

# CONNECTION

Missouri School for the Blind  
3815 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis

## CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY AT MSB

This summer marked the completion of MSB's science lab renovation. The lab is now fully equipped with state-of-the-art computers, devices and software that aid students who are blind as well as those with low vision in conducting experiments and gathering information. MSB students can use handheld Vernier probes to collect scientific data. The Vernier devices are compatible with JAWS software, which makes data audible. The renovated science lab

also boasts a SMART Board interactive whiteboard and a ZOOM Text document camera that allows images and information to be projected at sizes students with low vision can see. SMART Boards have been placed in three additional classrooms with plans for more in the near future.

For braille readers, MSB's academic classrooms have been outfitted with Focus 40 Refreshable Braille Displays. These devices receive electronic information from e-books and computers and allow students to read a selection one line at a time. The devices also have a braille keyboard so blind students can type documents. A low-vision lab will soon offer a variety of low vision devices, including the Amigo, Transformer and Pebble. Students will work one-on-one with staff to systematically explore these tools and determine which devices and software best suit individual needs.

The technology we are most excited about is the addition of iPads to our curriculum. Each department can use iPads for a multitude of applications related to academics, health and mobility. For example, students in the high school health course will use the iPads applications that relate to nutrition and wellness. GPS applications aid in orientation and mobility. In addition, the iPads have VoiceOver, a built-in accessibility feature that reads the screen out loud. This function can be paired with a refreshable braille display to allow blind students to read about the topics covered in class. The goal is for the students to cover the curriculum while learning to use the iPad as an alternative to braille or large print books. We are excited for our students as we explore the extensive and growing number of iPad apps available for the visually impaired!

iPads have a multitude of uses for students with visual impairments.



State-of-the-art computer station

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# MSB STEMS Summer Programs Were Out of This World!

From outer space adventures to down-to-earth crime scene investigations, students did it all!

In July, Missouri School for the Blind hosted its first ever summer experience STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). This successful program has now been added to MSB's rich history! STEM investigations made use of MSB's newly remodeled science lab that includes an interactive whiteboard and handheld computer devices specifically designed for

students with visual impairments. These devices helped students gather data and draw conclusions about their investigations. In addition, students used the mass transit system, with the support of a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, to travel to destinations throughout the St. Louis region.

## STEM SESSION 1: MISSION TO MARS

Students in Session 1: Mission to Mars, began their mission with a trip to the Saint Louis Science Center's Planetarium. The planetarium allowed students to experience what it's like to live and work on the International Space Station. In the Crew Quarters, STEM participants learned how residents eat, exercise, sleep and dress in space, as well as how medical needs are addressed and the station's environment is maintained. Students also enjoyed a special tour of Boeing, where



Inspecting a plaster cast of a shoe print

they were allowed to touch and feel a variety of current and historical scale models of spacecraft Boeing has constructed. Back at MSB, they performed a variety of experiments which simulated meteor impact on a spacecraft and the difficulty of completing tasks in alternate gravitational settings.

## STEM SESSION 2: CSI SUMMER

Students in Session 2: CSI Summer, arrived at MSB to find a mock crime scene to analyze. They mapped the scene, collected and documented evidence, and kept the scene free from contamination. A crime scene technician from the St. Louis Po-



Dusting for fingerprints

lice Department visited and brought a variety of items for students to explore, including plaster casts, bullets and police tape. She also showed students how to lift fingerprints from objects and transfer them to a card for evidence. Each student left with a card containing the fingerprint he or she lifted from the "crime scene." The CSI scientists made several visits to the crime lab at Saint Louis Science Center. After putting on gloves, protective eyewear, and lab coats, students participated in hands-on activities just like the real CSIs – including chromatography, hair cell analysis and fingerprint processing, just to name a few!



Building rockets



Special tour at Boeing



Working in alternative gravitational settings



# MAKING THE GRADE

## Missouri School for the Blind Offers a Well-Rounded Education

Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) is a state-accredited K-12 school offering a well-rounded education for students who are blind and visually impaired. Referral and placement decisions are made by local school districts through the IEP process with final approval made by the MSB admissions team. Here are just a few reasons why IEP teams sometimes refer students for long-term or short-term programming at MSB:

1) More emphasis is needed on the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for the blind or visually impaired. IEP goals related to socialization, extra-curricular participation, mobility, self-help, activities of

daily living, or self-advocacy are often identified as not being met at the local level.

2) Additional assistance with particular academic subjects is needed. Short-term placement options (6 weeks to one semester) allow for targeted instruction to prepare students for adapting to a regular science or math curriculum in their home districts.

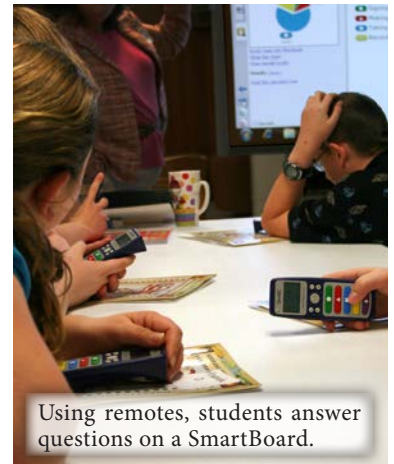
3) More intensive Braille instruction becomes necessary. Typically this occurs when the regular curriculum reaches more independent reading levels. At this time a student's braille instruction may need a boost to maintain the same reading pace as their peers.

4) Increased orientation

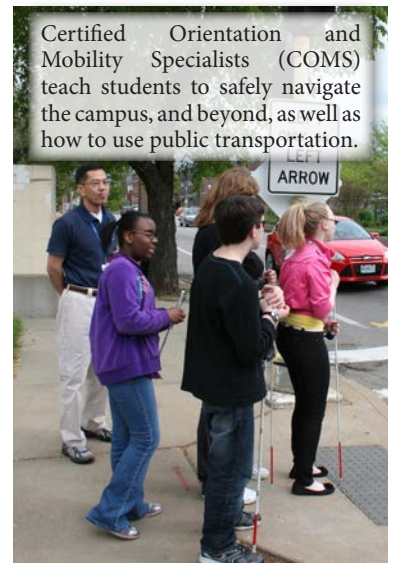
and mobility skills that go beyond the school and home environment are needed.

This may become a concern as the IEP team begins transition planning for a student. Being able to navigate in a work environment and use public transportation becomes a goal for transition.

MSB students have an opportunity to receive a quality education in the "least restrictive environment" at MSB. Even though MSB is a "separate school" placement, many students have told us they in fact feel MSB's environment is "less restrictive" because of their ability to participate with their peers in many extra-curricular and athletic activities.



Using remotes, students answer questions on a SmartBoard.



Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) teach students to safely navigate the campus, and beyond, as well as how to use public transportation.

## OCTOBER 2012 DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that October is Disabilities Awareness Month? During this time, we reflect on the struggles, triumphs and future of persons with disabilities. In 1964, October 15 was declared White Cane Safety Day to recognize the contributions made to society by those with blindness and low vision. In 2011, President Barack Obama renamed this day "Blind Americans Equality Day" in an effort to "recommit to forging ahead with the work of perfecting our Union and ensuring we remain a Nation where all our people, including those living with disabilities, have every opportunity to achieve their dreams."

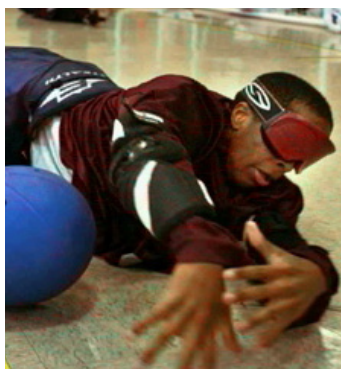
### ETIQUETTE 101

#### A few tips when interacting with those who have visual impairments.

- When meeting a person with a visual impairment, always identify yourself and others who may be with you.
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
- Guide people who request assistance by allowing them to take your arm just above the elbow when your arm is bent. Walk ahead of the person you are guiding. Never grab a person who is blind or visually impaired by the arm and push him/her forward.
  - Relax. It's okay if you happen to use accepted, common expressions, such as "See you later" or "Good to see you."
  - Never touch a service animal, or the person it assists, without permission.

*Adapted from "Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide for Missouri" and the University of Texas at Arlington Advisor Handbook.*





## SEPTEMBER

9/20	NCASB Eberhardt Track Meet @ MSB
9/21-9/28	Space Camp
9/28-9/30	NCASB Track Meet @ Ohio

## OCTOBER

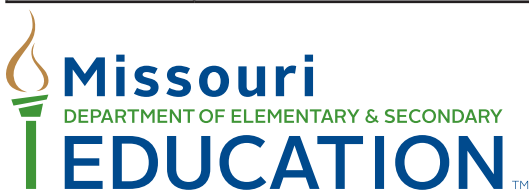
### Disabilities Awareness Month

10/10	NCASB Goalball Meet @ Illinois
10/12	Columbus Day (Observed) NO SCHOOL
10/15	Staff Development (8:00-4:00) NO SCHOOL

## OCTOBER

### Disabilities Awareness Month

10/19-10/20	NCASB Goalball Meet @ Tennessee
10/22-10/26	PLAN Test (10th Grade)
10/23-10/31	Red Ribbon Week
10/24	End of 1st Quarter
10/25	NCASB Goalball Meet @ Kentucky/ Beginning of 2nd Quarter 1st Quarter Progress Notes and Grade Cards Due
10/26	1st Quarter Achievement Assembly – 10:00 a.m.



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