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June 30, 2016

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Dr. Page McCraw, President
355 Cedar Springs Road
Spartanburg, South Carolina 29302

Dear Dr. McCraw:

Thank you for arranging the Education and Cultural Subcommittee's visit to the Braille Production Center on June 23, 2016. We appreciated the opportunity to see a portion of the School for the Deaf and the Blind's outreach work in action. As a result of visiting the center and interacting with staff, subcommittee members request the agency respond to the following questions:

- What does it cost to run the center? Please include both costs to SCSDB and an estimate from SCDC regarding the value of the space.
- Considering the current trend in work requests, is there an optimal size for the Braille Production Center?
- What resources would be required to grow the center to that optimal size?
- How much income does the center generate?
- How does the center determine how close the tactile graphics produced align with what a student would face on a standardized examination that includes tactile graphics?
- Is it possible for the center to become a Braille publisher?
- What are the pros and cons to licensing the electronic files created at the center?

Please respond to these inquiries by July 12, 2016. Please contact committee staff if you have any questions about this inquiry. The subcommittee looks forward to meeting with the agency again on July 13th.

Sincerely,

Signature Redacted

James E. Smith, Jr.

**South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind
Division of Outreach Services**

Braille Production Center
SCSDB Response to Request for Additional Information
July 12, 2016

Scott A. Falcone, Director, Division of Outreach Services

What does it cost to run the center? Please include both costs to SCSDB and an estimate from SCDC regarding the value of the space.

The approximate cost to run the Braille Production Center over the last three fiscal years are as follows: \$109,128.80 for the 2013-2014 school year, \$114,182.21 for the 2014-2015 school year, and \$125,940.85 for the 2015-2016 school year. The Braille Production Center utilizes approximately 1,570 sq. ft. of the Recreation Building located at Leath Correctional Institution. Utilizing values intended for insurance purposes, the value of the Recreation Building is \$1,531,49.00 for 12,897 sq. ft., which equates to \$118.75/sq. ft. Utilizing the \$118.75/sq. ft. price, the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) states the estimated value of the space occupied by the Braille Production Center is \$186,437.50.

Considering the current trend in work requests, is there an optimal size for the Braille Production Center?

The amount of work requests at the Braille Production Center has increased each year for the past five years. As a result, there has been an increased workload for each individual transcriber causing challenges to complete production of required textbooks during the current school year. The national implementation date of the Unified English Braille Code (UEB) was January 4, 2016, and South Carolina began the process of providing all K - 3 textbooks in the UEB code. Each year, an additional grade level will be added to the UEB cycle until all textbooks are provided in the new code. All new transcriptions produced by the Braille Production Center, regardless of grade level are in UEB. Consequently, the next three to five years may result in higher production compared to years in the past. In order to help relieve this potential burden, SCSDB may need to explore the option of adding four additional inmate transcribers taking the total inmate staff up to twenty. This size will be manageable with two full-time SCSDB employees overseeing the program and can continue operating within the existing space with the need of adding two separate office areas.

What resources would be required to grow the center to that optimal size?

Additional office space outside of the current location would be needed. If SCDC would permit SCSDB to use two additional offices (one currently approved by SCDC) in the hallway of the existing Recreation Building, all the networked embossers would be moved into one office space

and the manager would occupy the second office space. This would permit additional four staff members into the current space.

The local network infrastructure would need to be expanded to meet this change along with adding additional cabling and network ports.

Additional annual program budget funding would be required. Once fully trained, the additional four inmate transcribers would increase the existing payroll of approximately \$12,000.00 per year. A one time purchase of an updated Braillo B600 industrial production embosser in the amount of \$72,495.00 (1,800 pages per hour) and an upgrade/refurbishment of one existing Braillo 200 (600 pages per hour) in the approximate amount of \$15,000.00. The upgrade to the current older model Braillo 200 would increase the speed by 50% and would serve as a back up for the new purchase if the system went down. Four laptops and four monitors would need to be purchased. Four additional seats would have to be added to the Duxbury software license in the amount of \$1,600.00. Additionally, two desks, four chairs and tactile graphic embosser stands would need to be purchased in the approximate amount of \$2,000.00.

How much income does the BPC generate?

Revenue generated by the Braille Production Center over the last three fiscal years are as follows: \$122,924.59 for the 2013-2014 school year, \$160,344.61 for the 2014-2015 school year and \$143,507.47 for the 2015-2016 school year. Revenue generated this school year reflects a price reduction decided in April 2016 for South Carolina transcriptions. Rate reductions are as follows: \$1.17 per page to \$.90 for new transcriptions and \$.78 per page to \$.45 for reprints.

How does the center determine how closely the tactile graphics produced align with what a student would face on a standardized examination that includes tactile graphics?

Every textbook a student uses is not produced by the same vendor, so tactile graphics within the student's daily access to braille varies. The same would be true for standardized examinations. There are guidelines and standards set forth by BANA (Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010, Published by the Braille Authority of North America, 2011) that addresses production of good and appropriate tactile graphics, but that is not a guarantee that all braille producers nationwide follow them. However, SCSDB's Braille Production Center strictly adheres to these standards.

Is it possible for the center to become a Braille publisher?

The purpose of the SCSDB Braille Production Center is to transcribe braille textbooks for students in South Carolina. With the ability to supply braille textbooks within our own state, this affords a flexibility to meet all student needs to the greatest extent possible. For example, if a student is in a class where the teacher uses only part of the textbook or does not follow the order of the textbook, the Braille Production Center can provide the material in the order that is needed for instruction by the classroom teacher providing a syllabus in advance. When braille textbooks are

purchased from an outside vendor, this does not allow for this type of flexibility and can result in the student not having the material in braille at the same time as their sighted peers.

Files of braille textbooks are stored on a server to “reprint” as needed. If another state requests a book already printed, the Braille Production Center sells the book at the reprinting cost per page rate. The SCSDB Braille Production Center will braille a new document (textbook) for an outside source only if time allows. However, South Carolina students always remain first priority, and producing braille materials for K-12 students in South Carolina is the center’s primary goal.

Currently, the American Printing House for the Blind runs a braille database (Louis Database) which contains all national edition textbooks available across the country. Books produced at the SCSDB Braille Production Center are registered with this database.

What are the pros and cons to licensing the electronic files created at the center?

The Chaffe Amendment (now section 121 of the Copyright Act - copyright laws of 1996) allows for the production of braille materials without obtaining publisher permission. Thus, the SCSDB Braille Production Center has not experienced a need to license electronic files and quite possibly may not have the ability for such licensure. All textbooks and instructional materials are copyrighted and owned by the publisher.