

Volume 1, Issue 2

Winter 2012

CONNECTION

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

Knowledge to Empower Your Success - MSB Short Course

Designed for the blind/visually impaired student who is looking for intensive work in Braille, orientation and mobility, technology or activities of daily living, KEYS (Knowledge to Empower Your Success) is available on MSB's St. Louis campus for three to 18 weeks. Students ages five-21 who are attending local schools throughout Missouri may request specialized instruction at MSB while maintaining their core curriculum areas by continuing interaction with their home school.



Available KEYS courses includes Braille, Orientation and Mobility (O&M), Activities of Daily Living (ADL), Transition Training Skills, Visual Efficiency Skills or Computer and Assistive Technology. All coursework is individually designed to address the vision-specific needs of blind/VI students and is IEP-driven. KEYS courses are part of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) established by the American Foundation for the Blind.

In addition to classroom instruction students are invited to explore their personal interest in athletics, fine arts

such as music, visual or performing arts and practical arts, including industrial technology and family and consumer sciences.

For more information contact Asst. Supt. Joy Waddell, 314-776-4320, ext. 1140 or Joyce.Waddell@msb.dese.mo.gov.

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Home of the Mules!

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From the Superintendent



Supt. Yocum

Dear Stakeholders:

In this second edition of CONNECTION we are offering information on short-term programs offered by MSB. As a State Board Operated School, our goal is to aid in the education of blind and visually impaired students in their least restrictive environment, which in the spirit of IDEA, often means students stay in their local districts with support services. In addition to our regular K-12 school, we also offer several short-term programming options for students ages 5-21. In this edition, we are highlighting two of those:

- 1) KEYS (**K**nowledge to **E**mpower **Y**our **S**uccess), a program targeting the skills needed for success at the local level, and
- 2) MSB LIFE (**L**earning **I**ndependence **F**rom **E**xperience), a model transition program. It is designed to help Missouri's blind and visually impaired youth acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to transition smoothly and successfully to post-secondary life.

As always, we value our relationship with IEP teams and other stakeholders.

Sincerely,

“Tech It Up A Notch” Technology Day, March 29

MSB's first-ever “Tech It Up a Notch” event will provide blind and visually-impaired students in grades 6-12 “hands-on” access to vision-specific software and device. This free event will be held at Missouri School for the Blind Thursday, March 29, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Sessions offered will be determined by student interest and may include: **Refreshable Braille, Cooking with Adaptive Equipment, APH Software** (Talking Typer, Math Flash, etc.), the **Livescribe Pen, iPad, Braille and Tactile Production, Managing Important Information** (using talking watch, talking calendar and talking prescription bottle), **Text Enlargement** (CCTV, Pearl/Open Book, Sapphire, Ruby, ZOOMText and Transformer), **Braille Note Takers, “What Not to Wear: Clothing Identification and Labeling,” Trekker** and **Screen Readers and Enlargement** (ZOOMText, JAWS or NVDA).

The day's activities will include demonstrations, hands-on activities and competitions in the various categories and will conclude with use of the SMARTBoard and LE/PE SmartResponse system. Prizes will include iPads, Livescribe pens and adaptive equipment.

For more information, or to register, go to <http://www.msb.dese.mo.gov/documents/tech-day-info.pdf> or contact Asst. Supt. Joy Waddell at Joyce.Waddell@msb.dese.mo.gov or 314-776-4320, ext. 1140.

LIFE: Learning Independence From Experience

In 2010, in response to students' need for assistance with transition to outside life, Missouri School for the Blind introduced MSB **LIFE**, Learning Independence From Experience. Designed for 18-21 year old blind and visually impaired students, **LIFE** focuses on:

- *Instruction for transition*
- *Community experience*
- *Development of employment skills*
- *Post-school adult living objectives*
- *Daily living skills (Activities of Daily Living Skills), and*
- *Functional vocational assessment and training*



How LIFE Works

Upon enrollment students are formally assessed in each skill area and coaches work with the student, parents and the IEP team to determine appropriate annual goals. **LIFE** is offered in two-levels designed to provide qualified students with the opportunity to continue their educational experiences in an age-appropriate simulated community setting. Each day, students work in three areas of transition: Employment, Independent Living, and Education and Training, based on their IEP-driven transition goals.

MSB **LIFE I** is a day program, lasting from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Students report to the LIFE apartment each weekday morning and meet with their coaches to set daily goals and review their daily schedule. Students and coaches meet as a group to discuss pre-determined weekly topics related to successful inclusion in community work and living. Students participate daily in four structured, supported sessions: Applied Academic Skills, Applied Activities of Daily Living Skills, Employment Skills Development, and Leisure Recreation Skills.

MSB **LIFE II** builds on the skills and concepts learned previously and immerses students in the supported, simulated community 24 hours a day. **LIFE II** students live in the **LIFE** apartment and work and participate in leisure activities in the community. Students are responsible for their own meals and housekeeping, with limited supervision from MSB staff. In **LIFE II**, students spend more time in a work setting, with decreasing support from coaches but continue to work with them to set goals and assess their personal progress.

LIFE's Lessons

Applied Academics (Education/Training) – **LIFE** students practice functional academic skills in the context of the work place, home or community. They are challenged to connect what they learn in school with the world they experience.

Applied Activities of Daily Living Skills (Independent Living) – Increase independence in personal hygiene and care, clothing management, personal food preparation, and household management.

LIFE's Lessons *(continued)*

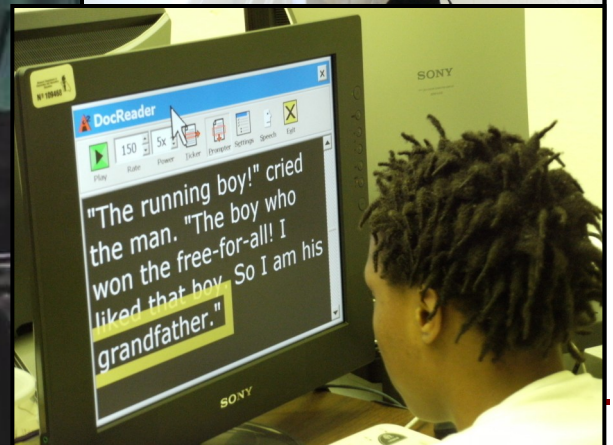
Embedded Related Services (all areas) - IEP-driven instruction based on each student's individual needs, including related and secondary services. Therapy activities are developed to teach skills which students need to perform their job duties, e.g., a student who has speech difficulties may be engaged in answering the phone, greeting customers, etc.

Employment Skills Development (Employment) – Workplace readiness skills and experience through working or volunteering at a community job site under the supervision of a coach. Curriculum concentrates on communication, time management, managing the workplace social environment, maintaining a production rate and using adaptive equipment and assistive technology.

Leisure Recreation Skills (Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind/Visually Impaired) – Students explore, plan and participate in recreational and leisure activities including board games, sports, journaling, arts and crafts, dance, music, gardening and book clubs.

Social Skills and Self-Advocacy Development (Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind/Visually Impaired) - Cooperating and sharing responsibilities with others, self-determination, self-advocacy and exploration of community resources.

Work Site/Community-Based Orientation and Mobility (Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind/Visually Impaired) - Orientation to the work site, concept and sensory development skills, cane skills and travel techniques including public transportation, mapping and route planning and visual efficiency skills related to travel, personal safety and advocacy skills.



The **LIFE** Team

Transition Coordinator – Coordinates with the Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Student Employment Coordinator, facilitates students programs, conducts assessments, monitors progress and modifies instruction as needed; liaison to student's home community.

Student Employment Coordinator – Evaluates and secures job-sites, assists students in interviewing and job attainment; determines best means for student to learn the job, while providing support.

Job Coaches - Work one-on-one with students in the community-based work setting, help provide initial training/modeling at each new community-based work setting and monitor student trainee's progress daily; gradually eliminate assistance as student becomes independent.

Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) – Facilitates students programs, conducts assessments, monitors student progress and modifies instructional programs as needed. The TVI collects and coordinates student's progress data and provides the Transition Coordinator with a detailed quarterly report of relevant home-related data.

Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Related Services Providers – Give direct instruction based on student's IEP goals.

For more information on MSB's LIFE program, contact Mrs. Joy Waddell, Assistant Superintendent, 314-776-4320, ext. 1140 or Joyce.Waddell@msb.dese.mo.gov.

Lions, Alumni and Friends Ensure Happy Holidays

Three Missouri Lions clubs - St. Charles First Capitol, New Melle and West St. Louis County - as well as MSB Alumni and United Workers for the Blind, teamed up to make sure the 2011 holidays were joyous for MSB's students.

For the tenth consecutive year, these groups and other friends of MSB have supported The Giving Tree, a program which gifts MSB students with clothing, shoes, coats, books and toys every Christmas.



Thank You!



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CONNECTION is available on MSB's website, via email and in print or alternative formats upon request. To request an alternative format or delivery mode, correct a name or address or add or remove a name from the mailing list, please contact Karen Burkhead, 314-776-4320, ext. 1133, or email Karen.Burkhead@msb.dese.mo.gov.

Calendar

March	April (continued)
Missouri Senior Beta Club Convention 3/8-10	Hand-in-Hand Session III 4/18-19
Lions Appreciation Night 3/11	Swim & Forensics Meet at Illinois 4/19
Daylight Savings Time Begins 3/11	Conference Swim & Forensics Meet at Minnesota 4/27-29
Swim & Forensics Meet at Indiana 3/16-17	
Swim & Forensics Meet at Ohio 3/23-25	May
End of Third Quarter 3/27	Truman Day, No Class 5/7
Awards Assembly 3/29	Teacher Appreciation Week 5/8-11
	Prom 5/10
April	Mother's Day 5/13
Easter Sunday 4/8	Alumni Weekend 5/18-20
Spring Break, No Class 4/9-13	Memorial Day 5/28

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