



Wyoming Department of Education PRESS RELEASE

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WDE Deaf-Blind Project Announces Project SASI

*Partnership with Texas Tech seeks to aid students
with autism and sensory impairments in rural, remote areas*

CHEYENNE – The Wyoming Department of Education’s (WDE) Deaf-Blind Project and Texas Tech University have partnered on a grant program offering Wyoming educators financial assistance in earning their Masters in Sensory Impairments as well as certification in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Autism Spectrum Disorders are developmental disorders characterized by restrictions in social and emotional development, communication, interest and motor skills. Sensory Impairment can include irregularities in taste, touch, spatial awareness, sight or hearing.

The endorsement will be through Texas Tech’s Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education in Visual Impairments. The course is an online program that will require about 2.5 years to complete. The program will require some on-campus activities in Lubbock, Tex. over selected weekends and in the summer. Wyoming participants in the grant program will have all books, courses and materials, in addition to travel and accommodations for on-campus activities paid for.

“Districts have an extremely difficult time locating highly-qualified teachers for deaf or visually-impaired students as well as orientation and mobility specialists,” said Wyoming Deaf-Blind Project Manager Joanne Whitson. “This is due to the fact the students in need of those services are spread out across the state. It is difficult to find someone willing to cover those miles or work with just one or two students. By helping schools grow their own educators, the districts will have someone local to work with their students, while having someone who can address other special education needs within the district.”

Applicants to this program will choose a field of focus:

- Teacher for the Visually Impaired
- Orientation and Mobility Instructor
- Deaf-Blind Educator
- Teacher for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing

Regardless the field selected, each program participant will also earn his/her certification in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Eligibility criteria requires that the applicant has a teaching degree and meet the standards of NCLB definition §9101 “Highly Qualified.” (For more information see: <http://nichcy.org/schools-administrators/hqt/nclb>).

Space in the program is limited, so prospective participants are encouraged to apply quickly. Interested teachers are asked to complete the attached paperwork and send it via email to Joanne Whitson, Wyoming Deaf-Blind Project Director joanne.whitson@wyo.gov.

Please mail the hard copies to the following address:

Joanne Whitson, Deaf-Blind Project Director
215 West Buffalo, Room 325
Rawlins, WY 82301

If you have any questions, please call Whitson at 307-324-5333.

The deadline for applications is July 1, 2013



**Virginia Murray Sowell Center for
Research and Education in Sensory Disabilities
Texas Tech University**

**College of Education
3008 18th St.
Lubbock, TX 79409**

**Students with Autism and Sensory Impairments Application – Cohort II
(Project SASI)
2014-2016**

A limited number of scholarships are available to the Students with Autism and Sensory Impairments (SASI) program. **To apply for the second cohort of scholars, submit the following documents, postmarked by Monday, July 1, 2013, to Joanne Whitson, SASI Collaborative Partner (CP) in Wyoming, via mail to the address at the end of this application.** Scholarship recipients are expected to begin the program in the Spring 2014 semester, starting in January 2014 and completing in December 2015 or May 2016, depending upon the program in which you participate.

To be eligible for this scholarship, you must be a general education teacher with current licensure/certification/endorsement in your state, or be a special education teacher who also has a general education licensure/certification/endorsement, and be a U.S. citizen. Upon completion of the program of studies, scholarship recipients will be eligible to be certified in their sensory impairment program area by their state educational agency. Completing scholarship recipients will also receive a Graduate Certificate in Sensory Impairment and Autism Spectrum Disorders from Texas Tech University.

Biographical Data

1. Full Legal Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)
2. Gender Male Female
3. Social Security Number _____

4. Present Mailing Address:

Address: _____

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

Permanent Address (If different from above)

Address: _____

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

Street Mailing Address [no Post Office Box (P.O.) numbers]:

Address: _____

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

5. Email address: _____

6. Phone numbers: Daytime _____ Evening _____ Cell _____

7. Are you a citizen or permanent resident of the United States of America or a U.S. Territory?

___ YES ___ NO

If yes, which state is your legal residence? _____

8. I am applying for:

- ___ Program of studies in Deafblindness (DB)
- ___ Program of studies in Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)
- ___ Program of studies in Visual Impairment (VI)
- ___ Program of studies in Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

9. Which of the following best describes your race?

- ___ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ___ Asian
- ___ Black or African American
- ___ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ___ White
- ___ Other (please specify) _____

Are you Hispanic or Latino? Y N

10. Check the degrees or certificates you currently hold (check all that apply):

- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Educational Specialist
- Doctoral Degree
- Post-doctoral degree
- State or professional credential(s)/certificate(s) in:

- State-issued endorsement(s) in:

- Grantee-issued endorsement
- High School diploma or equivalency
- Other (please specify) _____

11. List the address and contact information for a relative or other person not living with you, through which you can be contacted:

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Alt Phone: _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

Academic Data

Please list below all undergraduate and graduate college/universities and/or professional schools you have attended, in chronological order. Attach an additional page if necessary.

SCHOOL	DATE		DEGREE/MAJOR
	FROM	TO	

Professional Data

Please list your teaching or other professional certifications, including where they were obtained and in which areas. Attach an additional page if necessary.

CERTIFICATION	OBTAINED FROM	AREA

Employment

Name of Current Employer: _____

Location: _____

Position title: _____

Additional Materials

1) **Biographical essay and photo**

Tell us about yourself, including your interests and work experience. Your essay should not exceed one page in length. Please double space and use 12-point font. Attach a recent photo of yourself.

2) **Essay Question**

Please respond to the questions below. Your response should not exceed three typed pages in length (12-point font, double spaced). Use standard, professional, high-quality writing style.

What are your interests within the field of deafblindness, deafness, visual impairment, or orientation and mobility? How do you envision using your education upon completion of your graduate program? How will your training help students or programs in your region? Do you have any additional skills that that will help you as a teacher in your region (languages spoken, community leadership experience, etc.)?

3) **Letters of Reference**

Please submit two letters of reference. These should attest to your professional abilities, leadership skills, and perseverance, and explain why you should be selected to receive the Students with Autism and Sensory Impairments scholarship.

4) **Vita or Resume**

Please include a current one- to two-page vita or resume showing educational and work experience.

5) **Teaching Commitment Obligation**

Please read and sign Teacher Commitment Obligation form. The electronic version of this document may include a typed signature, but the mailed copy must include an original hand-written signature.

Teaching Commitment Obligation and Scholarship Requirements

I understand that if I am selected to receive a Project SASI scholarship, I must:

- 1) teach on a fulltime basis in an approved special education program for a minimum of two consecutive years for each year of scholarship received (For information on federal service obligation, see <http://www.serviceobligations.ed.gov/1999%20faq.pdf>).
- 2) begin the first school year of eligible fulltime teaching service in a EC-12 school program within twelve months from the date I receive my certification, and
- 3) provide employment verification to Dr. Nora Griffin-Shirley at Texas Tech University until my obligation is fulfilled.

I understand that failure to comply with the above will result in a requirement to repay any scholarship funds received.

I understand that withdrawing from the program prior to completion will require me to refund all monies spent on tuition, travel, books, and other expenses.

I understand that not completing the program by the planned completion date may require me to pay for my own expenses beyond the planned completion date.

I understand that if money has been paid up front for travel that I do not complete, I will be required to refund the program for those expenses. Expenses for unused airline tickets may be reimbursed once they are used for program-required travel. Penalties for changing flights may not be reimbursed.

I understand that signing below does not guarantee selection as a Project SASI scholarship recipient.

Print full legal name

Signature

Date

Return completed application postmarked no later than July 1, 2013 to:

Joanne Whitson, Project Director

WY Deaf-Blind Project

215 West Buffalo

Carbon Building, Room 325

Rawlins, WY 82301