

## E.7 DeafBlind

### Definition

A student with deafblindness has a degree of visual and auditory impairment which, when compounded, results in significant difficulties in developing communicative, educational, vocational, avocational, and social skills.

To be considered deafblind the student's vision and auditory impairments can range from partial sight to total blindness and from moderate to profound hearing loss.

Students who are identified and assessed as deafblind are eligible for supplemental funding when the following conditions are met:

- The student meets the above eligibility criteria; and
- A current IEP is in place that includes:
  - individualized goals,
  - adaptations and/or modifications where appropriate,
  - the strategies to meet these goals, and
  - measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the goals.
- Ongoing inclusive education service(s) must be provided.
- The services being provided are beyond those offered to the general student population and are proportionate to level of need(s).
- The inclusive education services are outlined in the IEP and directly relate to the student's identified disabilities or diverse abilities.
- Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

### Identification and Assessment

Districts should have current information that describes the sensory acuities (vision and hearing), physical development, orientation and mobility (skills and knowledge), social development, academic abilities, educational achievement, and communicative competence of students who are deafblind.

This information is best obtained for students who are deafblind through a multidisciplinary assessment process.

### Planning and Implementation

The needs of students who are deafblind are varied. Therefore instruction should be adapted and the curriculum modified to reflect individual needs. Many students who are deafblind have potentially useful hearing and/or vision that enhance their potential for integration into the classroom. However, specific intervention and appropriate support should be available in order for each student to develop and learn. The student's educational requirements and any special measures that are to be taken in order to help meet those requirements must be documented in a formal Individual Education Plan.

When an IEP is developed, the following needs should be considered:

- communication skills;
- social skills;
- orientation and mobility skills;
- visual skills;
- auditory skills;
- daily living skills;
- academic skills;
- specialized skills in reading (e.g., braille, large print, closed captioned TV [CCTV]);
- specialized skills in mathematics (e.g., abacus, Nemeth Code);
- access to technology (e.g., tape recorders, microcomputers); and
- study skills and note-taking strategies.

## Evaluation and Reporting

The **K-12 Student Reporting policy** pertains to all learners in the B.C. education system. A student who has a disability or diverse ability should receive regular communications of student learning in the same way as their peers in any other program and at the same time as the school and/or districts' regular reporting periods.

Some students who are deafblind are able to meet the Learning Standards of the BC curriculum if appropriate adaptations are made to instruction and assessment methods. As outlined in the Inclusive Education section of the **K-12 Student Reporting Policy**, regular reporting procedures are used to communicate student learning for students who use adaptations to access and show their learning.

Some students require extensive modifications and are assessed and evaluated only on individualized learning goals as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade they are enrolled. In these instances:

- Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning do not need to include a scale indicator or letter grade and percentage
- Written feedback is required that clearly explains the student's progress made towards their individualized learning goals and areas for further growth
- If a scale indicator or a letter grade and percentage are used on Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning, it must be noted that the student is being evaluated in relation to their individualized learning goals as outlined in their IEP and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade for which they are enrolled.

For more information, see the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Information for Educators and School Leaders at <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/reporting/information-for-educators-and-school-leaders>, and the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Communicating Student Learning Guidelines at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/k-12-student-reporting-policy-communicating-student-learning-guidelines.pdf>

## Personnel

Specialist teachers with responsibilities for supporting students in this category should fulfill the qualifications described for a learning assistance teacher (see Section D.1 Learning Assistance Services).

School districts should use the services of qualified personnel to meet the needs of students who are deafblind, as the educational strategies that are effective for those with a single sensory impairment are frequently ineffective with students with the dual sensory impairment of deafblindness.

If specialist teachers of the deafblind are not available then it is recommended that consultation services for district personnel be sought from other sources such as the Provincial Outreach Program for Deafblind Students (see Resources below).

If the support of an intervenor or a education assistant is warranted, the classroom teacher should consult with specialist personnel to assist in developing, directing and monitoring the assistant's or intervenor's activities. Education assistants or intervenors should have sufficient training and understanding of deafblindness for the duties they are assigned.

## Resources

### **Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness**

The Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness is available to provide consultative services to school districts enrolling students with deafblindness.

Consultants work with the team of service providers to help them plan and implement a consistent program designed to meet the needs of students with deafblindness in the school, the family and the community. The consultants are educational specialists in the field of deafblindness. Their experience and training has qualified them to provide support to other professionals and parents working with students with deafblindness.

### **Provincial School for the Deaf**

The Provincial Resource Program: BC Provincial School for the Deaf is a Kindergarten to Grade 12 school in partnership with South Slope Elementary and Burnaby South Secondary schools. Working as a team, members of the BC Provincial School for the Deaf strive to develop the full learning potential and positive self identity of each student. Value is given to Deaf heritage and each student is encouraged to become a responsible, contributing member of the Deaf and hearing communities.

For more information, see the BC Provincial School for the Deaf at <https://burnabyschools.ca/programs/bc-provincial-school-for-the-deaf/>

### **Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired – PRCVI or SET-BC**

School districts may borrow learning resources, reference materials and equipment for use with students with deafblindness from the Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI) and in some instances from SET-BC.

### **Auditory Training Equipment (ATE)**

School boards determine whether students who have a hearing loss need auditory training equipment for classroom use. The Ministry of Education and Child Care makes auditory training equipment available to school districts for the use of deaf and hard of hearing students in public and independent schools and provides for routine maintenance. See Appendix H.2.1 Auditory Outreach Program.

