

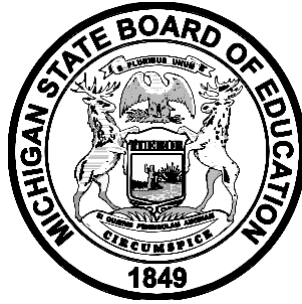
The Michigan Vision Services Severity Rating Scale

Michigan Department of Education

Low Incidence Outreach

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STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

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Introduction

The Vision Services Severity Rating Scale (VSSRS) has been developed to assist the Teacher Consultant for the Visually Impaired (TCVI) or Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) in making recommendations for services to students who are blind or visually impaired in the state of Michigan. It should be stressed that the Severity Rating Scales are not assessment/evaluation instruments, but rather tools for assisting in determining service delivery times.

Each of the seven categories listed on the VSSRS Severity of Need Profile is structured in terms of the impact on vision functioning as it relates to the student's educational program. When using the VSSRS, criteria provided within each of the categories is not all inclusive and many criteria overlap from one severity of need level to the next. Additional factors may influence the selection of the severity of need level by the teacher.

Rationale

A task force consisting of TCVIs and TVIs throughout the state of Michigan and from the Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) was formed to continue the process of revising the VSSRS and to address the standardization of service delivery to students who are blind or visually impaired. Proposed revisions were presented and discussed during working sessions at the 2010 Michigan Association for Education and Rehabilitation (MAER) of the Blind and Visually Impaired conference. The need for consistency when determining the educational needs of the visually impaired was the main focus. The Revised VSSRS is the result of extensive discussion in each of these discussions.

Purpose and Development

The purpose of this manual is to define criteria and guidelines for using the VSSRS with students identified as visually impaired. It is primarily intended for use with students in general education settings and may be applicable for some students with additional mild impairments. Further, it is intended to assist the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team in the selection of a vision service delivery model for existing as well as students who are newly identified as visually impaired. The VSSRS will also be used to document change of frequency of services for students who are already identified as visually impaired.

A Revised VSSRS may be completed for:

1. Initial assessment
2. IEP team meeting
3. End of each school year
4. Visual status changes
5. Placement changes
6. Other

Suggested steps for the Evaluation of a Student with a Visual Impairment:

1. Assess the student to determine his or her strengths and needs using a variety of assessment tools.
2. Complete the VSSRS to determine service delivery times.
3. Include recommendations of vision services in the TCVI or TVI report and share at the IEP team meeting.

The VSSRS consists of the following seven categories:

- Level of Vision (Medical)
- Functional Near Vision
- Reading Medium
- Low Vision Devices/Technology
- Material Preparation
- Compensatory Skills
- Communication With Student's Team/Pertinent Individuals

The Severity of Need in each of the scales is sequentially structured to correlate the degree of need for intervention/instruction from a TCVI or TVI, based on the severity of a student's visual impairment and educational needs.

Each of the categories is structured in terms of impact on the educational program as it relates to the student's age-appropriate needs. The Severity of Need descriptors within each category purposely overlap to some degree. To aid the TCVI/TVI in the selection of the Severity of Need that is most characteristic of the student with a visual impairment, additional evaluations may be necessary.

Category Definitions for the VSSRS

The VSSRS is primarily intended for use with students in general education settings and may be applicable for some students with additional mild impairments. It was developed for use with students in grades K–12 but could apply to students in preschool settings at the discretion of the certified TCVI/TVI.

- **Level of Vision (Medical):** refers to the student's distance vision and/or peripheral vision as reported by an eye care specialist. If both an acuity loss and field loss are present, add the two Severity of Need scores together and enter in the sum in the Score column.
- **Functional Near Vision:** refers to the student's level of functional near vision as determined by the TCVI or TVI (Appendix A).
- **Reading Medium:** refers to the student's primary mode of learning (i.e., braille, print, print modifications, auditory, or combination).
- **Low Vision/Technology:** refers to the student's need for and use of low vision devices and technology to facilitate maximum participation in the general education curriculum.
- **Material Preparation:** refers to the estimated time needed by the TCVI or TVI to modify materials necessary for the student's participation in his or her

educational program. Additional material preparation may be completed by a teaching assistant/paraprofessional/brailist but is not to be considered for this rating scale.

- **Compensatory Skills:** instruction in skills such as auditory and tactile efficiency, awareness of body in space, social skills, activities of daily living, etc.
- **Communication With Student's Team/Pertinent Individuals:** refers to the amount of time needed for communication with school personnel, parents, medical personnel, technology support personnel, and agencies concerning the student's educational program.

Contributing Factors to Service Delivery

Other factors may influence the selection of a service model that may not be mentioned in the Severity of Need Profile. If appropriate, those factors which influence a modification of the frequency of service may be marked.

A choice of one or more of the Contributing Factors to Service Delivery on the Severity of Need Summary may increase or decrease the frequency of service that is indicated by the Final Severity of Need Score.

The following factors may be considered:

- Age of student
- Attendance
- Availability of materials/equipment
- Consultation and coordination of Expanded Core Curriculum activities
- Progressive condition
- Recent vision loss
- School staff need for support
- Student cooperation
- Training of Paraprofessional/Teaching Assistant/Braillist
- Transition to new school/building
- Travel time
- Numerous accommodations provided by TCVI/TVI
- **Direct Curriculum Instruction—Occasionally,** the TCVI or TVI is the staff person responsible for all or the majority of curriculum instruction in math, reading, or another subject. In this situation, an additional one to four points may be applied to the Severity of Need score.
- Other

Recommendations of Services

- **Service Not Indicated:** The student does not require vision services provided by a TCVI or TVI.
- **One to Five Times per Year:** Contact by the TCVI or TVI may be with the student or other pertinent individuals, one to five times per school year.

- Three to Four Times per Semester: The student is seen directly by TCVI or TVI three to four times per semester. Services may consist of direct instruction in short “units” of instruction clustered within several days or weeks. Consultation is with the student and other pertinent individuals.
- One to Three Times per Month: The student is seen directly by the TCVI or TVI one to three times a month for 20 to 60 minutes each. In addition, the certified TCVI or TVI may provide consultation with pertinent individuals.
- One to Two Times per Week: This recommendation is designed for a student with a severe visual impairment who may need frequent material preparation/modification or instruction in technology. The student requires direct service from the TCVI or TVI one to two times a week for 30 to 40 minutes each. The TCVI or TVI provides regular communication to pertinent individuals regarding the student's needs.
- Two or More Times per Week: The student is seen by the TCVI or TVI two or more times a week for 45 or more minutes each. This recommendation is designed primarily for a student who is non-visual and who requires an inclusive program in all areas of instruction related to an appropriate educational program.

Directions for Completing the Vision Services Severity of Need Profile and Severity of Need Summary

The Severity of Need Profile and Severity of Need Summary can be found at the end of this document.

1. Category names are listed vertically along the left hand side of the Vision Services Severity of Need Profile Worksheet. Refer to definitions on the preceding page as necessary.
2. Descriptors are listed horizontally for each category. The descriptors are listed sequentially in terms of severity of need, from none to profound.
3. The numbers attached to each severity of need are considered part of a continuum. The specific number under each severity of need name is the numerical rating to be given for that level. For example, under Mild, a numerical rating of 1 is possible, while under Severe, a numerical rating of 3 is possible.
4. For each category, mark the descriptor that best describes the student. Place the appropriate severity of need number in the right hand column (Severity Score Column).
5. Total the right hand column to get a Severity of Need Score.
6. If appropriate, fill out the Contributing Factors to Service Delivery on the Severity of Need Summary by adding or subtracting 0.5 points. This number will be combined with the Severity of Need Score on the Severity of Need Profile and the result will be placed in the Final Severity of Need Score box on the Severity of Need Summary.
7. Using the Severity of Need Summary, refer to the table titled “Severity of Need Score and Frequency of Need.” Locate the range which contains the Final Severity of Need Score to determine the frequency of service.

Appendix A

Table of Approximate Equivalent Visual Acuity Notations

These notations serve as an indication of the approximate relationship between recordings of distant and near vision and point type sizes. Note **Jaeger** and **Metric** are **Near Vision** measurements.

<u>Distant Snellen</u>	<u>Jaeger</u>	<u>Metric</u>	<u>Point/Font</u>	<u>Equivalent Reading</u>
20/20 (ft.)	1	0.37 (M.)	3	
20/30	2	0.50	5	
20/40	4	0.75	6	Bible <small>(example)</small>
20/50	6	0.87	8	Newspaper <small>(example)</small>
20/60	8	1.00	9	High school texts <small>(example)</small>
20/80	10	1.50	12	
20/100	11	1.75	14	Children's books <small>(example)</small>
20/120	12	2.00	18	Large print books <small>(example)</small>
20/200	17	3.50	24	
12.5/200	19	6.00	36	Newspaper sub headline (example)
8/200	20	8.00		Headline (example)
5/200				
3/200				

Vision Services Severity Rating Scale (VSSRS) Revised 2013 Severity of Need Profile

Student: _____ Birthdate: _____ Grade/Program: _____ Date: _____

Severity of Need		NONE 0	MILD 1	MODERATE 2	SEVERE 3	PROFOUND 4	SCORE
Level of Vision (Medical)	(1) Distance Acuity	20/40 – 20/70	20/70 – 20/100	20/100 – 20/400	20/400 – Count fingers	Light perception to nil	
	(2) Peripheral Field	Full field	90 degree-30 degree Field	30 degree–10 degree Field	10 degree Field or less	No field	
(3) Functional New Vision (Appendix A)		Reads 9 to 12 point font	Reads 14 to 18 point font	Reads 20 to 26 point font	Reads 28 to 36 point font or larger	Unable to read print	
(4) Reading Medium		Regular print reader/ proficient braille reader/ pre-reader	Large print reader	Print needs vary. Occasional modifications needed (CCTV, magnifier, etc.)	Dual reading mediums: print/ braille/ auditory	Learning new reading medium (braille, auditory, technology, etc.)	
(5) Low Vision Devices/ Technology		No instruction needed	Mastery of devices/ limited instruction	Review or refine skills using existing devices	Instruction in additional functions of existing devices	Introduction of technology, equipment, skills (i.e. notetaker, screen reader)	
(6) Material Preparation		None	Occasional preparation and modifications needed	Monthly preparation and modifications needed	Weekly preparation and modifications needed	Daily preparation and modifications needed	
(7) Compensatory Skills		No instruction needed	Occasional instruction and input needed	Monthly instruction and input needed	Weekly instruction and input needed	Daily instruction and input needed	
(8) Communication with Student's Team/ Pertinent Individuals		Student successfully advocates for self	Occasional communication necessary	Monthly communication necessary	Weekly communication necessary	Daily communication necessary	
Severity of Need Score							

Vision Services Severity Rating Scale (VSSRS) Severity of Need Summary

Student: _____ Birthdate: _____ Grade/Program: _____ Date: _____

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SERVICE DELIVERY	
If appropriate, add (+.5) or subtract (-.5) points for each	
	Age of student
	Attendance
	Availability of materials/ equipment
	Expanded Core Curriculum: Prep/ Instruction/ Coordination
	Progressive condition
	Recent vision loss
	School staff need for support
	Student cooperation
	Training of Paraprofessional/ Teaching Assistant/ Braillist
	Transition to new school/ building
	Travel time
	Numerous accommodations provided by TCVI/TVI
	Direct curriculum instruction (add 1 to 4 points)
	Other (explain)



Severity of Need Score	Frequency of Service
0 - 2	Service not indicated
3 - 5	1 - 5 times/year
6 - 8	3 - 4 times/semester
9 - 13	1 - 3 times/month 20 - 60 minutes each
14 - 23	1 - 2 times/week 30 - 40 minutes each
24 - 32	*4 or more times/week 45 or more minutes each

*Adapted for Texas with the approval of Michigan Department of Education-Low Incidence Outreach



RECOMMENDATION OF SERVICES	
Final Severity of Need Score	Frequency of Service

Severity of Need Score	
Contributing Factors +/-	
Final Severity of Need Score	