

South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind



FY 2023-2024 Budget Hearing

**South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind
2023-2024 Budget Request
Budget Notebook**



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Agency Attendees



- Jolene Madison, President
- Scott Ramsey, Director of Operations/Chief of Staff
- Ben Riddle, CFO

South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind
Board of Commissioners

President
Jolene Madison

Education Services Director Dee Stark	Chief of Staff and Operations Scott Ramsey	Special Education Services Director Kristi Harding	Chief Information Officer Trad Robinson	Residential Life Director John Reynolds	Outreach Services Director Scott Falcone
School Principals	Finance Office	Nursing Services	Information Technology Staff	Residential Life Staff	Principals of Itinerant Programs
Data and Special Projects Manager	Facilities and Transportation	Audiologist	Instructional Technology Staff	Athletic Staff	Interpreting/ASL Services
Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator	President's Office Administrative Coordinator	Related Service Providers	PowerSchool Coordinator	Recreational Coordinator	Early Intervention Staff
Instructional Support Staff	Campus Safety/Security	Transition/Job Coaches			Deaf/Blind Program Staff
	Human Resources				

2023-2024 Budget and Proviso Requests



The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind is grateful for the generous support provided during the 2022-2023 budget cycle, which allowed us to complete maintenance and improvement projects on campus. **SCSDB is not requesting any additional funding this year.**

Agency Name:	School For The Deaf And The Blind		
Agency Code:	H750	Section:	6



**Fiscal Year FY 2023-2024
Agency Budget Plan**

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B1)</i>	For FY 2023-2024, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B2)</i>	For FY 2023-2024, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

CAPITAL REQUESTS <i>(FORM C)</i>	For FY 2023-2024, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

PROVISOS <i>(FORM D)</i>	For FY 2023-2024, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Ben Riddle	(864) 577-7544	briddle@scsdb.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Scott Ramsey	(864) 577-7522	sramsey@scsdb.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2023-2024 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
SIGN/DATE:		
TYPE/PRINT NAME:		

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	School For The Deaf And The Blind
Agency Code:	H750
Section:	6

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
TOTALS			0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Agency Name:	School For The Deaf And The Blind		
Agency Code:	H750	Section:	6

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$528,111
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What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

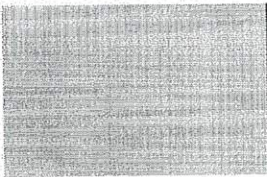
ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	None
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How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	The operating budget from the general fund at SCSDB will be reduced. The reduction will be realized from each division/department.
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	SCSDB will reduce its overall operating budget by \$528,111 to cover this 3% general fund reduction.
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.



Should the need arise, SCSDB will implement an across the board 3% reduction in operating expenditures by reducing operating budgets in each division. Upon implementation, expenditures will be reviewed to ensure funds are being spent on essential needs corresponding to the agency goals and objectives outlined in the most recent accountability report.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

AGENCY NAME:	South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind	
AGENCY CODE:	H750	SECTION: 6

2022
Accountability Report

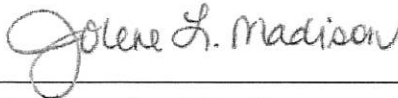
SUBMISSION FORM


I have reviewed and approved the data submitted by the agency in the following templates:

- Data Template
 - Reorganization and Compliance
 - FY2022 Strategic Plan Results
 - FY2023 Strategic Plan Development
 - Legal
 - Services
 - Partnerships
 - Report or Review
 - Budget
- Discussion Template
- Organizational Template

I have reviewed and approved the financial report summarizing the agency’s budget and actual expenditures, as entered by the agency into the South Carolina Enterprise Information System.

The information submitted is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

AGENCY DIRECTOR <i>(SIGN AND DATE):</i>	
<i>(TYPE/PRINT NAME):</i>	Jolene L. Madison

BOARD/CMSN CHAIR <i>(SIGN AND DATE):</i>	
<i>(TYPE/PRINT NAME):</i>	W. Scott Brawley

AGENCY NAME:		SECTION:	
AGENCY CODE:			

AGENCY’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB) was founded in 1849 and established with a purpose to provide specialized educational programming to a small number of students with hearing disabilities. Today, SCSDB serves students with sensory disabilities to include deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visual impairment, and sensory multi-disabled. SCSDB provides educational programming and services to students with sensory disabilities in South Carolina in order to assist these students to realize their maximum potentials through high quality educational programs, outreach services, and partnerships. In order to *Embrace the Possibilities* for every child, SCSDB serves children with sensory disabilities statewide. On campus, SCSDB provides a regular school day program for students. In addition to the instructional day program, SCSDB offers a full residential program to students that provides for the development of the whole child. Transportation is provided daily for local students. Additionally, residential student transportation is provided statewide to and from the home county to campus on a weekly basis. Students are picked up on Sunday afternoons and return home each Friday evening. Through Outreach Services, SCSDB provides statewide services in both education and accessibility. These services are offered in the local county to individuals with sensory disabilities, their families, and the professionals who serve them both directly and indirectly. In addition to the main campus in Spartanburg, Outreach Centers are located in Columbia and Charleston. The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind is the state’s specialized school for children with sensory disabilities.

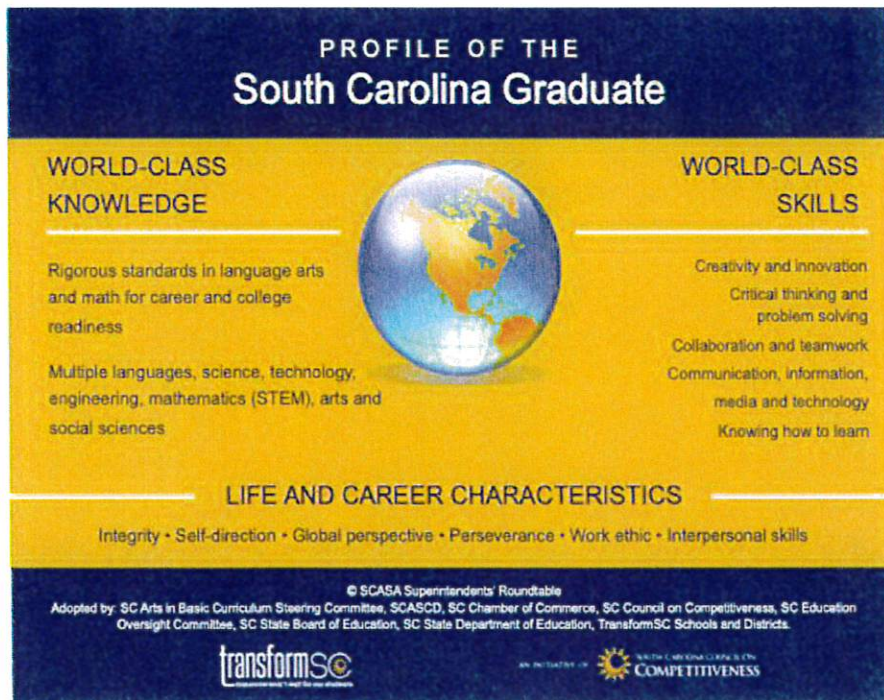
For SCSDB, the agency strategic plan is a long-term plan with goals that embody the critical areas in which SCSDB has identified for focus in order to accomplish the mission and vision of the agency.

- **Goal 1:** SCSDB will implement the *Profile of the SC Graduate* for students with sensory impairments by 2022.

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- **Goal 2:** SCSDB will ensure students are served in a safe environment on campus in order to realize their maximum successes through updated business continuity models by 2025.
- **Goal 3:** SCSDB Division of Outreach Services will be the statewide leader for individuals who are deaf, blind, or sensory multi-disabled through expanded Outreach Services.

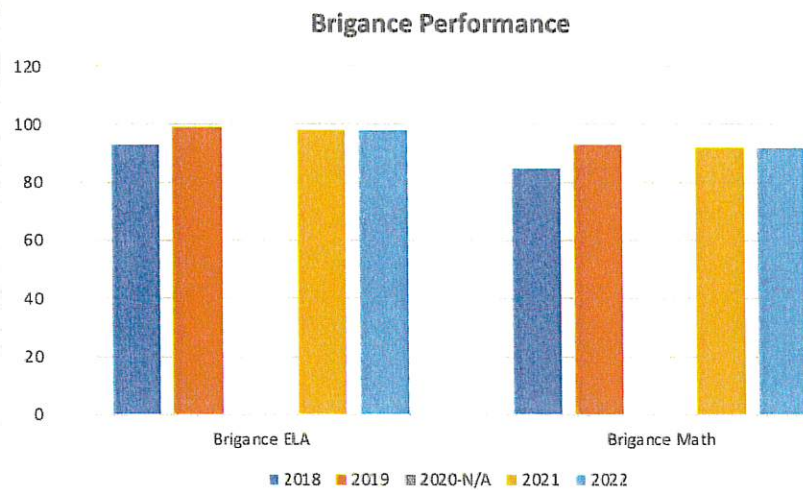
Goal 1 Update:

The *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* has provided a focus for Goal 1 as SCSDB has worked to implement this profile for students with sensory disabilities. SCSDB has continued to work to improve student skills in literacy, communication, written language, and mathematics. Under accountability measures established by the Education Oversight Committee, Brigance performance and Mastery of IEP goals continue to be measurement components for accountability. During the 2021-2022 school year, SCSDB maintained overall Brigance performance with 95% of students demonstrating gains. Student Brigance performance gains in English Language Arts maintained at 98%, and student Brigance performance gains in mathematics maintained at 92%. Despite student absences due to COVID-19 isolation and quarantine requirements, the large majority of SCSDB students continued to demonstrate overall growth.

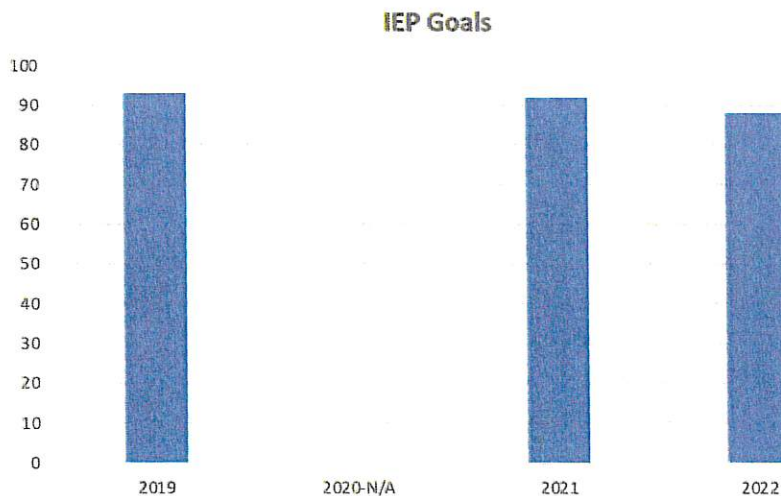
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In the area of IEP Goals, overall performance for students slightly decreased to 88% mastery during the 2021-2022 school year as noted below. Students mastered 91% of IEP goals in the area of English Language Arts and 85% of IEP goals in the area of Mathematics. It should be noted that the COVID-19 requirements for isolation and quarantine significantly impacted students' instructional time and continuity of learning. Despite opportunities for remote instruction, many SCSDB students struggle in the virtual format due to their unique accessibility needs.



In the area of work-based learning and student transition, SCSDB continues efforts to improve opportunities for students for adult life upon completion at SCSDB. In the area of work-based learning, 100% of SCSDB students in grades 9-12 participated in work-based learning experiences. These experiences include paid and unpaid work experiences, job shadowing, internships, etc. SCSDB has made great progress in expanding work-based learning experiences for students. Due to COVID-19, we have

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been limited in our ability to place students at off-campus sites as we work to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. Instead, SCSDB focused work-based learning opportunities on campus and through virtual shadowing and training opportunities and will work with our partners and local businesses to explore additional opportunities that may be available and needed to support student growth in preparation for transition post completion at SCSDB. SCSDB will continue to partner with SC Vocational Rehabilitation, the SC Commission for the Blind, and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs to support student growth and transition. In the area of student transition, 77% of students who graduated or exited in 2021 transitioned to placements one-year post completion. Under the accountability system, student transition focuses on student placement within the first year of completion to school, work, supported work environments, or other agency/local programs. This number is impacted by the fluctuating number of graduates in a given year as well as the ability to locate all students one year post-graduation. For example, one student was unable to be reached. Of the students reached, 83% are currently placed.

Goal 2 Update:

For Goal 2, SCSDB has continued to review and update business continuity models to ensure students are served in a safe environment. SCSDB now has a complete campus master plan from a facility study completed in 2019. This facility study evaluated current facilities and developed a long-range plan for facilities on campus. Currently, SCSDB recognizes a need for improved and updated dorm facilities, future plans for educational environments that are most conducive to learning, and upgrades to infrastructure and mechanical systems. SCSDB has worked to align the agency’s Capital Project Improvement Plan to meet the recommendations from the campus master plan. SCSDB is completing the demolition phase of the master plan with the removal of Hall Dorm. Once this building is demolished this year, SCSDB will have removed all the buildings that did not first require a new building. We will continue to evaluate our priorities to determine next steps in plan implementation. SCSDB recognizes that future facilities will be dependent upon funding availability.

Additionally, SCSDB has reviewed the overall campus safety master plan. The plan has served and continues to serve the agency in emergency planning and emergency situations; however, SCSDB recognized the need to update the plan to ensure strategies include the most recent guidance and expertise in the area of school safety as well as annual guidance from the Department of Education and other experts in the field. Although this plan is now complete, SCSDB does recognize that regular updates will be required, especially in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic with medical and safety guidance changing almost daily. SCSDB will continue to provide focused training for students and staff in identified areas as well as future needs for training as a result of the pandemic. For campus safety, in recent years, SCSDB has expanded current safety/security coverage to allow for 24-hour staff to include school resource officers on second and third shifts in addition to a regular campus safety office. As SCSDB is a residential school, the expansion to 24-hour coverage adds an additional level of safety for the students served. Additionally, SCSDB has worked to align staff roles in relation to safety staff and security staff to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the overall program. It is important to note that SCSDB has continued regular emergency drills this year for all types of situations and has expanded drills and evacuations during the residential setting.

SCSDB continues to properly conduct such emergency drills while adhering to SCDHEC guidelines for safety. SCSDB is prepared to transition to remote learning if circumstances arise in order to protect the

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safety and health of students and staff. Additionally, SCSDB has been approved as an e-Learning site in the event that school must be closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies. We have implemented a Learning Management System (CANVAS) to allow students access to teachers and instructional materials in a virtual format. Mifi devices have been secured for students who do not have reliable internet in their homes. As we transition to the 2022-2023 school year, SCSDB is reopening sports, off-campus activities, and visitors, all of which were suspended during the pandemic.

Goal 3 Update:

For SCSDB, Goal 3 focuses on the Division of Outreach Services and provides strategic targets to meet the needs of children with sensory disabilities across South Carolina. The Division of Outreach Services is a key component for SCSDB in meeting the overall agency mission and vision, and through this division, SCSDB provides services to children and their families in their local communities across the state. Program focus under Goal 3 includes Statewide Early Intervention Services, Statewide Blind and Visually Impaired Education Services, Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education Services, Statewide Interpreting Services, and supporting accessibility to instructional materials from children in South Carolina through the Braille Production Center.

In recent years, SCSDB has made great strides in rebranding Statewide Early Intervention Services. Traditionally, Early Intervention Services has provided support to children and their families from birth to age 3. However, in recent years, SCSDB has expanded services to include children up to age 6. SCSDB continues to serve over 500 children statewide each year. Due to COVID, SCSDB Early Intervention Services adapted and transitioned to provide much needed services to children and their families through alternate methods to assure safety of all stakeholders. Families were supported through the most effective method to include but not limited to FaceTime sessions, emails, phone calls, Zoom meetings, and so on. Under the Department of Health and Human Services for such programs, telehealth processes, and Medicaid billing, SCSDB followed said guidance to ensure compliance with provision of these needed services. Additionally, continued training was provided to staff in order to keep abreast of current trends and best practices for children with sensory disabilities.

This past year, Statewide Blind and Visually Impaired Education Services supported 353 children across South Carolina. Children received services in 46 school districts. In addition to services provided by teachers of the visually impaired, Orientation and Mobility services were provided to 110 children in school districts and an additional 45 children on campus. SCSDB served 19 Access Technology students and 25 Project Magnify students. Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education Services provided services to 197 students this past year across the South Carolina. Children received services in 25 school districts.

As both of the above programs work in sync with local school districts to provide much needed services for children with sensory disabilities, SCSDB Division of Outreach Services accommodated the needs of individual students and the modalities of learning while impacted by COVID-19. Although models varied, each teacher and service provider worked closely with each district to provide services through either a virtual, in-person, or hybrid model. For the upcoming school year, SCSDB Division of Outreach Services will continue to support local school districts and will be able to accommodate face to face, hybrid, and virtual learning dependent upon the need to individual school districts at any given point in time.

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In the area of Interpreting Services, in recent years, SCSDB has committed to one full-time staff interpreter for the Charleston/Low Country region, one full-time interpreter for the Columbia/Midlands region, and three full-time interpreters for the Spartanburg/Upstate region. Additionally, in order to meet interpreting needs, SCSDB has typically utilized 15 contract interpreters throughout the state. In addition to face-to-face interpreting, SCSDB has worked to meet interpreting needs through the expansion of technology in interpreting. Video phones are available on the main campus in Spartanburg and in Outreach office, in order to take advantage of federally funded video relay services to access on-demand interpreting services as needed for IEP and other critical academic related meetings conducted over the phone. This has freed up resources to cover requests which require an interpreter to be physically present.

In order to increase opportunities for accessibility, SCSDB offered 39 American Sign Language classes this past year. Participants included 42 staff members and 166 outside participants from the community. The American Sign Language Department at SCSDB successfully implemented virtual American Sign Language classes this past year and will offer both in-person and virtual classes this next school year.

Other information from the Division of Outreach Services includes the following:

- Kelly’s Kids served 15 children this past school year.
- SCSDB served 13 children through Little Locomotives as part of Early Intervention Services
- 40 trainings and workshops were provided by the Deaf-Blind Project
- 158 children are registered with the Deaf-Blind Project
- The Instructional Materials Center served 310 children to have accessible materials this past year
- The Braille Production Center produced 75,206 pages of Braille this past year
- The Braille Production Center produced 14,963 tactile graphics this past year

The Division of Outreach Services also includes an early childhood education program, Kelly’s Kids, on the main campus in Spartanburg, South Carolina. This program serves children ages 0 up to age 3 on a daily basis during the school year. This program is in partnership with Spartanburg County First Steps and is limited to children in Spartanburg County. This past year, 15 children were served through Kelly’s Kids. SCSDB is investigating the feasibility of continuing this partnership. Currently, the majority of the children served through Kelly’s Kids do not have an identified sensory loss. In order to reach more children and families needing specialized supports in the areas of deafness and blindness, SCSDB is researching options for providing the birth to age 3 programs in each of the three school programs with the sole focus on children who are deaf or blind.

Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies

SCSDB’s failure to achieve the agency’s mission limits opportunities for children with sensory disabilities in South Carolina. The educational objectives at SCSDB are developed using the general educational standards provided through the SC Code of Laws and the interpretation of those statutes by the SCDOE. These objectives focus on continual improvement in SCSDB’s ability to provide the highest quality educational programs for the deaf, blind and multi-sensory disabled children that are served throughout the state. Failure to meet these objectives would negatively impact educational services to children.

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SCSDB continually seeks assistance and guidance from the SCDOE to eliminate any negative impacts. The expansion of Outreach Services has allowed SCSDB to meet the growing need for services across South Carolina. Additionally, the campus master plan will allow SCSDB to develop a long-range plan for facilities and infrastructure. This plan is needed to avoid reactive repairs and to provide a safe, accessible, and conducive learning environment for the children served.

Table		Authorized Total FTE	Authorized State	Authorized Federal	Authorized Other	Position FTE	Actual Total FTE	State FTE	Federal FTE	Other FTE	Filed FTE	State Filed	Federal Filed	Other Filed	Vacant FTE	State Vacant	Federal Vacant	Other Vacant	Total Salary	Difference Authorized - Actual
H750	SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND	315,380	179,880	8,860	126,640	295,3646	295,369	179,416	7,758	108,195	234,675	141,879	7,435	85,361	60,694	37,537	0,323	22,834	\$ 16,311,900.00	20,011
Overall Result		315,380	179,880	8,860	126,640	295,3646	295,369	179,416	7,758	108,195	234,675	141,879	7,435	85,361	60,694	37,537	0,323	22,834	\$ 16,311,900.00	20,011

Table		Authorized Total FTE	Authorized Classified FTE	Authorized Unclassified FTE	Position FTE	Actual Total FTE	Actual Total Classified	Actual Total Unclassified	Filed FTE Total	Filed Classified	Filed Unclassified	Vacant FTE Total	Vacant Classified	Vacant Unclassified	Total Salary	Difference Authorized - Actual
H750	SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND	315,380	213,540	102,040	295,3646	295,369	206,767	88,602	234,675	166,024	68,651	60,694	42,743	17,951	\$ 16,311,900.00	20,011
Overall Result		315,380	213,540	102,040	295,3646	295,369	206,767	88,602	234,675	166,024	68,651	60,694	42,743	17,951	\$ 16,311,900.00	20,011

Carry Forward

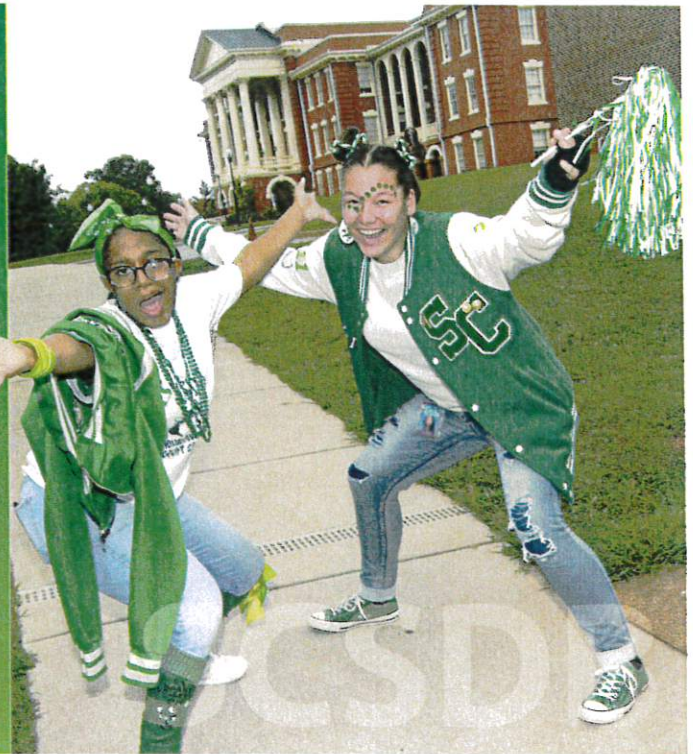


SCSDB Carry Forward Information from SCEIS: \$1,646,243.42

SC School for the Deaf and the Blind



355 Cedar Springs Road
Spartanburg, SC 29302
1-888-447-2732
Local: 864-585-7711
scsdb.org



- Established in 1849
- 160 Acre Campus
- Academic Programs: preschool - 12th grade
 - School for the Deaf
 - School for the Blind
 - Cedar Springs Academy (students with multiple disabilities, sensory loss)
 - Applied Academic Center (career and technical education)
 - Day and residential options for students
- Serving more than 1,200 students through **SCSDB's Campus and Outreach programs across the state**
- Cognia Accreditation
- 11 Athletic Teams
- Outstanding Arts Integration Program (dance, theatre, art, chorus, and music classes)
- HALTER therapeutic horseback riding program on campus
- 1:1 State of the Art Technology Initiative
- Strong community partnerships with area businesses and colleges



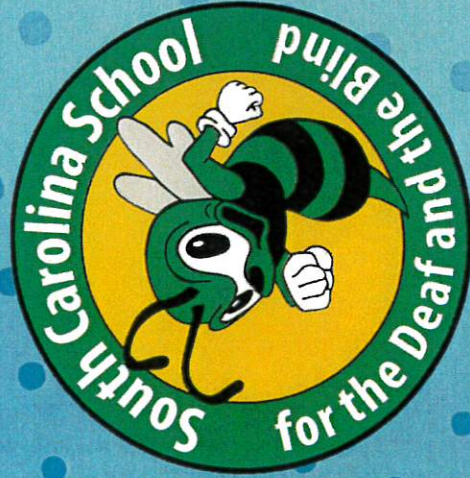
Students and faculty enjoy the newest SCSDB residential bus.

We are excited to host this year's
Southeast Regional NTID
Middle School Math Competition

January 20-22, 2023

***at the South Carolina School
for the Deaf and the Blind***

355 Cedar Springs Road, Spartanburg, SC 29302



RIT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 7, 2022

Logen Belmont
Director of Communications and Marketing
SC School for the Deaf and the Blind
lbelmont@scsdb.org
(864) 577-7580

Truly Unique

Swansea resident and South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind student, Brookelynn Raulerson, releases her debut single

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — Brookelynn Raulerson, senior at the School for the Blind at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind, has written and released her debut single “Truly Unique” on all streaming platforms.

Originally from Swansea and blind since birth, Raulerson has been singing since she was three years old and began attending SCSDB in the fifth grade.

“Music is the best way that I can express myself,” said Raulerson. “I wrote this song to help sighted people understand that blind people are not disabled. Just because we don’t do it the same way, doesn’t mean we can’t do it.”

Vincent Browning, owner of Sight Beyond Sight Entertainment LLC in Inman, S.C. and alumni of SCSDB, produced Brookelynn’s single. Since graduating in 1997, Browning has worked with numerous visually impaired recording artists.

“When I met Brookelynn and she told me she had written a song, I knew we had to record it,” said Browning. “We rearranged our schedules and were able to record the song this past summer.”

Brookelynn’s voice has been heard in over 50 performances representing SCSDB. She has performed all over the state, from Charleston to Rock Hill, and many times at the state house in Columbia. She has been involved in SCSDB productions and has had visual art installed across the state.

“We are so proud of her musical accomplishments,” said Josh Padgett, Director of Fine Arts at SCSDB. “Being an Arts in Basic Curriculum school, students at SCSDB are given opportunities for a comprehensive, accessible arts education where they can grow their love for the arts.”

Brookelynn is happiest when she’s singing and in the recording studio. She’s currently working on new music with the hope that her songs will inspire others to pursue their dreams too.

“Blindness is not what defines me,” said Raulerson. “My courage to pursue my dreams and use my talents, that’s what defines me.”



Designing the Future

NOVEMBER 3RD 2022

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind hosted funders at a ribbon cutting ceremony for its state-of-the-art screen-printing shop, Pennell Printing, on Wednesday, November 2nd. Funders for the project include AFL, Power:Ed and the Truist Foundation.

The ribbon cutting took place in the Pennell Printing classroom at SCSDB's Applied Academic Center (AAC). The AAC prepares students for jobs or continued education upon graduation. Students are introduced to career opportunities and work experiences. Pennell Printing gives students the opportunity to learn how a full-service,

professional screen-printing business operates.

Da'Quan Whetstone, senior at the School for the Deaf at SCSDB, shared his experiences with taking the screen-printing class and how it's teaching him skills for his future.

"Once I graduate, I want to work with mechanics and engine repair," said Whetstone. "I believe this class has given me the teamwork skills, the leadership skills and the hands-on opportunity to help with that."

At Pennell Printing, students learn skills relevant to the screen-printing business such as, using hand tools and office equipment, creating electronic invoices, maintaining inventory, marketing their products or services, organizing tasks, projecting costs and evaluating their products and services through feedback from customers.

"Pennell Printing is producing students who can navigate the expanding workforce in today's world with more modern and ever-changing technology," said Cherie Winkler, principal at AAC. "Thank you to all the funders who contributed to the success of this project. Our students are gaining the skills to be the world-class leaders of tomorrow."

View a video of the ribbon cutting on our YouTube page.



82-Year-Old South Carolina Woman Crochets Nearly 200 Hats For Blind And Deaf Students

"This makes my heart happy."

By Meghan Overdeep Published on October 13, 2022

With autumn approaching, it occurred to Julia "Judy" Pitts that each student at South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind might appreciate a warm, colorful hat.

"I've been crocheting for over 50 years," Pitts said in a statement. "During the pandemic, I made lots of hats with all sorts of designs and characters kids love, and when I was thinking through places I could donate them to, the students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB) came to mind."

On October 3rd, the 82-year-old delivered more than 170 crocheted hats for the students at the Spartanburg school.

"I love to see the kids," Pitts told *The Post and Courier*. "This makes my heart happy."

From hats with pompoms and pizza patches to hats crocheted into the shapes of pigs, foxes, and bears, every student at SCSDB received a hat that was special for them.

"The SCSDB Foundation is so grateful to Judy for thinking of our students this time of year," Sam Hook, Executive Director of the SCSDB Foundation, said in a release. "Smiles have been delivered all across campus because of these handmade hats."

This isn't the first child-focused organization that Pitts has donated her creations to.

In the past 50 years she's donated to a children's cancer center in Greenville, an orphanage in South Dakota, and Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries in Greenwood.

"Everybody has talents," she told *The Post and Courier*. "It's just about putting them out there and going forward."





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 26, 2022

Logen Belmont
Director of Communications and Marketing
SC School for the Deaf and the Blind
lbelmont@scsdb.org
(864) 577-7580

Freedom to Play

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind Foundation works with funders to provide a free play zone for sensory multi-disabled students at Cedar Springs Academy (CSA).

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — A former tennis court at Cedar Springs Academy (CSA) on the campus of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind has been repaved and repurposed into a free play zone.

“Students at CSA face additional challenges, such as limited mobility,” said Sam Hook, Executive Director of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind Foundation. “Having the opportunity to exercise and play freely is a vital key to our students’ growth and well-being.”

The Freedom to Play project at the SCSDB Foundation provides students with free play spaces in safe, outdoor areas while being supervised. According to the *Play and Playground Encyclopedia*, free play is defined as unstructured, voluntary, child-initiated activity that allows children to develop their imaginations while exploring and experiencing the world around them. Movement and activity refine students' emotional, intellectual and behavioral development. Children with unstructured outdoor opportunities are likelier to try new moves while enhancing their physical and mental health.

“The students at Cedar Springs Academy thrive on opportunities to be outside in the sunshine, play on the playground and do gardening,” said Sarah Davis, Principal at CSA. “In the newly renovated Freedom to Play area, our students can roll around, race each other and play with their friends safely. We look forward to the opportunities to build independence, self-esteem, confidence and overcome challenges through play!”

Funding for the Freedom to Play project was provided by the Barbara Stone Foundation, Costco Wholesale, Foundation for the Carolinas - The Longleaf Fund and Wholespire.

“The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind is so grateful for our community partners who have generously donated to our Freedom to Play project here at Cedar Springs Academy,” said Jolene Madison, President of SCSDB. “These organizations played an integral part in making the project possible.”



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A Family Legacy Lives On

The Babb Family donates new winter coats for students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — Continuing a years-long tradition started by the late Phyllis DeLapp, Andrew and Kitsy Babb provided dozens of coats for students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Phyllis DeLapp, Andrew's mother, donated coats to the students for many years and served as a trustee of the SCSDB Foundation from 1999 to 2012. Her daughter-in-law, Kitsy Babb, also served as a trustee for nine years. This year, Andrew and Kitsy Babb purchased coats with each student's unique style in mind.

"The holiday season is a prime time for family traditions and generosity," said Sam Hook, Director of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind Foundation. "We are grateful that Andrew and Kitsy have chosen to continue their family's holiday tradition of giving coats to our students who need them."

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The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind is the state's specialized school for students who are deaf or blind. It offers preK-12 educational programs on its main campus in Spartanburg and specialized vision and hearing services in school districts and homes throughout the state. Visit www.scsdb.org for more information.

The SC School for the Deaf and the Blind Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to securing resources that enable the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind to achieve its mission and goals. For more information, visit www.scsdbfoundation.org or call 864-577-7583.