



VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND



LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL



FROM KNIGHTS OF THE BLIND TO PARTNERS FOR LIFE

Preparing Students for Life — Together

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A CENTURY OF SERVICE

HELEN KELLER • 1925

"KNIGHTS OF THE BLIND"

Helen Keller was Deafblind. Her historic challenge to Lions International helped establish an extraordinary global legacy of service to people who are blind and visually impaired.

"...you Lion, you who have your sight, your hearing, you who are strong and brave and kind. Will you not constitute yourselves knights of the blind in this crusade against darkness" - Helen Keller

HER LIFE REPRESENTED THE INTERSECTION OF

DEAFNESS + BLINDNESS



THIS IS VSDB

ESTABLISHED 1839

Staunton, Virginia

Serving Students Who Are:

DEAF • HARD OF HEARING

BLIND • LOW VISION • DEAFBLIND

Day + Residential Programs Available

OUR STUDENTS EARN ALL VIRGINIA DIPLOMAS

- Advanced Studies Diploma
- Standard Diploma
- Applied Studies Diploma



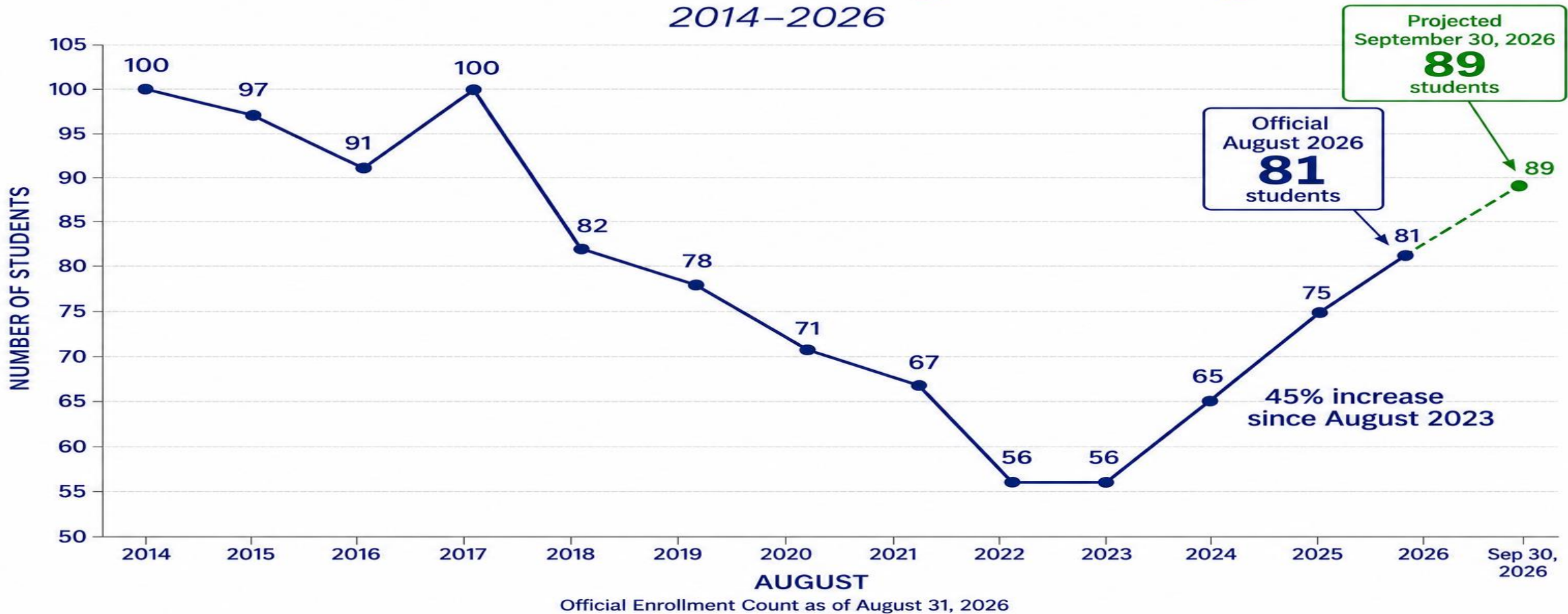
Learn more about VSDB!
Scan the QR code or go to:
www.vldb.k12.va.us



FAMILIES ARE FINDING VSDB AGAIN

VSDB Enrollment Growth Trend • 2014–2026

Enrollment Count: August to August *2014–2026*



ACCESS TO LITERACY & OPPORTUNITY

Not every student who is blind uses Braille. Students access literacy through diverse tools:

Braille

Print

Large Print

Assistive Technology

Audio

56% vs 23%

Employment rate: Learned primarily through Braille vs. Print
(Ryles, 1996)

58% vs 44%

Employment rate: Regular Braille readers vs. Non-Braille readers

BRaille IS LITERACY. LITERACY OPENS DOORS. VSDB PROVIDES BRAILLE.

200 BRAILLERS. NEW POSSIBILITIES.

PERKINS BRAILLE BLOOM™

INTRODUCED IN 2026

VSDB has approx. 200 Perkins Brailers. Braille Bloom connects traditional Brailers to today's digital world; Chromebooks, Tablets, & Phones via Bluetooth & USB to provide Braille in real

\$300 PER BLOOM DEVICE



🔑 CRITICAL NEED: MAINTENANCE

Our Brailers need routine mechanical servicing once each year to remain functional.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH THESE SKILLS?

Machinists

Technicians

Engineers

Mechanical Repair

Retired Tradespeople

Sometimes the resource we need most is a person who knows how.



PAWS TO INDEPENDENCE

NOVEMBER 18, 2026

Elementary children will receive their first plush dogs from Two Blind Brothers. But we want this to become more than receiving a stuffed animal.

BUILDING CORE VALUES

CARE

RESPONSIBILITY

SAFETY

ROUTINES

INDEPENDENCE

LIONS + VSDB + LEADER DOGS

WHAT COULD WE BUILD TOGETHER?



GROWING WITH THE STUDENT

PAWS TO INDEPENDENCE LIFELONG CONTINUUM



ELEMENTARY

Responsibility • Care • Safety •
Routines



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mobility • Independence • Working
Dogs



HIGH SCHOOL

Orientation & Mobility • Self-Advocacy
• Guide Options



ADULTHOOD

Independent Choices & Full Autonomy



BIGGER THAN GRADUATION

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE



LEARN

Academic Excellence &
Literacy



WORK

Career Readiness &
Employment



LIVE

Independent Living Skills



LEAD

Self-Advocacy &
Community Leadership

Beyond Standard Curriculum

Education, Employment, and Independent Living must weave together smoothly to ensure full participation in adult society.



LEARNING YOU DON'T REMEMBER



HOW DID YOU LEARN THIS?

Which hand do you extend for a handshake?

Usually your right hand. Who formally taught you that?

INCIDENTAL LEARNING

YOU WATCHED. YOU LISTENED. YOU NOTICED.

HOW DID YOU LEARN TO...

-  Know what to wear to an interview?
-  Make small talk with a supervisor?
-  Know how close to stand to someone?
-  Take turns in a fast-paced conversation?
-  Know when it's appropriate to interrupt?
-  Network effectively at a professional event?
-  Recognize when something doesn't feel right?

INCIDENTAL TO INTENTIONAL

DEAF STUDENTS

Information casually overheard in the environment may not be accessible.

BLIND STUDENTS

Information acquired through casual visual observation may not be accessible.

DEAFBLIND

Access to both visual and auditory ambient information may be severely limited.

THIS ISN'T ABOUT ABILITY. IT'S ABOUT ACCESS.

AT VSDB: WE MAKE THE INCIDENTAL INTENTIONAL.

EXPERIENCE BECOMES EDUCATION.



MAIN HALL: GATEWAY



RENOVATION UNDERWAY

Completion Anticipated October 2029

Conference & Welcome Center

Conferences, Meetings, Training,
Community Partnerships

Coffee Shop + Store

Customer Service, Retail, Food Service,
Business Operations

Event Planning Services

Planning, Hospitality, Logistics, Customer
Service

Video & Media Production

Camera, Editing, Music, Sound, Graphics,
Storytelling

Outreach Hub

Connecting families & schools across VA

Museum & Incidental Lab

Accessible history & career experiences

Administration

Bringing key administrative functions
together in one central location

MAIN HALL BECOMES A LIVING WORKPLACE: PEOPLE → CONNECTIONS → EXPERIENCES → OPPORTUNITIES

AND THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN

YOU KNOW THINGS OUR STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW.

Business Owners

Tradespeople

Educators

Healthcare Professionals

Farmers

Veterans

Public Servants

Community Leaders

- 💡 **YOUR EXPERIENCE** is a powerful learning resource.
- 🏢 **YOUR WORKPLACE** is an authentic classroom.
- 🔑 **YOUR NETWORK** can open a life-changing door.

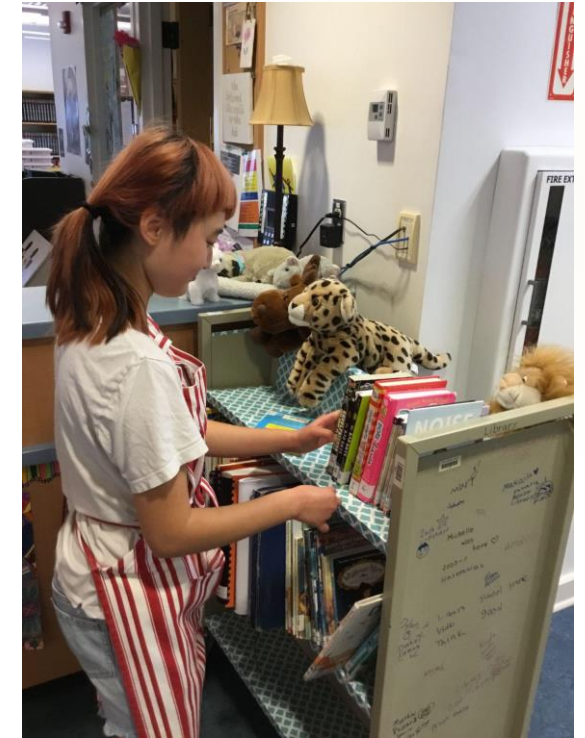


PREPARING STUDENTS FOR WORK

FOR ALL VSDB STUDENTS

Deaf • Hard of Hearing • Blind • Low Vision • Deafblind

-  Experience real workplaces first-hand
-  Explore diverse career pathways
-  Build communication & self-advocacy skills
-  Learn authentic workplace expectations
-  Develop professional networks
-  Be seen for what they CAN do



**TRANSITION DOESN'T BEGIN AT
GRADUATION.**

IT BEGINS NOW.

WE NEED YOUR WORKPLACE



We are always looking for diverse workplace partner opportunities:



Workplace Tours & Shadowing

Informational interviews & workplace walk-throughs.



Work Experiences & Internships

Paid work experiences, internships, and summer jobs.



Career Mentors

Ongoing guidance from experienced professionals.

Opportunities on the horizon

EVERY LION CAN OPEN A DOOR

YOU DON'T HAVE TO OWN A BUSINESS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

- ✓ Introduce us to an employer
- ✓ Invite students for a tour
- ✓ Conduct a mock interview

- ✓ Talk about your career path
- ✓ Offer an informational interview
- ✓ Teach a practical life skill

- ✓ Mentor a student
- ✓ Help identify a summer job
- ✓ Connect us with your network

SOMETIMES A CONNECTION BECOMES A CAREER.

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING UP

LIONS ARE ALREADY PART OF VSDB

-  Balls for All Initiative
-  Listen Up! Program
-  White Cane Quest — October 12
-  Leader Dogs Partnerships

VSDB Lions and Leo Club! (new this school year!)



LIONS CLUB CAMPGROUND

An incredible resource available to our students! We are actively exploring optimal usage:

- Independent Living & Transition Experiences • Outdoor Education & Leadership Development • Career & Life Skills Workshops



WE DON'T WANT TO REPLACE WHAT WE'RE DOING TOGETHER. WE WANT TO BUILD ON IT.

WHAT ELSE COULD WE BUILD?

Lions Career Network

Statewide network connecting students with Lions, employers, and workplaces.

Life Skills Days

Banking, budgeting, auto care, interviewing, home maintenance, and networking.

Career Table Conversations

Students sitting with Lions from different professions talking & asking questions.

Summer Opportunity Network

Identifying paid work experiences in students' home communities across VA.

Entrepreneurship Mentors

Connecting ambitious students with experienced small business owners.

Service Together

Lions and VSDB students serving local communities side by side.

WHAT IDEA DO YOU HAVE THAT WE HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF YET?

1925 KNIGHTS OF THE BLIND → 2026 PARTNERS FOR LIFE

180 LIONS. 180+ DOORS.



SCAN TO OPEN
A DOOR

KNOW THEM

TEACH THEM

MENTOR THEM

HIRE THEM

CONNECT THEM

A donation can provide a resource.

A relationship can create an opportunity. Our students need both.

I CAN OPEN A DOOR

Imagine what happens when 180 people open 180+ doors.

LET'S PREPARE OUR STUDENTS FOR LIFE — TOGETHER.



IMAGE SOURCES



https://www.womenshistory.org/sites/default/files/images/2018-07/Keller_Helen%20square.jpg

Source: www.womenshistory.org
