

September 12, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for continued federal funding for the **Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP)**. As the Assistant Director of Special Education for Marathon County Special Education, which serves six small and rural school districts in Central Wisconsin, I have seen firsthand the vital role this program plays in helping us meet the complex needs of our most vulnerable students.

In rural regions like ours, resources are limited and specialists are few. When we have students with dual sensory impairments—students who are deaf-blind—the challenge of providing an appropriate education becomes exponentially more complex. These are often the students with the most significant needs in our entire special education population.

I want to share a recent example that illustrates just how critical the WDBTAP is to our schools. Recently, we have had multiple students across several districts with combined hearing and vision impairments. Our local teams did everything they could, but we lacked the expertise to develop appropriate programming on our own.

Jen and Heidi from WDBTAP responded immediately. They traveled to our rural locations to conduct on-site evaluations. They didn't just observe and make recommendations; they provided **hands-on, role-specific training** to our staff members. They equipped our professionals with tactile communication strategies, coached us on positioning students so we could access their sensory registry, and guided our teams through individualized adaptations. Most importantly, they provided clear, actionable guidance that was tailored to each student's unique profile.

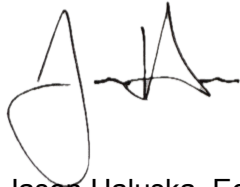
But their support didn't stop there. After their visits, the WDBTAP team continued to follow up with us to answer our questions, helping problem-solve challenges, and guide our teams in refining service delivery. They even suggested adaptive equipment we could use and assisted us with procuring that equipment. Their ongoing partnership allowed us to confidently design educational programs that truly met the needs of our deaf-blind students—programs that **upheld our obligation to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), which we could not have fulfilled without their help.**

This is not just technical assistance. This is educational equity in action.

I urge you to maintain federal funding for the Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project. For small, rural districts like ours, WDBTAP is not a luxury—it is a necessity. Without it, students who are already marginalized by the severity of their disabilities and the remoteness of their communities risk being left without the specialized support they are legally and morally entitled to receive.

Thank you for your time, and for your continued commitment to supporting all learners—especially those who need us most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Haluska', with a large loop on the 'J' and a stylized 'H'.

Jason Haluska, Ed.S.
Assistant Director of Special Education
Marathon County Special Education
jhaluska@mcse.k12.wi.us