



The Maryland
School for the Blind

Annual Report

2023 Edition

Table of Contents

A student holds a flower to his face to get a closer look.





4 Letter From the Superintendent
and Board Chair

5 Maryland Instructional Resource
Center, MIRC

6 Middendorf and the Cottages on
the Hill

8 MSB Class of 2023
and Class Graduates

The MSB Board
Past and Present

12

Student Reach
and Data

14

Student Story:
Leading With Confidence

15

See Beyond Festival
In Action

16

19 Student Story:
A Day in the Life

20 FY23
Financials

22 1853 Society Members
and Other Supporters

23 MSB Board
and Leadership

Letter From

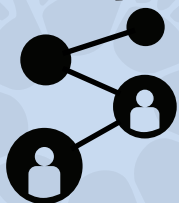
the Superintendent and Board Chair

200+



On-Campus
Students

24



Counties Reached
by MSB

Dear Supporters of MSB,

We are thrilled to present to you our annual report for the academic year 2022-23 at The Maryland School for the Blind. It is with immense pride and gratitude that we reflect on the achievements, growth, and progress made by our students, staff, and school community throughout this school year.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to continuous improvement and innovation in our educational programs and campus buildings. Moving into 2023, we were awarded the Middendorf grant for the Cottages on the Hill, thanks to their generous foundation (page 6).

Over the past year, our primary focus has been on providing an exceptional educational experience that nurtures the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of our students. We have strived to create a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and can gain self-determination like Nadia in our ROX program (page 15), or reach new heights like Briasia as our TikTok social media ambassador (page 19).

Our second year of the annual See Beyond Festival was a success in connecting our students and campus with the local community (page 16). With that success we have fostered a culture of respect, inclusivity, and accessibility for all.

In conclusion, we are confident that with the help of our supportive communities, passionate and driven students, and dedicated staff, the coming year holds great promise for our school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

W. Robert Hair, Superintendent

Marion Mullauer, Board Chair

1,500+



Students Served
Yearly, In State &
Out-of-State

170



Years of Blind & Low
Vision Education



The Maryland Instructional Resource Center (MIRC) team produces textbooks and educational materials for students throughout Maryland.



1,630

Tactile Graphics &
Diagrams
Produced



453

Total Collection
of Texts



This year the MIRC transcribed and produced the Kindergarten Reading Assessment (KRA) for students in Maryland, South Carolina, and Hawaii! Scan for more KRA information.



The MIRC team has also modified the "Bedtime in a Box" kits for students who are blind and low vision. Scan to learn about Bedtime in a Box.



10,641

Pages of Braille
Produced



800

American Printing
House-Eligible
Students Served

The MIRC is a centralized repository for braille and large print textbooks as well as other educational materials, located on MSB's campus. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) began a partnership with The Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) and local education agencies (LEAs) to establish the Maryland Instructional Resource Center (MIRC) for students who are blind or low vision.

Middendorf

and the Cottages on the Hill

A rendered concept of the Cottages on the Hill project.



Alice Temple and J. William Jr. Later in Life

In 1907
our campus moved from
downtown Baltimore to
Taylor Avenue and spans
95 acres in Baltimore
City and County.



John William Middendorf Jr.,

Picture to the left in his 1916 Harvard yearbook portrait, taken in 1915.



Alice Temple Carter,
1935, Picture to the right.

The Maryland School for the Blind expresses our gratitude to the Middendorf Foundation for their invaluable support towards our newest construction project, The Cottages on the Hill. The foundation has graciously provided a significant grant in support of the Cottages.

The Middendorf family's generosity to MSB began over 70 years ago when Mr. Middendorf joined the MSB Board of Directors in 1946. He sat on our Board until he passed away in 1973. His leadership and guidance, particularly in financial matters, over those 27 years helped shape the future of MSB and his legacy continues to do so today through the foundation.

Guided by the philanthropic ideals of its founders J. William Jr. and Alice Carter Middendorf, the Middendorf Foundation supports organizations and projects within the state of Maryland. Primary interests are capital projects in the Greater Baltimore area, in the fields of: culture, education, the environment, health care, historic preservation, and social services.

Mr. and Mrs. Middendorf, in their letter to future trustees of their foundation, stated:

"Our dominant idea is that the highest service of a private Foundation is to contribute to institutions which themselves help people stand on their own feet; to retain their independence; and, in short, to help themselves. We would favor substantial gifts to the sort of institution which can make provisions ... We have in mind such institutions of the character of...the Maryland School for the Blind. "

MSB Class of 2023

Class Motto

“We are proud, as proud as can be. We are the Class of 2023”



A student leads the graduation procession.



Student receives diploma from Superintendent Rob Hair.



Student graduate enjoy snacks with family after graduation.



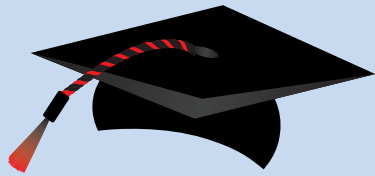
Student graduate shakes hands with Director Maureen Bisesi.

Class Officers

President: James Quade
Vice President: David Baul
Treasurer: Lucas Paredes
Secretary: Kenny Akanni
Public Relations: Amaurie Davison

Class Colors

Red and Black



Class Flower

Rose



Student Awards

These awards are presented annually to students who exhibit leadership qualities, academic excellence or noteworthy improvement throughout their years at MSB.

*MSB Staff
Commendation Award*



David Baul

*MSB Alumni
Award*



Anderson Ayala-Pacheco

*Benjamin Franklin
Newcomer Award*

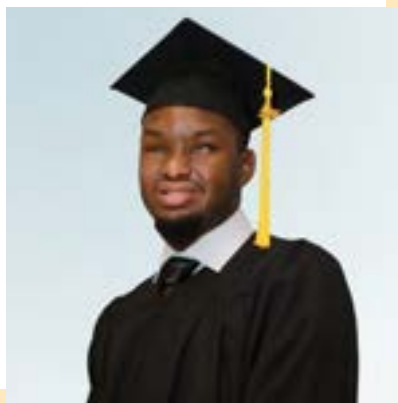


Kenny Akanni

2023 Graduates



Amaurie Davison
Berlin, MD



Andre Edwards
Temple Hills, MD



Arianna King
Halethorpe, MD



Ayomide Ogunjemilua
Upper Marlboro, MD



Charle Worsham
Forestville, MD



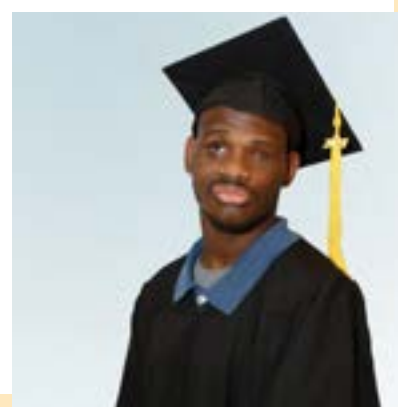
Charlie Smith
Reisterstown, MD



Christian Coreas
Bel Air, MD



Daniel Salembene
Kingsville, MD



David Baul
Baltimore, MD



Elijah Waddell
Catonsville, MD



Jaden Pointer
Baltimore, MD



James Quade
North Beach, MD



Kenny Akanni
District Heights, MD



Lucas Paredes
Baltimore, MD



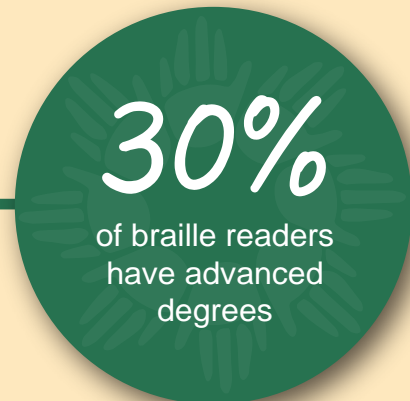
Mary Evans
Parkville, MD



Savion Cottingham
Baltimore, MD



Valerie Cooper
Baltimore, MD



The MSB Board

Past and Present

The average board member tenure is

9 years.

Some have served longer due to being Governor appointees.



Kati Penney joined the MSB Board of Directors in 2020. Her deep connection to the school stems from her daughter, Lucienne, who is a student at MSB. With a strong background in finance, Kati has honed her skills while working for prominent accounting firms. Currently, she serves as the Chair of the Audit Committee and is a member of the Governance Committee at MSB, where she drives responsible and strategic fiscal initiatives for the school. Alongside her husband Jon, Kati is a dedicated supporter of MSB, recognizing the invaluable impact it has on students like Lucienne.

Beyond her involvement with MSB, Kati is actively engaged in advocacy work through the Penney Girls Foundation. This foundation, established by her family, is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of chronically ill children, their families, and communities. Kati's commitment to these causes is a testament to her unwavering dedication and passion for creating a brighter future for those in need.

“

MSB is comprised of compassionate staff who are creative, collaborative, and truly one of a kind. It is a community that stimulates self-confidence and has taught Lucienne essential life skills and core values.

”



In Memory of William S. Ratchford II MSB Board Member, 2012-2023

"In honoring Bill Ratchford, we celebrate a man who devoted his life to the betterment of our students, our institution and the state of Maryland."

**-Robert Hair,
MSB Superintendent**

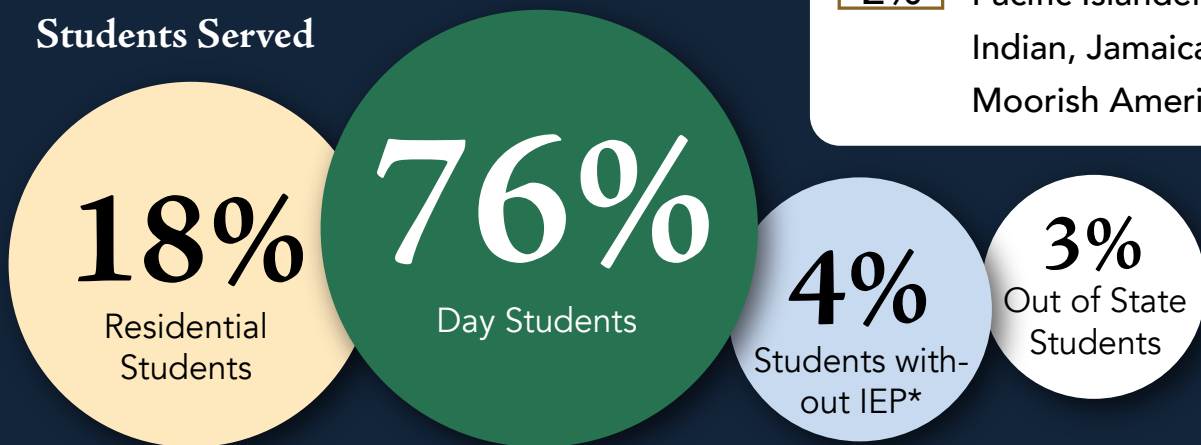
Students Served

The Maryland School for the Blind provides a range of services to our students, such as After School/Residential Programs, ELECCT*, and our Outreach Program, which includes Camp Abilities, MISLE*, and TrECCK*. These programs offer additional support to our students and their families.

On-Campus Student Demographics

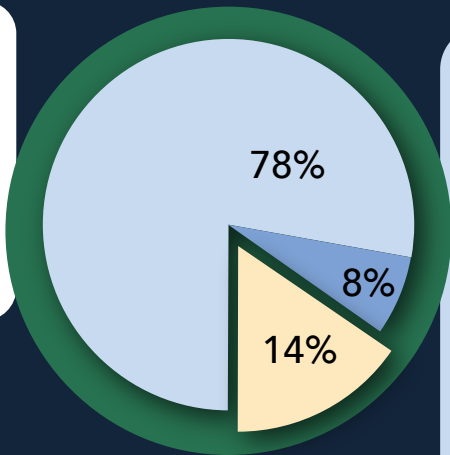
42%	African American
37%	Caucasian
14%	Hispanic American
4%	Asian American
2%	Pacific Islander, American Indian, Jamaican American, Moorish American

Students Served



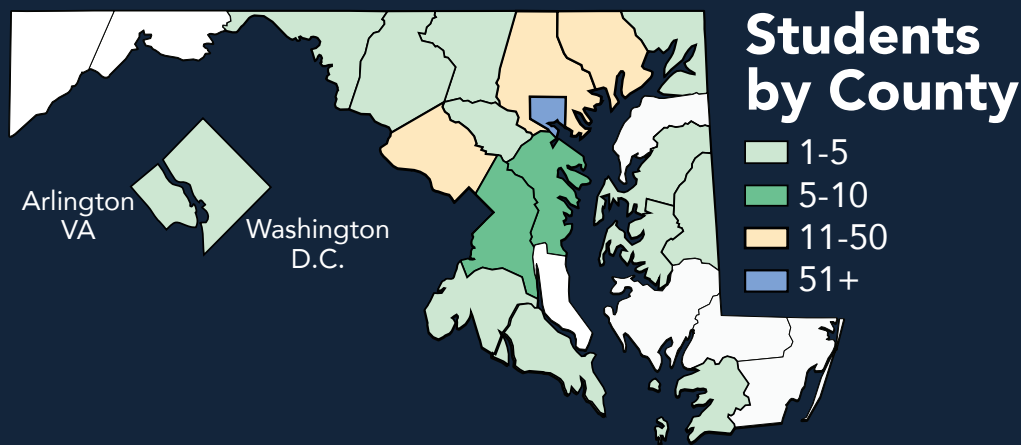
Outreach and Statewide Services

- Outreach Contracts
- MIRC Production
- Unique Students



- Outreach Contracts consist of Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) needed in homes or public schools throughout Maryland.
- MIRC Production is the percentage of tactile and braille printed materials from the Maryland Instructional Resource Center, located on our campus.
- Unique Students are students new to our Outreach and Statewide programs within the fiscal year.

*ELECCT - Extended Learning in Expanded Core Curriculum Topics
 *MISLE - Mastering Independence Skills Through Living Experiences
 *TrECCK - summer program focusing on the Expanded Core Curriculum
 *IEP - Individualized Education Program



Leading With Confidence

Nadia Gompers is not an inspiration. She's a high school freshman from Calvert County who loves riding horses, playing on her phone late at night, and watching Judge Judy re-runs with her dad. In fact, she says, **"People tell me that I'm an inspiration, and I don't feel good when they tell me that because I'm just normal."**

At a young age, Nadia knew that her disability is part of who she is, but it is not her identity. She is not impressive because she has cerebral palsy but rather because she has a kind heart, ambition, and confidence. Nadia jumps at opportunities that many would shy away from. She does modeling, acting, and part-time consulting with fashion brands to improve adaptive clothing lines—and she doesn't plan to stop there.

Nadia's parents were hesitant to take her out of public school when she was struggling. She had her group of friends, a routine, and on top of that, MSB would be a 3-hour round-trip bus ride. When they toured MSB, Nadia noticed that no one was staring at her the way they did in her previous school. To everyone here, she was just a normal kid. Her mom was immediately impressed by the technology lab, the physical therapy staff with their in-depth knowledge of cerebral palsy, and how easily Nadia could navigate the campus without assistance. Where she had been the "crazy mom" in other schools advocating for better services, everyone at MSB understood exactly what their family needed. She says, "Every kid deserves to be in an environment where they can reach their full potential." MSB was that environment for Nadia.

Since joining MSB in 6th grade, Nadia's confidence has sky-rocketed. In three short years, she's gone from having trouble talking to close family members to speaking at a recent Groundbreaking Ceremony with an audience of over 100 people. She has advocated to join the MSB residential program to live on campus during the week. Her parents were so impressed by her initiative and reasoning, but they were nervous about how much they would miss her. Nadia pushed them; she said it would help improve her social skills and indepen-

dence. They say she was also aiming for a few extra hours of sleep without a long bus ride. What teenager wouldn't jump at that opportunity?

Nadia now shares a dorm with five other girls where they take turns creating after-school activities to do together like painting and pumpkin carving. She joined the school's chapter of Ruling Our Experiences (ROX), a staff-led group that "creates generations of confident girls who control their own relationships, experiences, decisions and futures." She hopes to be a psychiatrist who helps teens in juvenile centers one day. She says, "The kids seem like they want help. They know they can do better, but they just need a push to help them." Nadia recognizes through her own experiences that you can do a whole lot with a little bit of help.



Nadia Gompers and family before her brother's football game.

See Beyond Festival

*A child participates in the lacrosse activity
at the See Beyond Festival in 2022.*

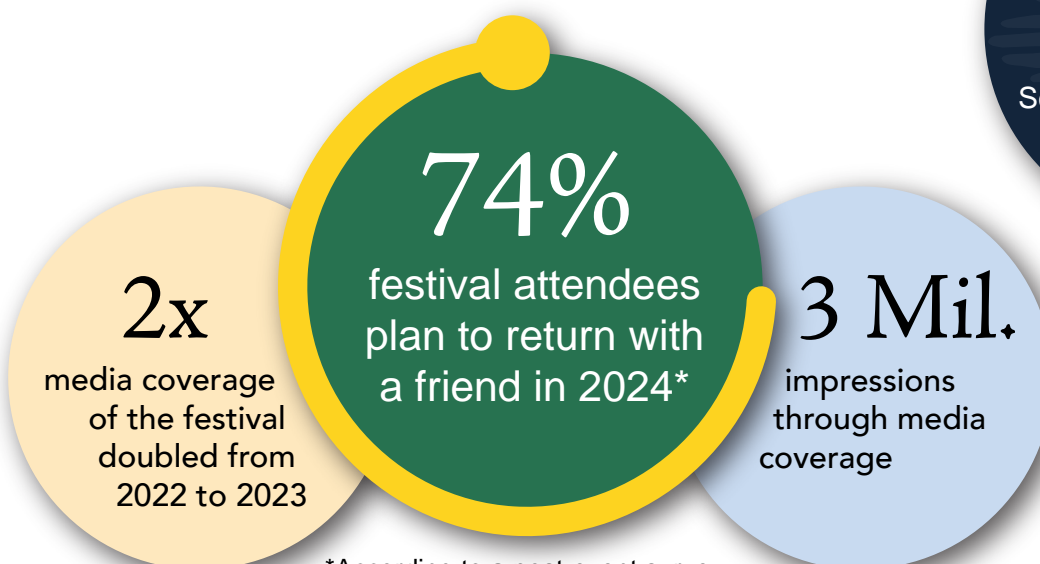
2,500

people attended
the See Beyond
Festival in 2023.

The 2023 See Beyond Festival proved to be an extraordinary event that showcased the power of adaptability and accessibility. Attendees from different generations, backgrounds and abilities all participated in a day filled with immersive learning experiences and boundless fun. The festival's success was further amplified by the media coverage, which doubled compared to the previous year, attracting an even larger audience. We invite you to join us April 27, 2024 from 11 am to 3 pm for next year's festival, where we will continue to grow by creating an inclusive and entertaining environment for all.



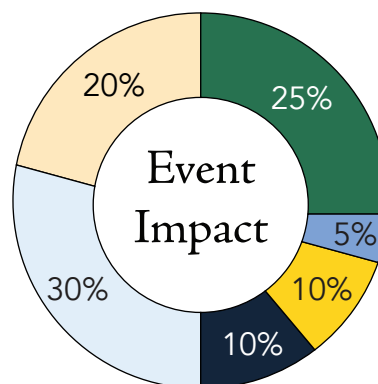
Scan for more info or to preregister for the See Beyond Festival



*According to a post-event survey.

Festival attendees shared what they learned about in a post-event survey.

- Blindness and low vision
- Braille
- Various vision conditions
- Their own adaptability without sight
- Accessibility
- Adaptations in sports



Thanks to our generous sponsors who made it possible for participants to try the activities for free: Lewis Contractors, Penney Design Group, Marshall Craft Associates, Parker Flavors, T. Rowe Price, Sons of the American Legion, Maurey, Donnelly, and Parr (MDP) Insurance, Maryland Relay, Cigna, Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute, Baird Private Wealth Management, CHUBB, Ruff Roofers, SC&H, Maryland Department of Disabilities, Baltimore's Child, Baltimore Fishbowl, WYPR & WTMD.

See Beyond 2023 In Action

Photo Credit to FJ Hughes



Activities Included:

Blind Soccer
Beep Baseball
Adaptive Lacrosse
Goal Ball
Sprint Races
Kids-zone
Sensory & Braille Crafts
Free Balloon Animals
Accessible Playground
Games
Obstacle Courses
Food Taste Test
Craft & Vendor Fair
Food Vendors
Live Music
And More!

A Day in the Life

During the 2022-23 academic year, The Maryland School for the Blind embarked on a new venture by creating their own TikTok page. Briasia Bowser, a talented 15 year old sophomore joined the team to provide a student's perspective. In between her classes, Briasia seized the opportunity to capture unique moments that are not always observable by the outside world. For instance, she documents the bus rides to blind soccer games and the cheerleaders' warm-up sessions before the goalball cheers.



Scan to follow MSB on TikTok.

“ I did TikTok as a platform where I was advocating for myself, but not only myself, but helping other people out there learn to advocate... ”

Briasia took advantage of the creative freedom afforded to her on TikTok to express herself and advocate for MSB and people who are blind or low vision. She aspires to be a role model for others. After being diagnosed with Stargardt's Eye Disease, she worked hard to regain her self-confidence and gain a better understanding of what awaits her after her time at MSB. Encouraged by her experiences at MSB, Briasia applied for an internship at the National Security Agency (NSA) and was awarded it for her senior year.



Briasia Bowser, sitting at a desk in class with a Braille writer.

“ ...when we hear blind, we hear people [who] only see blackness, which is not true at all. So, I want people to gain confidence and knowledge from watching those videos. ”

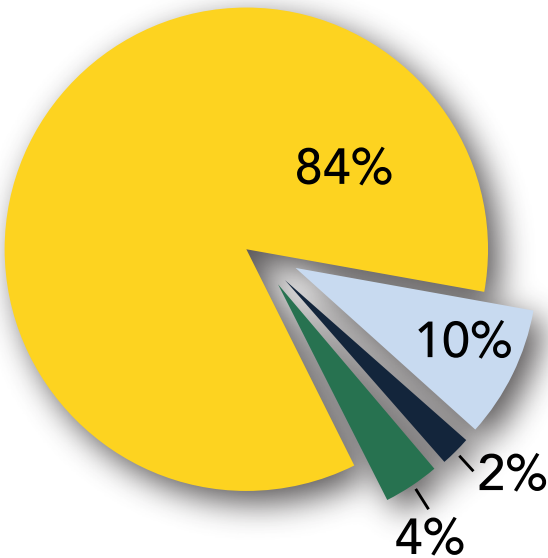
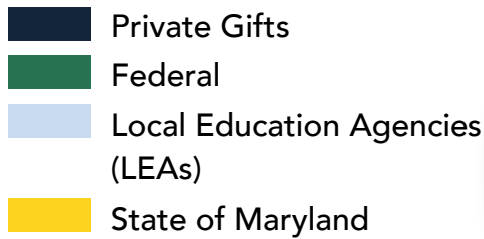
Financial

A student works with his teacher to "scan and bag" items at a child's play cash register.

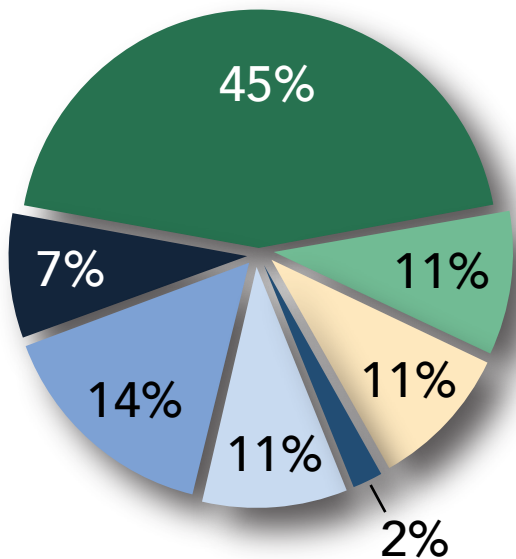
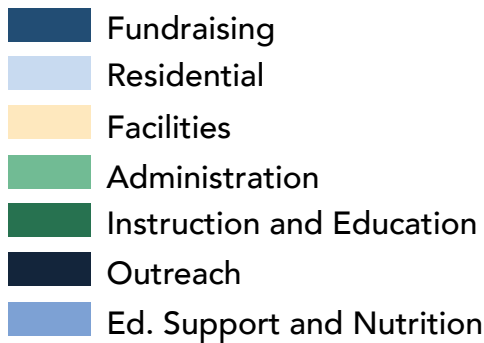


THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND is a private, 501 (c)(3) school under Internal Revenue Service regulations. The school's fiscal year ends on June 30th. Funding is provided primarily through grants from the Maryland State Department of Education and payments from local school districts. Contributions are received from individuals, corporations, foundations, and community groups. Total expenses for 2022-2023 approximated \$39 million.

Revenue



Expenses



1853 Society

and Other Supporters

- Anita & Pio Marocco Fund
- Ms. Ann H. Maddox
- Arden Baker
- The Campbell Foundation, Inc.
- Mr. Craig F. Ballew
- Cole Foundation
- Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore
- Donna and Jose Torres
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- Ensign C. Markland Kelly, Jr. Mem. Foundation, Inc.
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- The Schluderberg Foundation, Inc.
- Scott Wales and Jane Osburn
- The Thomas W. Bradley Foundation, Inc.
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Bosley

Other Supporters

The Maryland State Department of Education, MSDE

American Turners-Baltimore, Inc.

Rotary Club of College Park

American Legion Caroline Post #29

I C You Foundation, Inc.

The Markell Company LLC

Knights of Columbus, Fr. Burggraff Council #6021

Hirsch Electric, LLC

Lions Clubs of Aberdeen, Annapolis, Betterton Still Pond, Darlington, Deer Park, Denton, Greensboro, Hurlock, Jarrettsville, LaVale, Lineboro-Manchester, Montgomery Central (Derwood), Mt. Airy, Princess Anne, Queenstown, Union Bridge and International.

MSB Board

and Leadership

OFFICERS

Chair:

Marion Mullauer

1st Vice-Chair:

**Raymond Brown

2nd Vice-Chair:

Karen Malinowski

Treasurer:

Kati Penney

Secretary:

Renee Winsky

Ex-Officio Member:

Robert Hair,
MSB Superintendent

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Robert Hair

Maureen Bisesi

Diane Colburn

Dr. Joshua Irzyk

Marlo Jacobson

Bill McCubbin Jr.

Kibian Vazquez

Lauren Pappas

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Mark Booker

Liza Brown-DiCostantino

Dr. Lorraine Costella

**Dr. Nancy Grasmick

**Senator Guy Guzzone

John Huynh

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Jack Pumphrey

Dr. Karen Rigamonti

**Paul Schroeder

**Delegate Stephanie Smith

Lou Smith

Christopher Trapani

Dr. Joanne Waeltermann

Scott Wales

Robin Zimelman

EMERITUS MEMBERS

James J. Datovech

Edward J. Veilleux

**Governor Appointed



The Maryland School for the Blind

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