended the invitations to participants. The following groups participated in a focused discussion about consolidation of services:

- Two parent groups (Hampton: 8 participants, Staunton: 4 participants)
- Two VSDB personnel groups (Staunton: 12 participants, Hampton: 12 participants)
- Three alumni groups (Richmond: 5 participants, Hampton: 5 participants, Fairfax: 3 participants)
- One group of public school special education administrators (Richmond: 12 participants)
- One group of consumer organization representatives (Fairfax: 12 participants).

At each focus group session, participant comments were recorded on flipchart paper. The recorded information was then e-mailed or mailed to participants so they could check to see that their comments had been accurately recorded. In addition, they were given the opportunity to add additional information should they desire to do so after a review of the recorded information. Fourteen individuals added additional comments or clarified their existing comments.

THE QUESTIONS

All groups were asked questions targeted to the seven options that had been developed by the Task Force at their June 3-4 meeting. In addition, participants in all groups were asked to contribute additional options for consolidation of services. They were also asked to suggest criteria the Task Force could use in their decision-making. All participants were asked a question about the appropriate length of time for a student to travel from their home to the school in order to receive services.

The parent and VSDB personnel groups were asked what steps should be taken by school divisions and the Department of Education to ensure that students receive an appropriate education should the schools be closed and they returned to the localities for services. They were also asked to suggest what additional services and programs are needed at the two schools should

one or both schools remain open and what transition steps should be taken for the option of serving students at one site.

The VSDB personnel groups were asked what could be done to support school staff to make the transition to alternate employment should one or both of the schools be closed.

The alumni groups were asked questions regarding the need for a residential program, what programs and services they would like to see started at the two schools that are not currently available, and what kinds of supports and services families of students with sensory impairments need in their communities.

The special education administrators and consumer organization representatives were asked, in addition to the questions asked of all groups, the following:

- whether there was a need for residential services for students with sensory impairments,
- what school divisions need to do to improve services for sensory impaired students,
- what state-level initiatives are needed to assist school divisions to serve students with sensory impairments, and
- what other services and programs are needed from the two schools that are not currently available.

At the end of each group session, participants were given an opportunity to make any comments they thought they had not an opportunity to make during the presentation of the questions by the facilitator.

MAJOR FINDINGS

There was general agreement on the following findings:

- **Both schools should remain open.** Participants in all the focus groups exhibited a great deal of loyalty to the two schools, stressing what the schools had meant to them in their development or in the development of others. Parents related the time-consuming, frustrating and often disappointing experiences they had had with public schools in obtaining services for their child and his/her special needs. To them the school represented their best hope in obtaining services for their child for her/his academic and social growth. They had not been disappointed with services received at the two schools

Alumni spoke of how their school experiences had served them well in life, whether it was in obtaining a skill for which they were able to obtain employment or in acquiring the leadership skills and confidence to interact in their communities after they left the school.

Special education administrators and consumer organization representatives saw the schools as an option on a continuum of services that was appropriate and necessary for some students but not all.

- **The residential program is important to the development of the child.** The importance of a residential program to the academic and social development of the student was given as the primary reason the schools should remain open instead of returning students to local schools for services. It was felt that it is in the dorm life that a student learns life skills and discipline and it is in the after-school activities that a student has the opportunity to perform leadership roles, participate in team sports, and interact with others in a peer group.

Participants in the group of special education administrators and the group of consumer organization representatives felt that where students can be mainstreamed they should be mainstreamed but for those students for which mainstreaming is not an appropriate choice, a residential program is important to their development.

Personnel stated that if students and their families don't have access to a residential program within the state, some students would leave the state for services and others would return to the public schools where the students' needs would not be addressed adequately thus hampering their academic and social development.

- **There is no support for eliminating the high school functions at both schools with students returning to local schools and consolidating the elementary school at one site.** Personnel related that students often arrive at the schools in the middle and high school years when they are failing or otherwise not doing well in their local schools. In addition, their behavior may have become a management issue at their local school and for their parents. This is also a time when peer groups are most important to the student's development.
- **There is no support for eliminating the program for blind/visually-impaired students and serving only students with hearing impairments.** One person called this option discriminatory and another person stated this only pits one disability against another. It was felt the students' needs were similar and there was a need to serve students with those needs in a residential setting.
- **There is a strong desire that a decision be made and implemented.** There was consensus the issue of consolidation has been studied much too long and a decision needs to be made now. It was stated the uncertainty is stressful to parents particularly for parents who have a child at the school in Hampton for the perception exists that if one school closes it will be the Hampton school. It was also reported the uncertainty is affecting recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and staff at the VSDBM-Hampton.

FINDINGS AND COMMENTS RELATIVE TO THE SEVEN OPTIONS AND OTHER ISSUES

Option #1: Leave both schools open but with changes: Functions downsized, sharing of space with other entities, upgrading the facilities for another type of student, etc.

Participants were asked to suggest additional changes that should be considered by the Task Force. Participants, overwhelmingly, took the opportunity to say both schools should remain open with present services enhanced. Few additional changes were suggested with comments made on the changes proposed by the Task Force. Comments included:

- Add additional students – blind or deaf and emotionally disturbed students (parent, special education administrator); students with deafness or blindness as a secondary disability (parent); students that are presently being sent out of the state for services – the deaf emotionally disturbed student, the learning disabled, and multi-disabled (special education administrator)
- Create an immersion school to teach public school students and others to sign.
- Consideration should be given to teaching ASL as a foreign language (consumer organization representative)
- Provide a residential program for students with other disabilities using Comprehensive Services Act funds (consumer organization representative)
- State develop and support satellite sites throughout the state that would be available to assist children and their families to get services. The students would be funnel into the schools should there be a need for residential services (personnel)
- Seek out additional organizations to share space on the schools' campuses (parent); consider adding only those entities to the campuses that are compatible with the present population (parent)

Option #2: Consolidate the schools to one of the current locations.

Participants mentioned travel time as being a major concern should this option become a reality. This included a concern for the distance between the school and the child's home. This was a particular concern for multi-disabled students. The following comments were made:

- Some students may have to become residential students rather than day students (parent)
- Separation by distance increases the stress levels for children and their families (parent); a student expected to move to a new location may lose their sense of community because of the distance from their home (alumnus)
- The students that will be required to move will experience a loss requiring adaption to new surroundings and staff (parent)
- Travel time for some students will be greatly increased (parent, alumnus)
- Travel time for multi-disabled student with special medical needs (seizures) will be problematic (personnel, parent); multi-disabled students are often medically fragile and it is unreasonable to transport them for great distances (consumer organization representative); it would be more physically taxing for the multi-disabled student (parent)
- Students may return to school divisions and become isolated within their community/school rather than move to the new school (special education administrator, alumnus)
- Transportation for the multi-disabled student would force some students to be mainstreamed to the local school division even if the appropriate services could not be provided for them (alumnus)

- It could limit involvement of parents in the school life of their child (alumnus)
- Military families in the Hampton Roads area need the services of the school at Hampton to reduce the stress to the family already burdened by the disruption of military moves and periodic deployment of a parent (consumer organization representative)

Other impacts:

- Staff will be impacted if their school is the one to close (special education administrator, alumnus)

There was limited support for the consolidation at one site option. Reasons given by those who did support this option include:

- Consolidation could reduce the competition for resources between the two schools (special education administrator)
- Consolidation would be good in that funds from both sites could be used in one place to upgrade the facilities and programs as well as obtain needed qualified staff (parent, personnel)
- The increased numbers of students at one school could enhance the program opportunities for all students (special education administrator)
- If all the deaf students were at one site, there would be an increased identity for the school which could possibly result in a rise in enrollment (alumnus)
- One school for the blind should remain an option in the continuum of services. Although such a facility is not appropriate for all blind/visually impaired students, it is clearly the best option for some students (personnel)
- One site could be sold and the funds used to address ADA standards (personnel)

Comments were made regarding the ability of each school to meet the needs of students from the other site:

- The Hampton facility can handle the requirements of multi-disabled because the terrain is flat. Concern was expressed with “runaway wheelchairs” at Staunton and its “hilly” terrain (personnel)
- Military personnel are assigned to the Hampton Roads area because of the location of the school (personnel)
- Job skills training available at one location may not be available at the other location (personnel). Personnel at both sites felt there would be a lack of job skills training at the other site.

Option #3: Close both schools and relocate the school at another location.

Participants stressed that their responses to the option of one school closing were applicable to this option. There would be travel time issues, the uprooting of everybody (students and staff), the inability of parents (not living nearby) to become involved in their child’s activities, and concern for military families needing services, particularly for multi-disabled children if the site is not in the Hampton Roads/Tidewater area. The following additional concerns were raised

relative to this option:

- Both schools are a part of the communities within which they exist. There is a history and a sense of community in their respective communities. Both communities are comfortable with and accepting of the students. This would be lost (parent, personnel, alumnus)
- There is a network of community organizations providing services to the existing schools and the students (consumer organization representative)
- There may be an inability for the “new” school to provide services, due to lack of expertise, resources, money or desire (consumer organization representative); could the needed staff be attracted to a new location? It may be hard to find staff with specialized skills in the new location (alumnus, personnel)
- It may cost more to close both and build new facility (parent)
- Money for building a new school could be put toward education at the current sites (alumnus)

However, there was limited support for the option of closing both schools and locating the school to another location. The following components were made in support of the option:

- Major infrastructure needs exist at both schools. It is a challenge to honor the ADA requirements of historical buildings. The maintenance on a new facility may be less (parent)
- Shutting both schools and moving to a new location will be less costly. It is taking too much money to maintain current sites. Put the dollars into a new facility that meets codes (personnel)
- No other state has two school facilities and the ones we have require major repairs. It would be economically best to close both and relocate to a place requiring less repair, centrally located, possibly in Charlottesville (consumer organization representative)
- It would reduce the competition for funds between the two schools (personnel)
- If consolidating whether to one school or a new location, the goal should be to build a really strong quality program rather than to build as a “last alternative” (personnel)
- Consolidation of the two schools could facilitate creation of one “State of the Art” institution without competing for funds (personnel)
- New location needs to be geographically placed so it is not a barrier to parents (parent)
- When looking for a location look at the interstate road networks (personnel)
- The school should be in a metropolitan area where there is access to public transportation so students can be independent and move around in the community (consumer organization representative)

Option #4: Close both schools and download functions to regional, local divisions. There was no support for this option. Parents spoke of their frustration in dealing with school divisions in getting the appropriate education for their child before resorting to requesting admission to one of the two schools. Alumni shared their negative experiences as well. Special education administrators acknowledged that local schools would not be able to provide the level of experiences the students now receive at the schools. There was also strong support for the residential component that is now offered by the two schools that the local schools could not provide. The following comments were made:

- Deafness and vision impairments are low incidence disability populations. Closing both schools and returning the hearing and visual impaired students to local schools will result in poor educational experiences for students in most localities (consumer organization representative)
- Local numbers are so small that students wouldn't be apart of the deaf culture which is important for their development (special education director)
- Deaf education requires a critical mass of students (parent). This option would destroy the deaf student's identity as the deaf schools teach students what it is like to be deaf (alumnus)
- The behaviors of many students improve after coming to VSDB. Their behavior may become a problem if returned to local school. Their academic learning may also regress (personnel)
- Students need to communicate directly with the teacher instead of through an interpreter; there are few if any deaf teachers in local schools (parent)
- When there is one interpreter with a deaf student, the interpreter will not pay attention 100% to the deaf student and a hearing environment is not a healthy environment emotionally for a deaf student (alumnus)
- Higher interpreter skills are available at two schools than local divisions can find/provide (special education administrator). With interpreters there is so much information that is lost. Seventy-five percent of school interpreters do not have Level 3 certification (alumnus)
- Small rural communities find it almost impossible to find qualified teachers and interpreters causing a decrease in the academic skills of students (special education administrator, parent)
- If students are returned to school divisions, participation in extra-curricular activities would be limited because of a lack of interpreters (alumnus)
- Multi-disabled services in small school divisions are contracted out to other providers – some are too far away to provide the appropriate level of service (special education director). Will services be provided daily rather than weekly (parent)?
- Physical therapy and occupational therapy would not be available in the school setting because schools are focused on academics instead of the total child (personnel). Therapists/specialists may be serving multiple school settings thus less service is available to each child served (parent)
- There may be a higher cost for services at the local level but the amount of services provided would likely be less (special education director)
- Local schools do not have money to accommodate the students' needs causing students to suffer more (alumnus)

- If this option is implemented, the students will be left behind, working in opposition to the new program, No Child Left Behind (personnel)
- There would be no adult or possibly older youth deaf or blind role models for students (parent)
- Labeling and victimization of the students may occur (personnel)
- Family difficulties or insufficiencies that prevent families from coping with the additional stress of raising and educating a child with a disability will increase (consumer organization representative)
- If both schools are closed, deaf students will choose to go to the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington, D.C. (personnel)

Option #5: Close the high school (with students returning to school divisions) and consolidate the elementary schools to one location.

There was no support for this option. The sentiment was that the schools are more critical at the middle and high school levels than elementary. Participants shared the following perspectives:

- Middle and high school is often when students go to two schools because it is too far for a younger child to be away from home and the student's needs expand as they advance in their schooling/development (special education director)
- By middle/high school, a child is tired of being the "cute little deaf or blind child" who is working so hard and who always has another person (interpreter) with them in the classroom, on dates, at cheerleading practice, and sports (special education administrator)
- If a child returns to school divisions after elementary school to be mainstreamed and is assigned a Level 1 interpreter that can't interpret correctly then the child will get blamed for poor performance or what he doesn't know when it wasn't the child's fault (consumer organization representative)
- Being a part of a peer group is an important part of the teen experience/development of the child (parent).
- This option ignores the development of youth and such social issues as dating. Most interpreters are female so what does this do for a male or female deaf student trying to talk with a student of another gender using an interpreter (consumer organization representative)?
- Students need guidance/support/training to be successful. It is important to be trained by a teacher who knows the culture/language and can recognize what is going on in the life of the child who is blind/deaf (alumnus)
- Students need to gain independence which they won't obtain in the public schools (alumnus)
- When students return to the mainstream it is disruptive for the deaf student and the hearing community (alumnus)
- When children are younger it is easier to mainstream them, materials and subject matter are easier to follow than when older. Harder materials require more one-on-one attention (alumnus)
- Younger students need older students to look up to in order to understand what they can become (alumnus)

- It students were close to Northern Virginia or Virginia Beach, they would get services but what about those in small school divisions, those students would suffer (personnel)
- The current school is helping the children pass the SOLs but this would not happen at the local level because of the lack of one-on-one learning available now (parent)

Option #6: Eliminate the element of blind, visually impaired from the schools and serve only the deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

There was no support for this option. It was felt that blind and visually impaired students benefit from the interaction with the deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The following comments were made regarding this option:

- This is a form of discrimination (parent)
- Take this option off the table because it pits one disability against another and the reasons for placing the students are similar with different outcomes (special education administrator)
- For one child (from my division) there was increased mobility, learning of Braille, independence, a change in the dynamics of the family structure, and increased academic skills that the local school couldn't have done for this child (special education director)
- Some parents tend to be overprotective and prevent practice of skills such as cane travel. The schools teach independence and don't pamper the student. The students become more independent at the schools than in the mainstreamed schools (alumnus)
- What about the multi-disabled child? This leaves them out (personnel)

Option #7: Schools serve as technical education centers to local divisions with students returning to school divisions.

There was support for the school(s) serving as technical education centers to local division but only if students were present. It was felt that if the schools were to be technical education centers, students needed to be present so a learning laboratory could be created for greater learning. Some stated that the schools had served as resource centers in the past and done outreach but with the budget reductions this function had ceased to exist other than on an informal basis. Other comments:

- Might be a good use of space not presently being used (alumnus)
- Resources are needed to make this happen (consumer organization representative)
- Remove the responsibility from the Training and Technical Education Centers (T/TACs) for hearing impaired/vision impaired students and restore it to the two schools with the appropriate funding. More expertise exists at the schools for serving these students than exists at the T/TACs (consumer organization representative)
- Merge this option with option #1, keeping both schools open (alumnus)

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR THE TASK FORCE'S CONSIDERATION

There were few additional options offered. The participants continued to focus on the continuation of the existing school(s) or elaborated on ideas already listed by the Task Force.

The following comments were made:

- Have regional/local divisions take over administrative functions with students remaining at the two schools (parent)
- Reorganize the structure so the Department of Education would supervise all special education in the state, mainstreaming administration, and removing competition relative to budget (parent)
- Turn the blind education program for visually impaired students over to the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (consumer organization representative)
- Title I designation be given to both schools (assistance with budget) (parent)
- Create a Governor's School for the deaf and the blind here (Staunton) (personnel)
- The two schools become their own Local Educational Agency (LEA) so they can take full responsibility for the students (special education administrator)
- Use the schools as training centers for teachers who need to develop skills working with students with these disabilities or other students (consumer organization representative)
- Increase the number of other entities to fill the vacant space (special education director)
- Provide technical assistance through the T-TACs (special education directors). Existing schools need to be technical education centers to give consistency to programs statewide (personnel)

IMPORTANCE OF A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STUDENT

There was a consensus that there is a need for a residential program to serve deaf and hard-of-hearing students and blind and visually impaired students as well as multi-disabled students. One special education administrator stated there needs to be a continuum of services and choices available to local schools as well as parents. The primary reasons given for the continuation of a residential program included:

Students need to be in a community of like persons where they have peers and can interact with them outside the academic program (personnel)

- Students need opportunities beyond academics to perform in leadership roles, for socialization, to learn life skills, and to participate in sports. These opportunities would not be available to the student in local schools (alumnus, personnel)
- Life skill training happens in the dorms (alumnus)
- Students get skills that transfer directly over to academics – residential skills such as life skills, independence, and problem solving go hand-in-hand with academic training (special education director)
- The program offers technical support for the students: TTY, phone signals, closed caption and door signals, that would not be available elsewhere (alumnus)
- The residential program provides discipline that is often not available in the home. Parents are often overprotective (alumnus)
- The residential program should be a 12-month program (consumer organization representative)

NEEDED CHANGES/ACCOMMODATIONS BY SCHOOL DIVISIONS SHOULD STUDENTS RETURN

Participants in all the groups expressed concerns regarding school divisions' capacity to serve the students in a manner that would enhance the ability of the students to thrive and reach their potential, whether academically or socially. There were three primary concerns:

- The lack of skilled staff, particularly interpreters for the deaf students
- The lack of role models, i.e., deaf or blind staff and older deaf or blind students
- Lack of a critical mass of "like" students, with the student being isolated among a hearing/seeing population

Participants suggested the following needed to be in place to support the development and growth of students should they return to local schools:

- Inclusion of deaf and blind individuals in decision-making and teaching roles (consumer organization representative)
- Assistive technology for the blind or deaf student (parent)
- Qualified medical staff on site for multi-disabled students (parent)
- Smaller classrooms, more self-contained classrooms, more one-to-one learning opportunities (parent)
- Increased security for those that can't protect themselves (the multi-disabled child, in particular) (parent)
- ASL taught as a foreign language and available to all students (personnel)
- Permit or require vision impaired students to take additional time to finish school (2 years) so can learn Braille (personnel)
- All staff and students learn ASL so they can sign (parent). Interpreters create a lag in learning, discussion, and involvement in the classroom (alumnus)
- Critical mass of students with like disabilities (special education director)
- Continuation of childcare. The residential program provides childcare. Will the schools provide the same (parent)?
- Summer programs (parent)

STATE-LEVEL INITIATIVES NEEDED TO ASSIST SCHOOL DIVISIONS TO SERVE STUDENTS WITH SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS

Participants in the special education administrators and consumer organization representatives groups were asked if there were state-level initiatives that would be helpful in assisting the school divisions to address the needs of sensory impaired students. Their responses:

- Programs are needed to develop skilled interpreters at a higher level than are presently being provided by the community college system in training Level 1 interpreters (special education administrator); interpreters need to be required to reach higher interpreter levels if they are at Level 1 (consumer organization representative)

- Colleges need to establish a program with DOE providing dollars to endorse students in the fields of hearing and vision impairments (special education administrator)
- The state needs to give leadership to the recruitment and training of appropriate staff (all staff needed to address the needs of these students) (special education administrators)
- Abolish the waiver system (consumer organization representative)
- Train deaf education teachers and interpreters (consumer organization representative); consider joining with another state for an initiative to train teachers such as was done for veterinary medicine students (joint effort between Virginia Tech and University of Maryland) (consumer organization representative)
- Make more assistive equipment and materials available to support the education of deaf and blind students (consumer organization representative)

NEEDED COMMUNITY SUPPORTS IF STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL DIVISIONS

Parents and alumni identified the following community supports that they would like to see should children return to the community:

- Respite programs for the multi-disabled student and their families (parent)
- More summer camps, recreational program, enrichment opportunities, such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters (parent)
- Summer programs that include deaf instructors and other deaf students (parent)
- Public transportation (parent)
- Large deaf community (parent)
- Family physicians that accept Medicaid (parent)
- Transitional services for job, life skills, and social skills so child can become independent (parent)
- Strengthen communications between school and families (alumnus)
- Family support services and education so family members can learn sign language and obtain necessary information to support the child (parent, alumnus)
- Financial assistance for childcare (parent)

STAFF SUPPORT SHOULD ONE OR BOTH SCHOOLS CLOSE

Participants in the personnel groups identified the following supports that would be helpful to them in the event of a school closing:

- Provide incentives for staff/students to stay until facility is closed. There was a concern that staff would leave during the transition period further hampering the development of the students on site.
- Early retirement for those eligible
- Job sharing
- Retraining for staff with state paying the fees
- Job placement/employment with other agencies for all staff

- Provide the state severance package
- Provision of pay until another job is located

PROGRAMS/SERVICES THAT SHOULD BE ADDED
AT ONE OR BOTH SCHOOLS SHOULD THEY REMAIN OPEN

Participants in the parent, personnel, and alumni groups supported restoring programs and services that had been eliminated due to budget reductions in recent years. One parent questioned why reductions in funding had occurred at the schools when funding to K through 12 programs had not been reduced. He, and other participants in the group, saw this as being discriminatory toward the populations being served by the two schools. It was suggested that the following programs and services needed to be restored/added:

- Vocational programs with an expansion of what presently exists and a movement to those programs where jobs are readily available (personnel, alumnus, consumer organization representative, parent). Collaboration with vocational training centers in the area of the schools was seen as a positive (alumnus). It was thought that additional collaborations are needed.
- Enhanced teleconference facilities so programs can be provided in situations where the onsite staff does not have the expertise to provide (personnel)
- Enhanced technology program with computers used daily along with enhanced adaptive equipment (but not letting Braille skills falter either) (alumnus)
- Schools become accredited (alumnus)
- School(s) offer an advanced and standard diploma for students (special education director)
- Provision of extended school year services so services called for in the IEP can be addressed by the school(s) rather returning the students to the local school division for the service during the summer (special education director)
- Summer programs (special education administrator), SOL summer school (parent)
- Sports and athletics – enhancement of facilities to support a recreational program at both schools with a special request for an aquatic center at Hampton (personnel)
- After-school activities, such as art, drama, music classes (parent, personnel)
- Parent/family weekends so parents can learn ASL and interact with children (alumnus, personnel)
- Parent Advisory Committee with a Parent Coordinator on staff (parent)
- Satellite parent groups (personnel)
- Cochlear implant program with training for staff (parent, personnel)
- Electives added to curriculum (parent)
- Alumni interaction with students (parent)
- Libraries upgraded (parent, personnel)
- Intern program with colleges and universities (parent, personnel)
- Enhance specialized services and relationships with local vocational rehabilitative centers (parent)
- More services for the learning disabled (consumer organization representative)

- A more collaborative relationship between the school and the local school division (consumer organization representative)
- Deaf awareness training, more adult education (consumer organization representative)
- Programs for students who need a short-term intervention to address a specific need after which they can return to the local school, i.e., to learn ASL or read Braille (special education administrator, consumer organization representative, alumnus)
- Funding should be restored so day students can participate in after-school programs and activities
- Students living within a 35 –mile radius (Staunton) can be residential students thus benefiting from the residential program (parent, special education administrator)
- Programs that involve students working within the local public schools to the schools to help transition them back to the public schools before sending them back (alumnus)
- All campuses and facilities should be ADA compliant (parent)

TRAVEL TIME FOR STUDENTS

Participants in all the groups were asked how much travel was appropriate for a student with a sensory impairment as well as for a child with multiple disabilities. Participants in the consumer organizations' representative group felt the time was dependent on the severity and nature of the disability and the age of the child. There was a general sense among some participants that more than 2 hours was too much for a child with a sensory impairment. Other participants felt that if the child could watch TV, play and interact with others, they could travel for a greater length of time. One participant stated that some children in public schools ride a bus as much as 2 ½ hours a day. It was felt by one parent that for some children with multi-disabilities, that fifteen minutes was the limit. Several parents indicated they didn't care how long the travel time was as long as their children received the services they needed. Other comments relative to travel included:

- Quality education is more important than time on the bus (parent, alumnus)
- The issue is the quality of the bus and the opportunity to interact with other children while on the bus (parent)
- Airfare should be provided to those who must travel long distances (personnel)
- More buses are needed to cut travel time (personnel). Increase the number of buses and make the routes more direct (special education director)
- Instead of sending children home each weekend, send elementary school children home each weekend with the secondary students going less often – teen-agers are more likely to want to stay to interact with friends (personnel, parent)
- For the multi-challenged, invite the family to visit for the weekend instead of sending the child home. The family could stay in unused dorm space (personnel)
- Send the student home less often but allow them to stay for a longer period of time (alumnus)
- Family time is important for students in order to know their parents, siblings. It is important they go home on a regular basis (alumnus)
- Local school division should be responsible for the transporting of a student between school and home and there should be flexibility in how often the child goes home (consumer organization representative)

TRANSITION STEPS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL SHOULD THERE BE A DECISION THAT STUDENTS ARE TO BE SERVED AT ONE SITE

There was general agreement that there would be a need for a transition plan to be developed should a decision to be made to serve students at one site, whether all students are moved to one of the existing schools or to a new location. Suggestions for what should be considered in a transition plan included the following:

- Plan carefully, allowing at least two years with those students with academic needs arriving first with the more challenged students coming later – a tiered approach that is phased in (personnel). Allow a minimum of two years for transition (parent)
- Provide an environment that supports services and enhances programs that are equal or better than the environments in the existing schools (personnel)
- Staff should be hired and trained before the first students arrive (personnel)
- The child and family need to be given an opportunity to visit the new site (parent). Possibly provide for student/family overnight visits (personnel)
- Training should be provided for all staff and students on the needs of a child with specialized needs (parent)
- Transportation issues need to be resolved before movement occurs (personnel)
- Provide orientation to community services including medical facilities (where school exists) before movement occurs (personnel)
- Develop a strategy to retain staff at both sites until the transition is complete (alumnus) – There is the concern that staff may leave once they know their facility is closing before the transition is complete
- Have a Parent Advisory Committee in place to provide input into the transition (parent)
- The impact on school divisions should be taken into consideration. Funds will need to be redistributed to local divisions should students return to the divisions rather than go to the new site so there will not be a drop in the quality of services to the child and family. Local divisions will also need to be alerted to the additional students that may be returning to their systems (special education administrator)
- Provide orientation for the community in which the school exists (personnel)

SUGGESTED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY THE TASK FORCE IN MAKING A DECISION

Overwhelming, participants thought the Task Force should use the criterion of the “best interest of the child” as their primary criterion in making a decision. They often followed this comment with the statement that the best interest of the child will include a residential program. The issue of cost was also raised as a criterion but put in the context of getting the best education for the student in terms of student outcomes. There were some that felt that cost should not be a consideration. Other criterion that were suggested:

- Consider the “No Child left Behind” initiative and where children can best be served to meet all the needs of the children (personnel)
- Education of the student has to be the consideration (alumnus)

- Ensure that a child does not get less service than the child without disabilities (parent)
- Reflect good stewardship of taxpayer funds and assure each student's access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (personnel)
- Provide the best way to meet academic and social needs of children (parent)
- Validate the authentic culture and the language of deaf child and support continuation of that culture (personnel)
- Consider the needs of the family as well as the child (alumnus)
- Consider where the majority of the population lives in addition to the issue of a central location (personnel), think about all of Virginia's children, not just those in the larger areas (personnel)
- Listen to the input from staff along with child and parent (parent)
- That which will provide the least negative impact on the child, family and staff (parent)
- No services eliminated (special education administrator)
- Funding and outcomes (special education administrator)
- Cost effectiveness (parent)

OTHER COMMENTS

As often happens with focus groups, participants provided information not specially asked for through the focus group questions. A summary of the additional information follows.

- The concern exists that the Task Force does not have individuals on it that are deaf or a part of the deaf culture and therefore, couldn't possibly understand the needs of a deaf student and their families
- The Task Force should look to other states for models. The states of Florida, Alabama, and New Mexico were mentioned as models to be reviewed (special education administrator, personnel)
- Admission requirements are unclear. Parents spoke to the difficulty of getting their child enrolled at one of the schools or even learning about the schools. Special education administrators spoke to the lack of clarity in the schools' admissions policy and why children are accepted at one site and not the other. A comment was made in the consumer organization group that VSDB-Staunton only accepts those students who have the potential to pass the state assessments, eliminating the option for the deaf student who cannot pass them
- There needs to be a marketing effort to increase the enrollment at both schools.
- There was a concern among alumni that many parents of deaf students cannot sign and therefore, communication is a challenge at home. This was given as another reason that a residential program option is needed
- There were a variety of ideas about additional funding for the schools. These included removing funding for interpreters in public schools and putting the funds into the two schools (alumnus), obtaining additional military impact funding (consumer organization representative), and obtaining Title I funding (parent)
- A better relationship needs to exist between the two schools. There have been hurtful comments and actions. The healing needs to start to build a healthy relationship. One school is perceived to be better than the other (personnel)

- The least restrictive environment for hearing impaired is sometimes the residential school. If Virginia closes both, then the state must send the students out of state for their education (parent)
- Virginia is not a parental choice state thus school divisions have to make the referral and many refuse to do so. Sometimes parents feel threatened by the process (parent)
- Schools need to be more aggressive in hiring deaf or blind administrative staff as role models (parent)
- The blind community thinks it is not appropriate to run two schools. Locate the blind students at one school for critical mass (consumer organization representative)
- Whatever the decision, it needs to be funded adequately
- The question was raised: Why is it a legal/moral issue to have a residential program for deaf/blind students when there isn't one for students with other disabilities such as autism? (consumer organization representative)
- All the groups represented in the consumer organization focus group want to be "players" in the implementation of whatever decision is made
- Currently, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitative Center (WWRC) is providing service via contract to VSDB-Staunton for occupational, physical therapy and medical services. Should consolidation occur at Staunton, staffing required to provide these services needs to be adequate whether they are provided through a contract with WWRC or provided by employees at VSDB (the addition of staff) (consumer organization representative)
- The VSDB is a "drain" on local school programs in providing services to the schools. VSDB-Staunton is receiving special education assistance from the local school division (consumer organization representative). The Task Force should take a long view, be progressive rather than myopic in their thinking and decision-making. This is only the start of the process (personnel)

Prepared by Judy Burtner, Facilitator
 Submitted to the VSDB Consolidation Task Force
 August 27, 2003

APPENDIX D

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEFINITIONS

The Task Force reviewed the definitions of least restrictive environment, individualized education program, special education, and specially designed instruction to ensure that these terms were understood when referenced during meetings. The definitions are provided below:

Least Restrictive Environment:

“ . . . means that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

Individualized Education Program:

“ . . . means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a team meeting in accordance with this chapter. The IEP specifies the individual educational needs of the child and what special education and related services are necessary to meet the needs.”

Special Education:

“ . . . means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent or parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in a classroom, in the home, in hospitals, in institutions, and in other settings and instruction in physical education. The term includes each of the following if it meets the requirements of the definition of special education: speech-language pathology services; vocational education; and travel training.”

Specially Designed Instruction:

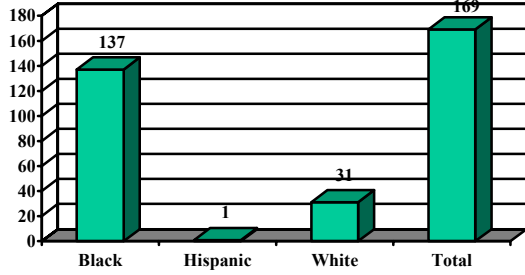
“ . . . means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this chapter, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction: to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children within the jurisdiction of the local educational agency.”

Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, March 27, 2002, Part I, 8 VAC 20-80-10, Definitions, p.7.

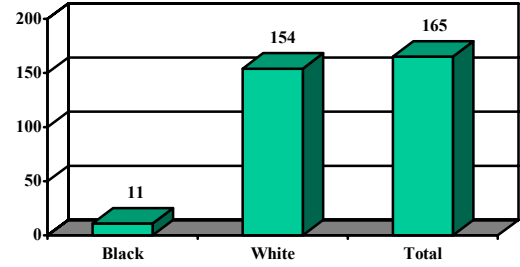
APPENDIX E

ETHNIC STATUS OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

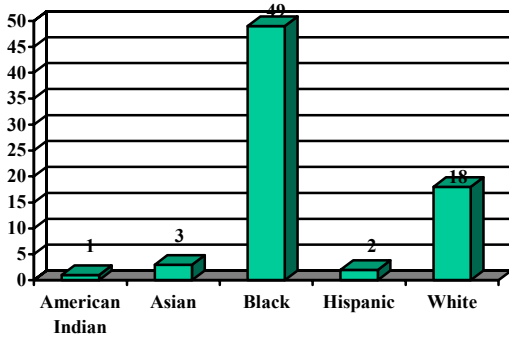
VSDBM-Hampton
Employee Ethnic Status



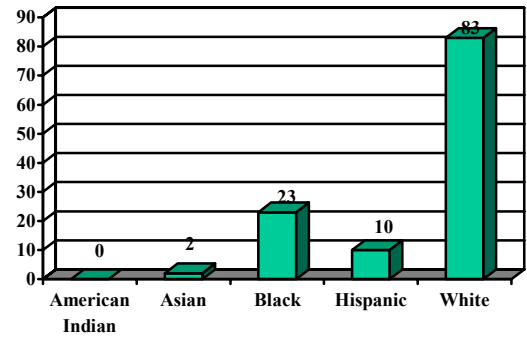
VSDB-Staunton
Employee Ethnic Status



VSDBM-Hampton
Student Ethnic Status



VSDB-Staunton
Student Ethnic Status.



APPENDIX F

ADVISORY COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP VIRGINIA SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND 2002/03

SENATORS

Emmett Hanger, Jr. 24th District

W. Henry Maxwell 2nd District

Martin Williams 1st District

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

George Broman, Jr. 30th District

Mary Christian 92nd District

Allan Louderback 15th District

Lionell Spruill, Sr. 77th District

Glenn Weatherholtz 26th District

SUPERINTENDENTS

Nancy Armstrong
The Virginia School for the Deaf & Blind - Staunton

Darlene White
The Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind
And Multi-Disabled - Hampton

CITIZEN MEMBERS

Gordon Landes (former student)

John Pleasants

Margaret Williams

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Audrey Davidson

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Karen Trump, Director of State Schools & State Operated Programs

APPENDIX G

TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

Transportation Routes for VSDB-Staunton

Bus #1 Charter Bus
Bus leaves Staunton at 9:00am on Sunday

Student Pick Up Time On Sunday	Bus Stop Location
12:45	Windsor
1:15	Chesapeake
2:00	Virginia Beach
2:30	Norfolk
2:55	Hampton
3:15	Newport News
3:45	Williamsburg
4:15	Mechanicsville
4:45	Richmond
5:15	Short Pump
5:40	Hadensville
6:00	Ferncliff

Students arrive in Staunton at 7:05pm

Bus #1 Charter Bus
Bus leaves Staunton at 1:00pm on Friday

Student Drop Off Time of Friday	Bus Stop Location
2:05	Ferncliff
2:15	Hadensville
3:00	Short Pump
3:15	Richmond
3:45	Mechanicsville
4:15	Williamsburg
4:45	Newport News
5:05	Hampton
5:30	Norfolk
6:15	Virginia Beach
6:45	Chesapeake
7:15	Windsor

Transportation Routes for VSDB-Staunton, cont.

Bus #2 VSDB-Staunton Bus
 Bus leaves Staunton at 10:00am

Student Pick Up Time On Sunday	Bus Stop Location
2:25	Marion
3:00	Wytheville
3:20	Pulaski
3:30	Dublin
4:10	Christiansburg
4:55	Roanoke
7:00	Staunton

Students arrive in Staunton at 7:00pm

Bus #2 VSDB-Staunton Bus
 Leaves School at 1:00pm Friday

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
2:30	Roanoke
3:15	Christiansburg
4:10	Dublin
4:20	Pulaski
4:40	Wythville
5:25	Marion

Bus #3 Charter Bus
 Bus leaves Staunton at 10:30am

Student Pick Up Time On Sunday	Bus Stop Location
12:00	Orange
12:50	Fredericksburg
1:15	Triangle
2:15	Merrifield
3:00	Chantilly
3:30	Sterling
4:00	Percellville
4:40	Winchester
5:10	Strasburg
5:40	Woodstock
6:10	Harrisonburg

Students arrive in Staunton at 6:40pm

Transportation Routes for VSDB-Staunton, cont.

Bus #3 Charter Bus
 Bus leaves Staunton at 1:00pm on Friday

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
1:30	Harrisonburg
2:00	Woodstock
2:30	Strasburg
2:55	Winchester
3:45	Percellville
4:30	Sterling
4:50	Chantilly
5:30	Merrifield
6:30	Triangle
6:50	Fredericksburg
8:15	Orange

Bus #4 Charter Bus
 Bus leaves Staunton at 10:00am

Student Pick Up Time On Sunday	Bus Stop Location
12:00	Dillwyn
1:05	Chase City
1:40	South Boston
2:30	Danville
2:55	Martinsville
3:40	Gretna
5:00	Lynchburg
5:15	Amherst
6:00	Charlottesville
6:15	Crozet
7:15	Staunton

Bus #4 Charter Bus
 Bus leaves Staunton at 1:00pm on Friday

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
1:30	Crozet
1:45	Charlottesville
2:30	Amherst
2:45	Lynchburg
4:00	Gretna
4:45	Martinsville
5:15	Danville
6:10	South Boston
6:45	Chase City
7:45	Dillwyn

Transportation Routes for VSDBM-Hampton

Danville Charter Bus Leaves VSDBM-H at 11:00am

Student Pick Up Time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
3:00	Danville
4:30	South Hill
6:00	Franklin
7:30	Arrive back at VSDBM-H

Leaves VSDBM-H At 11:45am

Student Drop Off time of Friday	Bus Stop Location
12:45pm	Franklin
2:15pm	South Hill
4:00pm	Danville

Roanoke VSDBM-H Car Leaves VSDBM-H at 9:30am

Student Pick Up time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
2:00pm	Roanoke
7:00pm	Arrive back at VSDBM-H

Leaves VSDBM-H at 11:45am

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
3:30 pm	Roanoke

Portsmouth/Chesapeake – VSDBM-H Bus Leaves VSDBM-H at 4:00pm

Student Pick Up Time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
5:30pm	Chesapeake
6:00pm	Portsmouth
7:10pm	Arrive back as VSDBM-H

Leaves VSDBM-H at 1:00pm

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
1:45pm	Portsmouth
2:00pm	Chesapeake
2:20pm	Chesapeake (Day Care)

Transportation Routes for VSDBM-Hampton, cont.

Sunday VSDBM-H at 12:30pm

Student Pick Up time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
2:05pm	Surry
2:40pm	Petersburg
3:40pm	Richmond
5:30pm	Midlothian
6:30pm	Cumberland
7:15pm	Arrive back at VSDBM-H

Friday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 1:00pm

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
2:00pm	Richmond
3:05pm	Midlothian
3:35pm	Cumberland
4:05pm	Petersburg
5:00pm	Surry

Northern Virginia #2 Auto rent, rental bus

Sunday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 11:00am

Student Pick Up Time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
1:45pm	Woodbridge
2:15pm	Annandale
2:40pm	Falls Church
3:40pm	King Street
4:00pm	Dominion Street
8:15pm	Arrive back at VSDBM-H

Northern Virginia #2 Auto rent, rental bus, cont.

Friday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 11:45am

Student Drop Off Time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
2:45pm	Woodbridge
3:15pm	Annandale
3:40pm	Falls Church
4:40pm	King Street
5:00pm	Dominion Street

Transportation Routes for VSDBM-Hampton, cont.

Eastern Shore -VSDBM-H Car
 Sunday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 1:00pm

Student Pick Up Time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
3:45pm	Eastern Shore
7:00pm	Arrive back at VSDBM-H

Eastern Shore - VSDBM-H Car
 Friday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 11:45am

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
2:30	Eastern Shore

Northern Virginia #1 Charter Bus
 Sunday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 12:00pm

Student Pick Up Time on Sunday	Bus Stop Location
3:00pm	Marshall
3:30pm	Warrenton
4:15pm	Fredericksburg
4:45pm	Bowling Green
5:30pm	Tappahannock
7:30pm	Arrive back at VSDBM-H

Friday - Leaves VSDBM-H at 11:45am

Student Drop Off Time on Friday	Bus Stop Location
2:00pm	Tappahannock
2:30pm	Bowling Green
3:00pm	Fredericksburg
3:45pm	Warrenton
4:30pm	Marshall

APPENDIX H
ENROLLMENT FOR THE TWO SCHOOLS

SCHOOL YEAR	VSDBM-Hampton				VSDB-Staunton			TOTAL FOR BOTH SCHOOLS
	BLIND	DEAF	MULTI-DISABLED	TOTAL	BLIND	DEAF	TOTAL	
1980-81	62	107	31	200	38	260	298	498
1981-82	61	107	32	200	39	255	294	494
1982-83	59	116	34	209	37	233	270	479
1983-84	49	119	34	202	38	204	242	444
1984-85	48	122	34	204	31	180	211	415
1985-86	48	115	35	198	32	136	168	366
1986-87	45	112	43	200	30	127	157	357
1987-88	35	88	45	168	31	127	158	326
1988-89	38	99	46	183	34	106	140	323
1989-90	43	108	46	197	51	110	161	358
1990-91	27	91	72	190	59	126	185	375
1991-92	22	65	86	173	52	136	188	361
1992-93	18	51	74	143	40	136	176	319
1993-94	15	51	67	133	35	137	172	305
1994-95	12	50	51	113	38	132	170	283
1995-96	10	67	47	124	40	136	176	300
1996-97	9	42	41	92	32	136	168	260
1997-98	8	37	36	81	27	138	165	246
1998-99	8	29	40	77	29	147	176	253
1999-00	11	31	34	76	32	129	161	237
2000-01	12	30	34	76	30	115	145	221
2001-02	5	14	62	81	29	123	152	233
2002-03	5	14	61	80	29	126	155	235

APPENDIX I
PLACING SCHOOL DIVISIONS
PLACING SCHOOL DIVISIONS

BOTH SCHOOLS

Albemarle County Public Schools
Chesapeake Public Schools
Chesterfield County Public Schools
Danville City Public Schools
Fairfax County Public Schools
Franklin County Public Schools
Hampton City Public Schools
Henrico County Public Schools
Isle of Wight County Public Schools
Newport News Public Schools
Norfolk City Public Schools
Petersburg City Public Schools
Portsmouth City Public Schools
Prince William County Public Schools
Richmond City Public Schools
Roanoke City Public Schools
Suffolk City Public Schools
Virginia Beach Public Schools

HAMPTON

Accomack County Public Schools
Alexandria City Public Schools
Arlington County Public Schools
Caroline County Public Schools
Cumberland County Public Schools
Fauquier County Public Schools
Gloucester County Public Schools
Hanover County Public Schools
Hopewell City Public Schools
Lunenburg County Public Schools
Mecklenburg County Public Schools
Richmond County Public Schools
Southampton County Public Schools
Spotsylvania County Public Schools
Surry County Public Schools
Winchester City Public Schools
York County Public Schools

STAUNTON

Appomattox County Public Schools
Augusta County Public Schools
Bedford County Public Schools
Buchanan County Public Schools
Buckingham County Public Schools
Campbell County Public Schools
Charlottesville City Public Schools
Essex County Public Schools
Frederick County Public Schools
Fredericksburg City Public Schools
Halifax Public School
Harrisonburg City Public Schools
Henry County Public Schools
Loudoun County Public Schools
Louisa County Public Schools
Martinsville Public Schools
Montgomery County Public Schools
Orange County Public Schools
Page County Public Schools
Patrick County Public Schools
Powhatan County Public Schools
Prince George County Public Schools
Pulaski County Public Schools
Rappahannock County Public School
Rockbridge County Public Schools
Rockingham County Public Schools
Shenandoah County Schools
Smyth County Public Schools
Stafford County Public Schools
Staunton City Public Schools
Warren County Public Schools
Waynesboro City Public Schools
Westmoreland County Public Schools
Williamsburg-James City Schools
Wythe County Public Schools

APPENDIX J

SUMMARY OF BUILDING CONDITIONS

VSDB-Staunton Building Conditions

Abernathy Natatorium Use: Swimming Pool	Exterior wall construction needs minor repair; Interior plumbing, floors, walls, ceiling, doors, base trim need minor repair. HVAC system needs major repair. No sprinkler system.
Athletic Storage Building Use: Storage of Equipment	Exterior windows need minor repair; Interior ceiling need minor repair.
Bass Hall Use: Dormitory and Dining Hall	Exterior windows, roof drainage, accessory structures need minor repair; Interior plumbing, HVAC, floors, walls, ceiling, doors, base and trim need minor repair. Air-conditioned on ground floor only.
Battle Hall Use: Dormitory, Office and Classrooms	Roofing needs minor repairs; Interior HVAC, walls and doors need minor repair. Lighting, floors, and ceiling need replacing. No sprinkler system.
Bradford Hall Use: Infirmary	Exterior wall construction and windows need minor repair; Interior plumbing, floors, walls, doors, base and trim need minor repair. No central air conditioning (1/3 of building has window units).
Bus Garage Use: Maintenance Shop and Equipment Storage	Exterior wall construction needs minor repair. No plumbing, HVAC, sprinkler system.
Carter Hall Use: Dormitory	Needs new roof; Interior floors and doors need minor repair. Window air-conditioning units in lounges.
Chapel Use: Meeting Space, Central Store, Offices and Student Library	Exterior walls, windows, roofing, accessory structures need minor repair; interior plumbing, HVAC, electrical power, lighting, floors, walls, ceiling, doors, base and trim need minor repair.
Cold Storage Use: Cold Food Storage	Exterior wall construction and windows need minor repairs. interior floors, walls, ceiling, doors, need minor repairs.
Darden Hall: Closed/Vacant	Major renovation needed.
Food Storage Use: Dry Food Storage	Exterior wall construction and windows need minor repair; Interior floors, walls and ceiling need minor repair. No sprinkler system.

VSDB-Staunton Building Conditions, cont.

Harrison Hall Use: Student Center, Computer Lab, Arts & Crafts, Distance Learning	Roof and exterior wall construction needs minor repair. Interior plumbing, floors, walls, doors, base and trim need minor repair. No sprinkler system. Window AC units in 2/3 of building.
Lewellyn Gym	Exterior, roofing, windows and accessory structures need minor repair. Interior plumbing, HVAC, floors, walls, ceiling, doors, base and trim need minor repair. No sprinkler system.
Main Hall Use: Administrative Offices	Needs new roof. Exterior wall construction, windows, roof drainage need minor repairs. Accessory structures need major repair. Interior plumbing, HVAC, electrical power, floors, walls, ceilings, doors, base and trim need minor repair. Half of carpeted areas need replacement.
Paint Shop Use: Electrical & Paint Maintenance Shop	Exterior wall construction needs minor repair. Windows need replacing. No plumbing or sprinkler system.
Perry Hall Use: Classroom, Office Space, Back-up Dormitory	Exterior wall construction and windows need minor repairs. Interior plumbing, floors, walls, ceilings, doors, base & trim need minor repair. No sprinkler system (only in attic). Window AC units in 20% of rooms.
Price Hall Use: Dormitory	Roof needs replacing. Interior floors and doors need minor repairs.
Strader Hall Use: Education	Exterior wall construction, windows and accessory structures need minor repair. Interior plumbing, HVAC, floors, walls, ceiling, doors, base & trim need minor repair. Limited sprinkler coverage.
Stuart Hall Use: Grounds & Maintenance Shop Plumbing Shop and storage	Exterior wall construction, accessory structures need minor repair. Windows and roof drainage need major repair. Roof needs replacing. No plumbing. HVAC, lighting needs replacing. Interior floors and doors need minor repair.
Superintendent Residence	Roof needs replacing. Exterior wall construction, windows and accessory structures need minor repair. Interior plumbing, floors, walls, ceiling, doors, base and trim need minor repair. No sprinkler system.
Swanson Hall Use: Classrooms & Gym	Exterior wall construction and roofing need minor repair. Interior plumbing, HVAC, floors, walls, doors and base & trim need minor repair. No sprinkler system (attic only).
Watts Hall Use: Office Space, Guest Rooms, Meeting Rooms.	Roof needs replacing. Interior floors, walls, doors need minor repair. No sprinkler system.

VSDBMH Building Conditions

Bradford Hall Use: Hampton Harbor Academy	Exterior wall construction needs minor repair, windows need major repair. Interior walls, base and trim need minor repairs. HVAC system needs major repair.
Butler Hall Use: Education	Interior floors need minor repair.
Central Storage Use: Warehouse/Security Office	No sprinkler system.
Garage Use: workshop	Needs minor repair – windows. No sprinkler system.
Genevieve Whitehead Hall Use: Operations/Maintenance	Interior ceiling needs repair. No sprinkler system.
Houston Gymnasium	Air handler unit needs to be replaced.
Jones Hall Use: Administration/Health Services	No work needed.
Palmer Hall Use: Education	HVAC needs minor repair: air handlers need replacement.
Price Hall Use: Dormitory	Exterior wall construction needs minor repair.
Ritter Hall Use: Dormitory	No work needed.
Storage Shed Use: Equipment Storage	Exterior walls, windows, roof need major repair. Interior walls, ceiling and doors need major repair.
Stryker Hall Use: Food Service/Cafeteria	Windows, roof need minor repairs to stop leakage. No sprinkler system.
Superintendent's Residence	Roof needs repair, leaking in garage. No sprinkler system.
William Whitehead Hall Use: Education-Hampton City	Interior carpet needs some replacement. No sprinkler system.

Reports prepared in June, 2003

APPENDIX K

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you apply to the VSDB for these students?
2. Have you had a student return to the school division from the VSDB? If so, why?
3. How do you distribute the DOE information to parents? Do you have any suggestions for improving that process?
4. How are you currently serving other students in the division with sensory impairments?
5. What concerns do you have about serving the students currently at the VSDB(s) in your school division?
6. Do you have any other comments you'd like to give the Task Force?