

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

2025 Annual Report

AGENCY: Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (218)

YEAR: 2025

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Agency Goal 1 – Access and Success

Objective 1: Identify additional recruitment sources that are used by the Deaf and Visually Impaired communities. We are posting at Gallaudet University, Deaf Job Wizard, and Language 1st. While we have improvement recruiting staff that are reflective of our students. We are looking for other sources for visually impaired individuals.

Objective 2: Add video on VSDB website of the written instructions being signed through ASL to improve accessibility to the Deaf Community. While we have more videos on social media, our Agency website still needs to post additional instructions in American Sign Language to improve recruitment. As well we are posting descriptions of pictures and videos to attract blind and visually impaired individuals.

Agency Goal 2 – Welcoming and Respectful Culture

Objective 1: Implement a Communication Philosophy to ensure equity and accessibility of American Sign Language and English on the VSDB campus. In addition, pictures will contain descriptions for those who are visually impaired. This has been completed and we have hired an ASL Specialist that starts in the upcoming fiscal year to among other items teach ASL to staff, parents, and students. This will increase dialogue among staff and help with incidental learning.

Objective 2: Continue to add American Sign Language to VSDB training as it is created. This has been a challenge as software is limited that will allow the structure needed. We have identified a professional source but at the time do not have the funding to support this.

Agency Goal 3 – State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training

Objective 1- Communication Philosophy should be added to the strategic plan when it is updated.

Objective 2- Superintendent’s Cabinet will be put in place for opportunities to improve operational excellence and identify opportunities of improvement. Superintendent’s Cabinet has been put into place and working primarily on the growth of enrollment and providing top tier education to our students, whether they are deaf, blind, deafblind, visually impaired on hard of hearing.

Objective 3- Strategize a way to offer American Sign Language to employees to help with communication and accessibility. We have hired an ASL specialist to assist Staff, family, and students with ASL who will start in July 2026.

Agency Goal 1 – Access and Success

Objective 1: Expand recruitment through additional deaf, blind, deafblind and educator preparation programs to increase qualified applicant pools

Objective 2: Continue expanding ASL videos, caption and image descriptions, and other accessible recruitment materials on the VSDB website and social media platforms.

Agency Goal 2 – Welcoming and Respectful Culture

Objective 1: Implement an agency wide ASL professional learning program to support employees in meeting ASL proficiency requirements established for their positions and to strengthen communication, access, and educational outcomes for students.

Agency Goal 3 – State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training

Objective 1: Continue implementing the communication philosophy and integrate it into agency strategic planning, employee onboarding, professional learning, and continuous improvement efforts.

Objective 2: Superintendent's Executive Cabinet will continue to elevate agency operations, workforce development, enrollment growth and strategic priorities to identify opportunities for improvements and organizational effectiveness.

Objective 3: Continue supporting employees in meeting position expectations and developing specialized competencies that improves services for students, families, and employees.

