

The **Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB)** Field Services Department collaborates with both the **Kansas State Department of Education** and the **TASN Coordination** project to recruit and train Teachers of Students Who Are Visually Impaired (TSVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS). The **TSVI/COMS Preparation and Mentorship** project offsets tuition and fees, books, and travel expenses while participants attend the out-of-state, graduate-level teacher preparation programs. KSSB provides preservice mentoring and onsite support to participants throughout their program of study.

## PROVIDING MENTORSHIP AND COORDINATING TSVI/COMS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The TASN TSVI/COMS Preparation and Mentorship project supports the training of licensed teachers to be endorsed as TSVIs or individuals with a bachelor's degree to become COMS.

Project-trained TSVIs are  
**currently teaching  
in every**  
Kansas State Board of  
Education Region

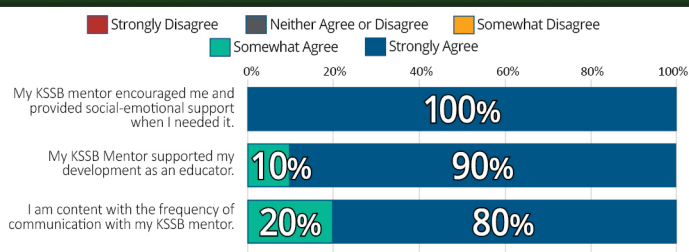
After the participants have completed their program of study and earned their endorsement or certification, the project facilitates up to three additional years of support through TASN e-Mentoring for Student Success

(eMSS). This program began in 2007 and is in its 14th year of operation. Participants are provided training through the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Missouri State University, or Stephen F. Austin State University depending on convenience and whether they are seeking a TSVI certification, COMS certification, or a dual certification. Educators from the KSSB Field Services Department mentor each TSVI and COMS throughout the certification process, and survey results indicate that participants are overwhelmingly satisfied with the mentoring provided.

*"I have learned so much that I've already **applied in my teaching**. What I have learned has been **helpful from assessment to instruction**. I couldn't have asked for more."*

— TSVI Program Participant

### MENTORING FEEDBACK FROM 10 PARTICIPANTS



Since 2007, 46 individuals have become TSVIs or COMS through this project. All but two of these educators (96%) are still actively working as or finished their careers in education as TSVIs/COMS. Fifteen additional educators are currently working toward their certification. Although the project is continually working to increase the number of TSVIs/COMS in Kansas, with over 1,500 students throughout the state who are blind or have low vision, the need for additional certified educators remains!

*"My mentor is extremely knowledgeable, kind, and willing to help/guide me with anything!"*  
— TSVI Program Participant

**100%** of participants described the **TSVI/COMS** coursework as **valuable** and were **satisfied** with their university program.

## PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO EXPAND EDUCATORS' SKILLS

Along with offsetting the cost of coursework, during the 2020–21 school year, the TSVI/COMS Preparation and Mentorship project, in collaboration with the Kansas Instructional Resource Center (KIRC), provided the Third Annual Kansas Vision Symposium, with 93 attendees, and Introduction to the Brain, Visual System, Neuroplasticity, and Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI), with 50

attendees. On the post-training evaluation survey for the CVI follow-up webinar, more than 80% of participants mentioned a specific practice that they will implement. The Vision Symposium consisted of sessions on echo-identification, access for students with deaf-blindness or multiple disabilities in distance learning environments, and technology recommendations within comprehensive evaluations. An evaluation survey following the Symposium showed that participants planned to implement the newly learned practices.

A sample of participants' next steps included:

- "I plan to research echolocation further, see how the research develops, and share the knowledge with COMS across Kansas."
- "I have to ensure that I use multiple assessments with my students who have visual impairments. Having just one assessment does not encompass the students' needs."
- "I will connect more frequently with families to address areas of highest need for students within the home versus school."
- "I will use vocabulary related to location and surroundings with students as we work together."

### EVALUATION RESULTS FROM 80 VISION SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS Average Ratings (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

