

Editor:

Tanni L. Anthony, Ph.D.
State Consultant on
Blindness/Low Vision

Colorado Department of Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202

(303) 866-6681 (voice)

(303) 866-6767 (fax)

E-mail: anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Put Your Own Mask on First!

By Tanni Anthony



At the recent Courage to Risk Conference, one of the speakers made a comment that really got my attention. Kim Bevill advised, “Put your own mask on first!” Anyone who has flown on a commercial plane knows this is part of the safety information shared before the plane takes off. Remember ... “Should the cabin lose pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the overhead area .. please place the bag over your own mouth and nose before assisting children.”

This is a good life practice and not just on a plane that may be experiencing challenges. It can be applied to life challenges too. The inherent meaning is that we as adults are not good to anyone, if we are not emotionally secure and balanced to take on the next task in front of us. Whether we are wearing a caregiver hat or a professional hat, we need to put our metaphorical mask first so we can be in a position of true attention to the people we care for in our lives. In these ever busy times, we must first take care of ourselves to be of good use to others.

Since Kim shared this message, I have had the opportunity to be on five different flights. As I waited for those take-offs, I listened attentively and smiled when the oxygen mask part of the flight attendant message was shared. Each time I smiled and nodded to myself - this is advice worth heeding both in the air and on the ground. *Put your own mask on first!*

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

**A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
January—February 2009**

Table of Contents

Page	Page	Page
1 Put Your Own Mask On First	12 Survival Kit for College	24 Check it Out
2 CSAP	14 Info about DVR Services	25 CAER Information
5 Bits from Bonnie	17 Conferences	25 Families Connecting Families Conference
6 Low Vision News	17 CSAP Review Opportunity	26 Youth Services Programs
7 Low Vision Clinics	18 Dots of Interest	27 Braille Testing Docs
7 Braille Mentor Program	19 Jobs in Colorado	28 Vision Coalition Notes
8 Spotlight on ROP	20 Para Olympian Story	35 Colorado Connections
10 Resources and Materials	21 Spotted Teaching Dots	
11 Scholarship Information	22 Calendar of Events	

2008-09 CSAP Tests and Students Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired: General Recommendations

By Tanni Anthony

The CSAP Test Administration period has arrived! Please review these general recommendations well before administering a CSAP test to a student who is blind/visually impaired:

<u>CSAP 2009 Assessment Administration Dates</u>	<u>Regular Testing Window</u>	<u>Early Testing Window</u>
Grade 3 Reading	2/17/09 to 2/27/09	2/2/09 to 2/13/09
Grade 3 Writing and Grades 4-10	3/9/09 to 4/10/09	3/2/09 to 4/03/09

Test Formats

- ◆ The CSAP test is published in five possible formats for students who are blind/visually impaired: (a) regular print; (b) standard large print of 18 point; (c) extra large print (per an approved nonstandard accommodation request); (d) uncontracted braille; and (e) contracted braille.
- ◆ If the test is in braille format, it is mandated that a person who is administering the test can read and write braille.

Data Grid or Biogrid of the Test

- ◆ Please fill out the “braille version” bubble on the student data grid. This is very important as some of the tests MAY have omitted items due to visual-bias challenges. This bubble is the only way for the test publisher to know that a particular grade/content test in braille may need to be pulled for special scoring (due to fewer test items).

Transcriber Notes on Braille Tests

- ◆ There will be a label on the front of the test indicating that the print version of the braille transcriber notes are located in the back of each test. The label should be in a bright color to attract your attention. If for some reason, it is not obvious if there are transcriber notes, **please go through the braille test ahead of time** to determine the location of the transcriber notes.
- ◆ TVIs should work with their students to scan for braille transcriber notes. This skill may need to be an actual IEP goal to ensure that the student has this ability.
- ◆ There will be transcriber notes specific to picture descriptions. Captions will be noted as such to make the distinction between a picture description and an actual picture caption.

Preview of the Test and Gathering of Need Testing Materials

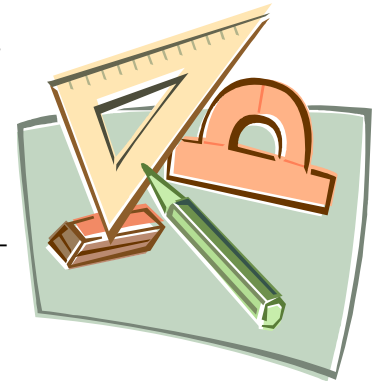
- ◆ It is the responsibility of the TVI to read through the braille CSAP test well ahead of time in order to determine if there are any needed “other materials” for the test. For example, some of the math tests will require materials such as graph paper and material to plot points for making a line graph. Other needs may include 3-D geometric shapes.

Check to see if it may be helpful to bring a tactile diagram kit, wikki sticks, and thumb tacks for some of the math tests in the older grades. Be sure to have graph paper on hand for tests requiring graphing.

- ◆ The label on the front page of the test should be in a bright color. The label will direct the test evaluator to look in the back of the test booklet for the envelope with the needed materials for that particular test.
- ◆ Please remember that the Braille version of the test is also considered to be a part of the secure materials and must be secured on a daily basis. No versions of the CSAP may be stored in classrooms.

Protractors, Rulers, and Tangrams

- ◆ If the test requires a protractor, an APH protractor will be included. It would be best practice, however, to be proactive and ensure that the student uses the protractor used in everyday instruction prior to the test. (CDE is no longer dispersing protractors).
- ◆ The rulers used last year seemed to be fine. They are paper rulers with braille added. If you want to bring the ruler that the student has used for everyday instructional purposes, that would be the better option. Please note: ALL measurement tools are preserved at their true measurements. A large print ruler, for example, is not going to have larger increments of spacing than a regular ruler.
- ◆ Tangrams will be provided for the math tests needing these materials. Be proactive to ensure that these materials have been sent with the test.



Accommodations

The *Colorado Accommodations Manual* can be found at http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/manuals/2009/2008-0929_CO_Accomm_Man.pdf

- ◆ Please review the manual for allowable accommodations. These accommodations should be on the student's IEP for testing purposes. Be aware of accommodations that provide for extra time or give the student appropriate breaks to accommodate for visual fatigue etc. Also it will be important to be aware of the rules for scribing. There are times when using a scribe is the most efficient way to collect the student's information. A scribe cannot be used when the test is actually measuring writing skills unless the student dictates needed punctuation etc.
- ◆ For tasks requiring writing, students can use a separate piece of paper for their answer.

The Test Directions Etc.

- ◆ If a student does not understand the test directions, the TVI can use different words to convey the intent of the test items. If the directions do not apply to the student such as "use your number 2 graphic pencil, the TVI can substitute the language needed to fit the type of writing instrument for the student.
- ◆ It is permissible to give students verbal information to help orient them to a tactile graphic, as long as information is not given to guide the student to the answer.

- ◆ Look at what the test question is measuring. Sometimes it is not tied to the actual content of items – but another construct. For example, the question may not truly be about baseball, but some aspect of math. We have had people think this is a visual bias issue (though our kids should know about baseball – but I hope you understand the example. Go Rockies!)

Suppressed Items

- ◆ There are a handful of suppressed items in the braille version of the CSAP tests. This should not be a surprise to the TVI administering the test(s) – the expectation is that each test be previewed ahead of time. A suppression of a test question DOES NOT mean that we do not have high expectations of our braille readers or that they should not know a certain construct. Please be sure to explain this to your student. In the rare instance that a question has been suppressed, it has been done so through a strict peer-review process. Reasons for an item to be legitimately suppressed include: (a) there is no good way to illustrate the graphic tactually and there are no corresponding easy-to-get objects to accommodate the missing graphic and (b) the amount of time needed to tactilely review the needed graphics that correspond to the test question are inordinate (we test this onsite at the National Braille Press and have instances where it took the braille reader 30 minutes just to acquire the needed tactile information to answer one test question).

Transcription of Results in Regular CSAP Booklet

- ◆ Students who use a large print and/or braille test format may record answers directly on the adapted format copy of the test, may use a scribe or use other techniques for response as designated in the student's IEP. Upon completion of testing, the student's test responses must be transferred into a regular print test booklet. When the student has used braille as a response format, the transfer of this information into the regular print assessment booklet should be completed by the TVI or a district brailist. The content of both a large print and a braille test must be transcribed into the regular print CSAP booklet. The data grid should indicate it was a braille test...

Returning Completed Tests

- ◆ All transcribed test booklets, along with the original braille and standard and nonstandard large print test materials must be returned to the CTB/McGraw –Hill Scoring Center with the other CSAP test materials. They should not be retained in Colorado. Be sure to turn in all CSAP tests.

Contributing to the Annual Item Analysis Process

- ◆ Tanni has sent out an electronic form to gather information about the 2008-09 CSAP tests; if there are particular test items in a grade/content/particular format test that were problematic for your students. We also want to know if the test had no concerns. This item specific information is reviewed annually with the Unit of Student Assessment and the test publisher.
- ◆ The CSAP questions have been reviewed over the past 6-7 years for visual-item bias. We have been diligent in removing or altering questions that are too visually-based for accommodation and, on rare occasions, would be too time consuming to complete. As such, the expectation is that the braille reading student will be able to complete the CSAP test. For example, visual bias is NOT due to a student not having an experience with a particular type of a tree or a school gym.
- ◆ Be familiar with grade-level expectations. We can ensure that our students have instructional experiences commensurate with their peers when we are aware of what is addressed in the state standards (e.g., Venn Diagrams, web addresses, diacritical marks, Braille number lines, use of graphic organizers, use of footnotes, etc.).



Bits From Bonnie

By Bonnie Snyder

BonnieLS21@gmail.com

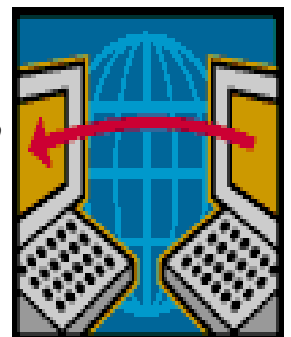
This is the time of year to start planning for a week-long summer class for TVIs, and other interested people. I have been talking with Jim Olson and he has graciously agreed to team teach with me this summer. I am, again, looking at the third week of June for this class. Location is still in limbo, but as soon as we have something set up you will be notified.

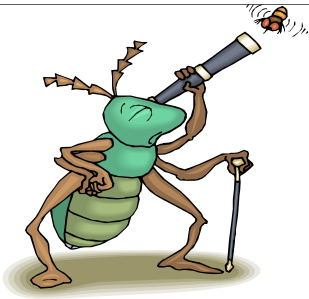
So, what shall we cover this summer? Jim and I thought it would be of great value for us to take a look at DAISY and audio book technology. This will include but not be limited to the following:

NIMAC – NIMAS	Amis	TPB
Book Wizard Producer	Book Wizard Reader	Victor software
Victor Breeze	Book Port	Braille Note
PacMate	Voice/Braille Sense	PlexTalk
XML format	BookShare	Audible.com
TextAloud	MP3 books	RockBox for MP3 players

We are hoping to give you all hands on experience with the software and hardware as well as encourage lively discussions about the audio component of blind education. If you have a particular favorite that was not included in the above list, please let Jim or me know and we will make every effort to include it. Feel free to ask questions about the proposed subject matter for the class so that we can be sure to cover what is valuable to you.

Editor's Note: We are in our final months of technology funding for this school year. If you have not had the chance to call on Bonnie to assist you with you with the AT needs, please make these arrangements soon. If you have suggestions for Bonnie on topics for the summer course, please let Bonnie know so this course can be customized to your learning needs.





Low Vision News

By Jim Olson, CLVT, COMS, TVI

The following information is being reprinted from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) directions for the 2009 Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students:

In order for students to be eligible for registration in the Federal Quota Program, they MUST meet the requirements as outlined in An Act to Promote the Education of the Blind. Students must:

- ◆ *Meet the definition of blindness*
- ◆ *Be enrolled in a formally organized public or private, nonprofit educational program of less than college level.*
- ◆ *Be enrolled with the registering school or agency on the first Monday in January.*

The following documents are not to be submitted to APH, but must be on file with the agency or school where students are attending in the event that an audit requires evidence of the student's educational program or visual acuity:

- ◆ **Written education plan**—for each student registered. This verification that the student is in a formally organized educational program may be an IEP, a 504, or any other written action plan.
- ◆ **Current eye report**—by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist must be on file for each eligible student. (A report from a neurologist is acceptable for students classified as 'Functions at the Definition of Blindness'.)
- ◆ **The report must be current within three years.** Exemption from the current eye report regulation: students with proven non-changing eye conditions, such as bilateral enucleations, anophthalmos, or other conditions determined immutable. A diagnosis of Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) does not exempt administrative units from the current eye report regulation.

A diagnosis of Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) does *not* exempt administrative units from the current eye report regulation.

The low vision evaluation clinic team is concerned with current eye health care because our Colorado clinic does not perform eye health care as part of its low vision evaluation process. We strive to work in conjunction with a student's established eye care professional. Current eye health and eyeglass prescription information is a vital component to the procedure of prescribing appropriate magnification for near and distance viewing tasks.

Prevent Blindness America (www.preventblindness.org) recommends that "everyone receive a comprehensive eye exam through dilated pupils regularly as recommended by their eye doctor." People with special risks and students with diagnosed eye conditions may need more frequent eye health care. Several free fact sheets, including a children's eye health position statement, are available at http://www.preventblindness.org/resources/fact_sheets.html.

If you have any questions please call Jim Olson at (719) 578-2195.



RETINOPATHY OF PREMATURITY (ROP)

Information found at:<http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/rop/#2>

What is Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)?

Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) is a potentially blinding eye disorder that primarily affects premature infants weighing about 2¾ pounds (1250 grams) or less that are born before 31 weeks of gestation (A full-term pregnancy has a gestation of 38–42 weeks). The smaller a baby is at birth, the more likely that baby is to develop ROP. This condition, which usually develops in both eyes—is one of the most common causes of visual loss in childhood and can lead to lifelong vision impairment and blindness. ROP was first diagnosed in 1942.

How Many Infants have ROP?

With advances in neonatal care, smaller and more premature infants survive. These infants are at greater higher risk for ROP. Not all babies who are premature develop ROP. There are approximately 3.9 million infants born in the U.S. each year; of those, about 28,000 weigh 2¾ pounds or less. About 14,000–16,000 of these infants are affected by some degree of ROP. The disease improves and leaves no permanent damage in milder cases of ROP. About 90 percent of all infants with ROP are in the milder category and do not need treatment. However, infants with more severe disease can develop impaired vision or even blindness. About 1,100–1,500 infants annually develop ROP that is severe enough to require medical treatment. About 400–600 infants each year in the US become legally blind from ROP.

What Causes ROP?

ROP occurs when abnormal blood vessels grow and spread throughout the retina, the tissue that lines the back of the eye. These abnormal blood vessels are fragile and can leak, scarring the retina and pulling it out of position. This causes a retinal detachment. Retinal detachment is the main cause of visual impairment and blindness in ROP.

Several complex factors may be responsible for the development of ROP. The eye starts to develop at about 16 weeks of pregnancy, when the blood vessels of the retina begin to form at the optic nerve in the back of the eye. The blood vessels grow gradually toward the edges of the developing retina, supplying oxygen and nutrients. During the last 12 weeks of a pregnancy, the eye develops rapidly. When a baby is born full-term, the retinal blood vessel growth is mostly complete (The retina usually finishes growing a few weeks to a month after birth). But if a baby is born prematurely, before these blood vessels have reached the edges of the retina, normal vessel growth may stop. The edges of the retina—the periphery—may not get enough oxygen and nutrients. Scientists believe that the periphery of the retina then

sends out signals to other areas of the retina for nourishment. New abnormal vessels begin to grow. These new blood vessels are fragile and can bleed, leading to retinal scarring. When these scars shrink, they pull on the retina, causing it to detach from the back of the eye

Are There Different Stages of ROP?

Yes. ROP is classified in five stages, ranging from mild (stage I) to severe (stage V):

Stage I — Mildly abnormal blood vessel growth. Many children who develop stage I improve with no treatment and eventually develop normal vision. The disease resolves on its own without further progression.

Stage II — Moderately abnormal blood vessel growth. Many children who develop stage II improve with no treatment and eventually develop normal vision. The disease resolves on its own without further progression.

Stage III — Severely abnormal blood vessel growth. The abnormal blood vessels grow toward the center of the eye instead of following their normal growth pattern along the surface of the retina. Some infants who develop stage III improve with no treatment and eventually develop normal vision. However, when infants have a certain degree of Stage III and "plus disease" develops, treatment is considered. "Plus disease" means that the blood vessels of the retina have become enlarged and twisted, indicating a worsening of the disease. Treatment at this point has a good chance of preventing retinal detachment.

Stage IV — Partially detached retina. Traction from the scar produced by bleeding, abnormal vessels pulls the retina away from the wall of the eye.

Stage V — Completely detached retina and the end stage of the disease. If the eye is left alone at this stage, the baby can have severe visual impairment and even blindness.

- Most babies who develop ROP have stages I or II. However, in a small number of babies, ROP worsens, sometimes very rapidly. Untreated ROP threatens to destroy vision.

Resource Information:

ROPARD is The Association for Retinopathy of Prematurity and Related Diseases (ROP). Founded in 1990 by a concerned group of physicians and volunteers, ROPARD's primary goal has been the funding of clinically relevant research to understand, treat, and prevent ROP and related retinal diseases. The website is:
<http://ropard.org/>

For a bibliography of books specific to blindness/visual impairment, go to this webpage on ROPARD's website:
<http://ropard.org/bibliograph.php>



Resources and Materials



EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE:

Hugh Haggerty operates a web site that offers a variety of educational software and games. The products specifically designed for people who are blind or losing vision. One such program helps the user learn Braille using a standard computer with adapted keys. To learn about more programs, visit www.hahaggerty.com or call Hugh at (353) 861-8313.



WEBANYWHERE:

This is a web-based screen reader. No special software is required to install WebAnyWhere. This screen reader allows persons who are blind or low vision to access the web from anywhere on any computer. For more information, go to:

<http://webanywhere.cs.washington.edu>



NATIONAL BRAILLE PRESS ITEMS:

A Pocketful of Sound: A Quick-Start and Buyer's Guide to Accessible Book and Music Player by Anna Dresner describes and compares talking book players and related software, including the Zen Stone, iPod, Rockbox, Olympus DS series, Victor Reader Stream, Icon, and others. This book is available in hardcopy Braille, ASCII, Portabook format (electronic contracted Braille files) on CD-ROM or for download for \$14.00.

Label It! Is a new book by Judy Dixon that provides labeling strategies for clothing and accessories, medications, food containers, appliances, and a variety of other items. The cost is \$10.00.

OFFICE 2007 KEYBOARDING COMMANDS

includes keyboarding command in separate booklets for PowerPoint 2007, Word 2007, Excel 2007 and Outlook 2007. The four-booklet can be purchased separately for \$5.00 each

To order these items from National Braille Press and/or to learn about their other publications, go to:
<http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/publications.html>

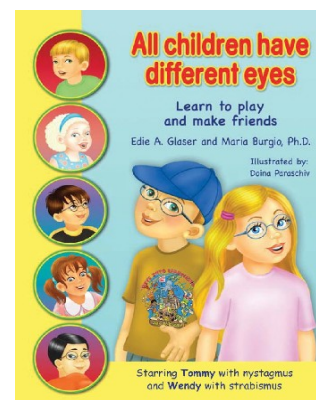


Touch the Invisible Sky is a braille-print book featuring spectacular tactile graphics. The sixth book by astronomer Noreen Grice, co-authored by NASA scientists Simon Steel and Doris Daou, uses images from different telescopes that detect light in various wavelengths and shows how the images they create can vary. For information on ordering *Touch the Invisible Sky*, visit www.ozonepublishing.net.



All Children Have Different Eyes:

Learn to Play and Make Friends. This book focuses on how children with visual impairments can play and make friends. Parents and teachers will learn how visual impairment affects social interactions. Over 40 examples and activities transform the engaging stories into an interactive workbook for parents and teachers. A glossary for kids and resource listing for adults are included. The book is available through the American Printing House for the Blind (but not on quota funds). For more information, contact www.aph.org





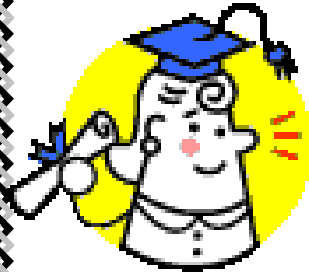
MORE TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Scholarship Information

The application process for the 2009 Diversity Scholarships sponsored by Kaiser Permanente Colorado is in full swing! We invite students who are entering their undergraduate studies, Master level students, and Doctoral students to apply. The link to the application and information is:

http://physiciancareers.kp.org/co/scholarship/web_pages/background_information.htm

This program was created as a community outreach effort to financially assist students pursuing an education for any career associated with the health care or public health fields. The scholarships were established, and are sponsored, by Kaiser Permanente's



“Education for Life” Program

Applications Now Available

Application Deadline: March 1, 2009



The Need: Students who are visually impaired and blind throughout the state of Colorado are faced with unique challenges in life. Many students find it difficult to "see their future."

The Mission: To provide financial assistance to students who are visually impaired or blind and who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to encourage and support the pursuit of higher education (community college or university), which will enhance both career and personal success.

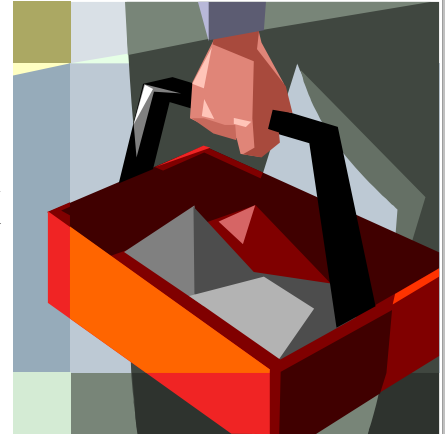
To apply for an “Education for Life” scholarship and to obtain more information, please go to: www.seethefuture.org and click on “Education for Life” scholarships. You may also call Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund at 719-471-3200.

A Survival Kit for College

By Amy Brush, MS Ed, TVI (Amy_Brush@caboces.org)

This article is reprinted with permission from Amy Brush. It was featured in the Fall Division of Visual Impairment Quarterly, 2008.

This past school year, I had a senior in High School in New York State. She has used a Braille Note, JAWS, Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, hard copy braille, Perkins braillewriter, among other equipment and resources to be successful in her high school career. During her senior year, she was accepted to a four-year university in Ohio. While she is a very successful student, I realized that I had been managing many things for her as far as accounts, troubleshooting of equipment, and progress management of things more independently. The further we went with this kind of thinking, the more I realized she may benefit from a “survival kit” of sorts to refer to once on her own. Never having had a student of mine graduate and head off to college, I feel this is as much of test of my work and skills as hers. It has been my job to prepare her for independence—this project helped me to assess her specific needs and to organize lessons associated with those needs and to build our kit.



Included in this kit were the following tools:

1. All the technology-related service numbers, websites, phone and fax numbers, and when possible a contact name if we dealt with a specific dealer.
2. Her Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic member number and contact number for ordering procedures.
3. Her Bookshare membership information and ordering / downloading procedures.
4. We looked up local numbers for bus companies at her college and if possible routes for her specific needs.
5. All college contact information for the Disabilities Coordinator and other important college contact persons.
6. We obtained a ‘refillable’ credit card, not associated with a bank account, to do some ordering of needed materials. Along this this, a list of adaptive equipment online companies for reference. We went through a few mock orders and then she placed an order using the card supplied by her parents. One note her: make sure you activate the card before using it.
7. Along the way we discovered a wonderful service entitled ‘Read This to Me.’ It is a service wherein the consumer faxes print documents along with a phone number where he or she can be reaches and a reader associated with the service will receive the document and call back and read it to the sender. We found this to be a successful venture and she even sent a chart-based document one time to see how it would go over and the service did a wonderful job. It is a free service with volunteer readers and most times my student would receive a call back within a few hours. I therefore included some cover pages with her information already in place for use with the service. For more information on this program, go to www.readthistome.org>.

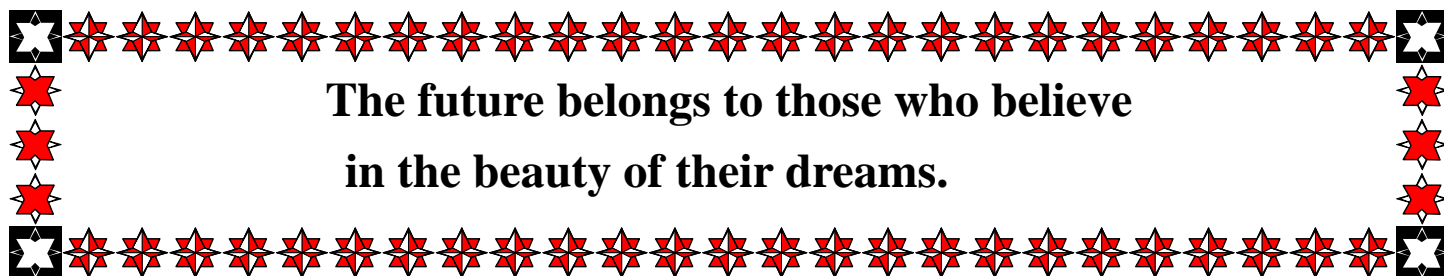
8. During her high school years, my student learned to use News Line for daily newspapers when necessary or for leisure reading. We included this phone number and procedure, as well.
9. Development of a reference for APA or MLA format in braille or electronically is not only important, but difficult to find. I had found a few full versions of books for these format on Bookshare, but my student really needed a quicker reference. So we used the print that our school librarian supplies us and created together a reference tool in electronic format and hardcopy braille.
10. I sent a Label Maker and Perkins Braille with a braille label paper, along with touch dots and other marking tools so my student could make her own adjustments as needed to her dorm, signs, and other needs as they arose.
11. I also advised her to keep an electronic copy on her Braille Note, in a computer file, and emboss it to have hard copy as needed. Another trick was to email the finished file to herself so she can find it anywhere she may be as long as she has computer access.

In addition to these times, I recently made an on-campus visit with her to get her oriented to campus layout and to troubleshoot things that she was concerned about. I sometimes forget all the concerns that someone heading to college may have and finding myself showing her some things that I had not thought of before.

12. Using a change machine for the all-important handful of quarters for the laundry room.
13. Using those quarters in a pay-washer and dryer.
14. Finding an on-campus ATM with audio feedback ... headphones required.
15. Basic layout of classrooms, aisles / rows/ etc.—any room we were able to physically enter, we explored to better understand the step layout and obstacles that may present themselves.

All of these simple procedures seemed to allay unnecessary anxiety that had been building up. I feel it 'leveled the field' for my student and her peers. She seemed so much more confident and relaxed when leaving the campus after our first visit there. She is still experiencing the normal anxiousness that any college freshman will go through, but I feel that with our specified work and toolbox, she is a much more prepared student.

There are many others things that could have been added to our kit. I'm sure that some students may not need these things I have listed. The kit, in my opinion, should be not only individualized to fit the needs and strengths of each student, but to also be considered a 'work in progress. I find that every venture in this field leads me to new learning and understanding of how individualized each student is, and that to do my job well, I can never rely on cookbook type teaching. As my student develops more contacts, equipment, or service in her new life, I hope that she will continue to use our kit and add to or reduce it, as she sees fit.



Information about DVR Services

By Julia Zanon

This article original appeared in a 2007-08 WHOT newsletter. Our thanks to Julia for updating this important information for students, families, and service providers.

What is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation? The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a state agency under the Department of Human Services. Individuals who are blind and visually impaired are one of the populations served by Colorado DVR. It is the mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to assist individuals whose disabilities result in barriers to employment to succeed at work and live independently. You can find more information at www.cdhs.state.co.us/dvr.

How do I find out what vocational rehabilitation counselor to call for my school district? DVR offices are located throughout the state in larger cities/towns. The larger metropolitan areas such as Denver, Ft. Collins and Colorado Springs will have a designated counselor who works with individuals who are blind and vision impaired. This position is called the Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind or "RCB." The best way to find your counselor is to contact the nearest local DVR office and ask if there is a designated RCB. If not, then ask for the counselor who works with the school district transition program. You can find a list of the offices on the DVR

At what age should a rehabilitation counselor be contacted to become involved with a student who is visually impaired to plan for post-graduation activities? The best time to contact the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is when the focus of the student's program is in the process of moving from academic to employment. Because our services are so individualized, there is not a "one size fits all" answer to this question. For example, if the student is doing well academically and is planning to attend college, then I would contact vocational rehabilitation during the student's second semester of junior year or first semester of senior year. If the student is not heading for college and the focus in school has been work experiences and community living, then you probably want to contact DVR sooner. Remember that the job of the rehabilitation counselor is to focus on employment as well as the services and support systems that will assist the student to become employed. It is ideal for a counselor to have the senior year to get to know the student and work with the TVI and any other transition members to best prepare for adult life.

Are there eligibility criteria of who will be served by DVR? If so, what are the criteria? To be eligible to receive DVR services, the individual must have a disability that results in a substantial impediment to employment and need vocational rehabilitation services to be employed. It is all based on whether the student has a disability and how this disability impacts their ability to prepare for, get and keep a job. A low vision student is encouraged to apply as much as students who are legally blind. Sometimes students also have other disabilities in addition to the visual impairment and the counselor will need to obtain information about those disabilities. Colorado requires that any applicant be able to legally work in the state of Colorado, meaning they have to be a citizen, legal resident, or have a "green card." If the student is 18 years or older, the counselor will need to have a copy of the applicant's Colorado state ID Card or Driver's license, if he or she is able to drive. If the student is receiving social security income based on his or her disabilities, then the Colorado DVR presumes eligibility with the appropriate document.

What types of services does DVR provide? Services are based on the needs of the eligible individual and are designed to support the employment goal of the individual. Some of the most common services include vocational counseling and guidance, vocational training, assistive technology, independent skills training (we call this Personal Adjustment to Blindness skill training), orientation and Mobility skill training, job placement, job coaching, job seeking skills training, work adjustment training, vocational evaluation and adaptive computer skill training. In order to determine what services will be needed and appropriate for that individual, the counselor will work together with the eligible individual to identify the specific needs and services that will help that individual have reach his or her employment goal. Service provided to any individual have to be necessary, appropriate and least possible cost. For example, if the individual can obtain the academic or vocational training, he or she needs at a community college, DVR will need to

consider that resource rather than a similar training program at a private school.

Who is responsible for follow-through? The best way to answer this question is to describe the Individualized Plan for Employment. Once an eligible individual and the counselor have identified an employment goal, the services needed to reach that goal and the sources for those services, they will write a plan called an Individualized Plan for Employment or IPE. This plan will list the employment goal, the objectives needed to reach that goal and the specific services needed by that individual. The plan will list who will provide the services and how the progress will be monitored and measured. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitation counselor to monitor the progress of the plan and to help the individual make changes if needed or manage problems if they come up during the life of the plan. Since the goal is employment, a file is not closed until the eligible individual is in suitable, stable employment.

Why should a student be involved with vocational rehabilitation? Of the student is able to access the resources and support they need without any assistance, then they probably do not need DVR services. For example, a student may be able to obtain the assistance they need while in college from the student disability office and might not need DVR during training. However, that same individual might need assistance with searching for and obtaining a job as well as access their job site, and then DVR could be used. Most people apply for services because they find that blindness and vision impairment create barriers that are not so easy to accommodate once they are out of the protected public school environment. While in public school, students are provided with materials in accessible format and a lot of support services as well as a team of teachers and professionals who are planning for their needs. Once they graduate, they are suddenly on their own and have to advocate for themselves to get what they need. Unfortunately, there are still many employers who have very little awareness of blindness or access needs. The applicant needs to be able to market their skills to the employer and be very comfortable with their disability and asking for appropriate job related accommodations.

What is the likelihood that a vocational rehabilitation counselor can attend a student's IEP? You will want to make sure you invite the rehabilitation counselor to the IEP staffing. This will make the planning for the students transition needs comprehensive and meaningful. When possible, a rehabilitation counselor will be able to attend an IEP staffing before the student has applied for services. I would encourage you to establish a productive working relationship with the rehabilitation counselor to encourage this participation. If the counselor is not available, then he/she should be able to provide you with information about referrals, eligibility, and other resources so that you can share this with the student and parents.

What should the parents, school personnel, and the student be doing to prepare for life post-high school graduation? There are so many things a student and family and teachers can be doing that it is hard to distill into a simple answer. I think the most important thing to remember is that students with disabilities are just like everyone else. They will want to be able to make up their own minds about what kind of work they want to do, whether they want to work or not, how they want to live, who they want to live with, whether they want to get married or stay single and whether they want a family or not. Some students are ready for these choices and then the vocational rehabilitation process is a very rewarding and productive experience. Some students are not ready to make these choices and they will need some time before they come in for help. It is all about readiness on a physical, psychological and emotional level. We all can help them by encouraging them to be responsible, self advocating, courageous, self aware, knowledgeable about jobs, aware of their own skills and abilities as well as their limitations and teach them how to locate and access needed resources, self advocate and figure out strategies for getting their needs met. If a student is college bound, then it will be important for that student to be registered with RFB and D, be ready to apply for financial aid, know how to access the student disability services office and to have a good plan for what they want to get out of college training. If a student wants employment, then it would be helpful if that student knows their interests, goals and skills and to have had some type of paid or unpaid work experience while in school.

Are there any books or resources that you would recommend for TVIs, parents or students to read? These are recommendations from Cheryl Carver from our state office:

- ✓ Cooperative Services Handbook for Youth in Transition (can be downloaded for free from the CDE website <http://www.cde.state.co.us/>)

- ✓ The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities (can be downloaded and reproduced for free from NCWD and can be found at <http://www.transcen.org/>)
- ✓ Preparing for Life: the Complete Guide for Transitioning to Adulthood for those with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome by Dr. Jed Baker (can be purchased from NPR at <http://www.nprinc.com>)
- ✓ Transition to Employment by Craig A. Michaels (part of a transition series published by pro-ed <http://www.proedinc.com>). There is another book in this series titled Transition Issues Related to Students with Visual Disabilities. Although I have not read it yet, I did scan it and found some useful information.

What will DVR pay for in terms of equipment for my student to go to college? Or to get a job? DVR may help individuals obtain the assistive technology and/or blindness or low vision equipment they will need for training and work. This is individualized based on the specific disability needs and the employment outcome. For example, someone going to college is going to need to use a computer as well as the assistive technology to make that computer accessible. They might also need a note taker, daisy player, digital recorder and scanner, depending on the tasks they have to complete. Another individual who is going to work polishing silver at a local restaurant is probably not going to need the same technology as the college student. That is why it is important for the rehabilitation counselor to work together with the individual to develop an employment goal and determine the unique services and needs. In Colorado, there is also a financial need analysis that will be done by the rehabilitation counselor to determine if the eligible individual and his or her family have any surplus resources that could be used to help purchase that equipment or technology. Throughout the planning process as well as during the implementation of the employment plan, the counselor and eligible individual will be working together to find the resources and services that best fit that individual's needs. In addition to DVR funding, there are several other funding sources that can help, such as the Blind Equipment Fund and the Howard Fund.

Are blind students who are not yet 21 and have socially graduated and participating in a transition program eligible for DVR services? To be eligible for DVR services, the individual must have a disability that results in a substantial impediment to employment and need services from DVR to achieve employment. This means that a student certainly can apply for DVR services at any time along the continuum of educational services, including transition services. Specifically, the CSDB transition program is a good example. DVR has worked together with the transition coordinator and students in this program to provide career counseling and guidance as well as other support services. It depends on the needs of the individual and if you would like to get more information and/or discuss a specific situation, you can contact the RCB or the supervisor I in the local office as well as the transition coordinator in the DVR administration office in Denver at 1575 Sherman Street.

At the time of this edition of this article (1-2009) The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is under an Order of Selection and currently, all categories of severity of disability priority classification are being placed on a wait list. Anyone applying for services after 10-16-08 will be provided with any assessments and/or services to determine their eligibility and priority classification. When DVR has a waiting list for VR services, you will be assigned an order of selection priority classification when you are determined eligible. Your priority classification and our funding level will determine how long you need to wait. Eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities will be served first, individuals with significant disabilities will be served second, and individuals whose disabilities are least significant will be served third. Individuals within each of these categories will be served in order of their application dates. The severity of their physical or mental impairment, the type and number of VR services they need, and how long it will take to provide these services will determine how significant the disability is for assigning a priority classification. The rehabilitation counselor will assist by providing referral information about other community services that are available to the individual.

SAVE THE DATE



Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference
The Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
Located in Southern California

November 12–15, 2009

Look for more information soon on our web site!

www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.com

COSTA MESA, CA

PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS

February 26-28, 2009—Colorado Springs

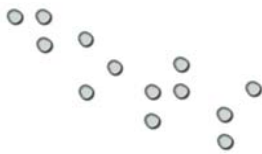
PEP PEP Conferences are family centered conferences designed to offer support, information, and education to parents and professionals from Colorado. PEP promotes the partnerships that are essential in supporting and including children with disabilities and their families in all aspects of the school and community.

For more information and to apply for the conference online or download an application go to: <www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp> or call the PEP hotline at 303-866-6846.

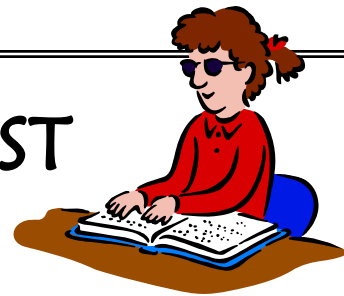


OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE YOUR INPUT TO THE CSAP!

The Unit of Student Assessment is very interested in having TVIs participate in their yearly Content Validity and Alignment Review. During this review, content experts and teacher specialists examine every new item for alignment and bias issues before it becomes a part of the next test. This year's review will take place June 1-4 for the different content areas – please be in touch with Tanni if you are interested in participating.



DOTS OF INTEREST



CELEBRATING 200 YEARS—HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO LOUIS BRAILLE!

The following items have been designed to celebrate the birth of Louis Braille 200 years ago, recently recognized this past January 4th. They are available from National Braille Press, 88 St. Stephen Street, Boston, MA 02115, 1-800-548-7323.

- ✓ **Note Cards.** The image of Louis Braille on the front of each card was designed by Judith Krimski in celebration of his bicentennial.
- ✓ **Label pin.** The label pins contain the same image of Louis Braille as the note cards. They have Braille letters across the bottom spelling out “Braille 200.”
- ✓ **Key chains.** These gold-plated coin key chains measure 1.5” in diameter. On the one side, the words “Louis Braille 1809” appear in Braille, and the reverse side shows a picture of hands reading Braille and words “Braille Opens Doors” in print.
- ✓ **Tactile Louis Plaque.** This limited edition ivory-colored cast resin tactile plaque is signed and numbered and measures 11” X 9.”
- ✓ **Print/Braille bookmarks.** The front features NBP’s new website and the back contains a brief history of Louis’s life.
- ✓ **Wall Poster.** This 12 1/4” X 17” poster celebrates the life and achievements of Louis Braille. The poster is free, you pay for shipping only.



All of these items can be viewed and ordered on the new website: LouisBrailleBicentennial.com

BANA (Braille Authority of North America) has written a position statement that explains why braille is not a language.

This document is available on the BANA website. The link is <http://www.brailleauthority.org/Braille%20is%20NOT%20a%20Language.pdf> .



IMPORTANT!

We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for the next school year. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your job openings. We have THREE metro-area TVIs looking for employment for this next school year, so we have a chance to really ensure that anticipated vacancies are filled.

If you know of an anticipated opening in your part of the state, please begin working to recruit someone into our field by ensuring he or she has an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an Orientation and Mobility Specialists. This may be a paraeducator, a brailist, and/or a colleague already in the teaching profession. Please work with Dr. Paula Conroy to learn more about the UNC distance education / graduate program to prepare TVIs and O&M Specialists in Colorado!

Jobs for School Year 2008-2009 or 2009-2010

TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairment.

O&M = Orientation and Mobility

Metro Region:

- ✓ **Paraeducator** (1.0 FTE) and **Paraeducator**(.5 FTE) positions open in Denver Public Schools. For more information, contact Cheryl Leidich 303-324-9591.

Southern Region

- ✓ **Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments** (.5 FTE). Contact Leah Bitat at bitatlm@d11.org in El Paso 11 District in Colorado Springs for more information.
- ✓ **TVI - Elementary / Special Needs** (1 FTE) for the CSDB School for the Blind in Colorado Springs. Contact Chelle Lutz at <clutz@csdb.org>. **TVI: Transition Program / Outreach Services** (1 FTE) for the CSDB School for the Blind in Colorado Springs. Contact Chelle Lutz at <clutz@csdb.org>.
- ✓ **Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments / O&M Specialist**—(.1FTE or five hours a week for 2010-2011). Contact Debi Blackwell of Canon City Schools at BLACKWD@canoncitieschools.org

General Professional I Administrator, Colorado Commission for Individuals who are Blind and Visually Impaired The position exists to manage the Colorado Commission for Individuals who are Blind and Visually Impaired (CCIBVI). The CCIBVI was created as a result of House Bill 07-1271; the enabling legislation can be found at C.R.S. Title 26, Article 8.7. The CCIBVI is comprised of Governor appointed experts in multiple regions throughout the state and disciplines and requires membership of at least eight members to be blind or visually impaired. The commission exercises its powers, duties, and functions as a Type II state Agency within the Division of Boards and Commissions of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). To download the application, go to: <http://www.colorado.gov>

Para Olympian Story

By: Robin Theyoung



As a child, I loved sports and competition but realized very quickly that I couldn't play sports at the same level as my fully-sighted peers. I came to the conclusion that competitive sports just wouldn't be a part of my life and that crazy Mary Lou Retton gold medal dream that sprouted as I watched the 1984 Olympics was

an impossible. At the age of fourteen I attended Michigan Blind Athletic Association's Sports Education Camp where I learned to play and fell in love with goalball. A couple years later I began competing at regional tournaments around the US and in 1998 I made the US team for the first time and fulfilled the once crazy dream of wearing a USA jersey. During that time I also began volunteering each year at the Sports Camp where I'd learned goalball along with a couple others around the country hoping to show other kids that they too could play sports recreationally and competitively.

I am blessed to have spent the last decade as a member of the US Women's Goalball Team. Countless hours in the gym and on the court have enabled me to play against and alongside the best players in the world. We have had a lot of success over the years and have also had a lot of fun traveling all over the world for various tournaments. We all have shelves full of medals, trophies, photographs and souvenirs from our tournaments and travels but we have always been lacking one thing—a Paralympic Gold Medal.

Four years ago at the Paralympics in Athens, Greece we were the favorite to win, having won every major international tournament for the past three years. But when we faced Canada in the Championship game, we didn't play to our potential and had to settle for silver while we watched Canada climb to the top of the podium and hear their national anthem. It was truly a heartbreaking experience so we spent the next four years working hard and improving our game in a quest for redemption.

In September, the wait was over and it was time to head to the 2008 Paralympics Games in Beijing, China and put our hard work to the test. Every other team had also improved their playing since Athens and we had a lot of tough games. When the eight team round-robin preliminary matches were over, we had a record of 4 wins, 1 loss and 2 ties which put us in second place. This meant that we had accomplished our first objective and made it into the semi-final round.

We played Denmark for our semi-final match-up in a nail-bitter of a game in which we trailed most of the game but came back to win it in sudden death overtime! We ran onto the court and hugged with joyful tears glistening in our eyes. We had done it!! We were playing for the gold! It was an amazing feeling to know for sure that we would not be going home empty-handed. We were guaranteed a medal—now we just had to make sure it was the right color.

Later that evening we took the court for the Championship game against China. We walked onto the floor at the Beijing Institute of Technology Gymnasium amidst the roar of the sold-out crowd—not letting ourselves be bothered by the fact that maybe only 100 of the fans were cheering for us while about 6,000 were cheering for our opponents. We warmed up on the court before gathering at the bench for Coach's final instructions and inspirational words. Do I remember what he said? No. What I do remember is us all putting our hands in the center of our huddle as we've always done before a game while Asya roared "WHO DO WE PLAY FOR?" and we thundered back "USA!!" I'm not sure anyone besides us heard it over the thundering crowd but that didn't matter. We heard it—and we felt it.

Jen Armbruster, Asya Miller and Lisa Banta took the court and the rest of us took our places on the bench. The game started fast and furious. Asya was pumped up and throwing harder than I've ever seen her throw. If my memory serves me, she got called on a bogus high-ball penalty not long into the game and I believe they scored the penalty shot on her getting on the board first. Not long after though, Asya punched one through China's defense to tie the score a bit later. But a little while later China punched back. And that's how the whole game went. Asya would score and then China would even it up. It was torturous to watch really. One moment we would be jubilant and

then the next moment we were filled with sorrow, fear and dread—not to mention nausea. And then with only a couple minutes left the score was tied 5-5.

With less than a minute left, Asya threw a fireball down the court and through the Chinese defenders. On the bench, my teammates and I grabbed each other's hands, knees and shoulders in silent celebration as the referee called the goal and the crowd erupted. We clasped each others' hands tightly and waited and watched as the clock ticked down... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... and the buzzer sounded! WE DID IT!!! The six of us met in the center of the court in a triumphant and teary hug. The gold was ours and it felt AMAZING!!!

Before we knew it, it was time for the medal ceremony. Holding hands, we stepped onto the top of the podium—right where we'd been dreaming of standing since we'd stood at the silver medal position four years earlier—maybe we'd even been dreaming of it all our lives. They came around with the medals and placed them around our necks and handed us bouquets of flowers. We turned around to face our families who were unfortunately seated behind the podium and we lifted our hands and bouquets in the air grinning at them before turning back around. And then our anthem began to play. I sang loudly and proudly alongside my teammates, our hands over our hearts. And as I sang, the weight of the moment settled on my shoulders—not like a burden but like a blanket. *This is the moment people dream of—and it's finally ours!* I thought. I was overwhelmed with pride and emotion. My voice wavered and cracked as my throat became thick with emotion. From “o'er the ramparts,” to “that our flag was still there,” all I could do was mouth the words and I simultaneously laughed and cried. I regained control of my voice for the last two lines though and I belted them out—so happy to be in that moment and wishing I could make it last just a little bit longer.

All good things must come to an end though. But the memories of that experience and the knowledge that even the craziest dreams can come true will stay with me forever. And I know I'll continue to compete for at least another four years and I'll also continue to work at various Sports Education Camps and share my experiences with kids there as well as my students at CSDB who just may be our future Paralympians.

Spotted Teaching Dots!

Thanks to Amber Rundle for submitting this article!!



Who: Janet Anderson (TVI) and Mary Chambers (Brailist/Assistant, also enrolled in UNC's TVI program) Sandy Vasquez (6th grader at Columbia Middle School) **Where:** Columbia Middle School, Aurora Public Schools **Why:** In honor of the 200th anniversary of Louis Braille's birthday.

The Aurora Vision Team received an invitation to volunteer to help with Janet and Mary's plan for teaching Columbia Middle Schoolers about Louis Braille and his contributions to literacy for blind individuals. I've always admired the birthday parties Janet throws for Braille's birthday, so I decided to sign up to help.

It was SUCH a neat experience. Mary developed a lesson plan for the Social Studies teachers at Columbia to use with their classes. Then, during the last period of the day, Janet and Mary hosted 2 students from each class in a hands-on experience learning about Braille. They had 3 stations set up—watch a video about Louis Braille, learn to write your name in Braille, and put Braille on a cookie with M&M's. In addition to that, there were posters on the wall and unscramble the words/riddles in Braille. I heard many students saying things such as, “this so cool,” “I didn't know this is how it worked,” or “Hey, Adam—check this out, I can read my name in Braille!” It was really energizing to be a part of the first afternoon of their 2 day celebration. Janet gave a NBP commemorative Louis Braille bookmark to each of the participants.

I told one of my students about it, and he decided that he wanted to tell his peers about Braille, even though he is kind of learning it “in the closet” as he has tried to pass as being fully sighted! It was a great way to spread the word about Braille, and the way in which our visually impaired students and peers read...not to mention it may have planted the seeds of “being a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments looks COOL!!”



Calendar of Events

2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

- February 4-27 **CSAPA Grade 3 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Administration**
- February 4-March 27 **CSAPA 4-10 Administration**
- February 12-14 **2009 Conference on Inclusive Education—Denver**
 Visit: www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp
- March 1 **"Education for Life" Application deadline for scholarship**
 Visit: www.seethefuture.org
- March 5-8 **Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Institute - Washington, DC**
 Contact: Caitlin McFeely at cmcfeely@afb.net
- March 9-April 10 **CSAP Grades 3-10 Administration**
- March 12-15 **CA Transcribers and Educators of the VI —Burlingame, CA**
 Visit: www.ctevh.org/conference.htm
- March 23-27 **Short Course Program on Introduction to Independent Living — CSDB**
 Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- April 1-4 **CEC Annual Convention and Exposition— Seattle, WA**
 Visit: www.cec.sped.org
- April 15 **Southern TVI Meeting - Colorado Springs**
 Contact: Stephanie Isabel - isbell@cmsd12.org
- April 16-18 **Short Course Program on Orientation & Mobility—Colorado Springs**
 Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- April 17 **Metro TVI meeting—Anchor Center from 2—4:00 pm**
 Contact: Nancy Cozart - ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
- April 22 **COACT State Test Date**
- April 23-25 **Western Region Early Intervention Conference—Colorado Springs**
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

More Calendar of Events

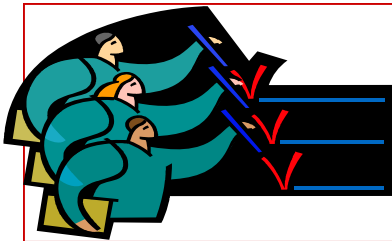
2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- May 6** **COACT Makeup Test Date**
- May 7-9** **Short Course Program on Orientation & Mobility - Colorado Springs**
Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- May 7-9** **Annual O&M Conference - Anchor Center in Denver**
Contact: Melissa Shular at melissa.shular@asd20.org
- May 13** **Southern TVI Meeting - Colorado Spring**
Contact: Stephanie Isabel - isbell@cmsd12.org
- June 5-7** **Annual Family Learning Retreat - CSDB in Colorado Springs**
Contact: Stefanie Morgan at (719) 570-0793.
- July 14-17** **13th International Mobility Conference - Marburg, Germany**
Visit: www.imc.blista.de
- July 17-19** **Families Connecting with Families Conference, Costa Mesa, CA**
Visit: www.napvi.org
- October 15-17** **APH Annual Meeting of Ex Officio - Louisville, KY**
Contact: American Print House for the Blind
- October 28-31** **AT Industry Association Conference - Schaumburg, IL.**
Visit: www.atia.org; registration@atia.org Contact: 1-877-687-2842
- November 12-15** **Getting In Touch with Literacy Conference—Costa Mesa, CA**
Visit: www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.com

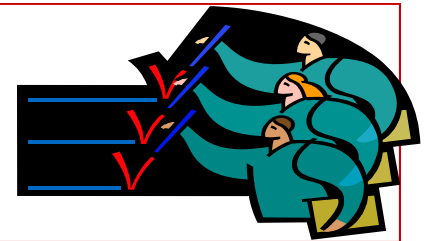
2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

- July 20-25** **AER International Conference - Little Rock, AR**
Visit: www.aer.bvi.org
- August 8-13** **World ICEVI Conference— Jomtein, Thailand**
Visit: www.icevi.org





CHECK IT OUT!



Adaptive Physical Education

Presenter: Matt LaCortiglia, M.Ed.

This webcast provides an overview of the FAIER model to create and adapt physical activities for individuals with disabilities. FAIER is an acronym for each aspect of this model -Foundation, Awareness, Implementation, Evaluation, and Refinement. Included is a step-by-step outline of the model and case example to help you apply the model in your work. This information with additional detail and planning worksheets, will be available in the upcoming book *Run, Play, Move*. To see this and other webcasts go to: <http://www.perkins.pvt.k12.ma.us/webcasts/>

NFB-LINK

NFB is an online mentoring program that provides students who are blind/visually impaired with resources and guidance on a variety of blindness and career related topics.

For more information, visit <http://www.nfbblink.org/>

Access Technology Tips

The NFB Jernigan Institute Access Technology team offers a Technology Tips section. With this new service they will provide you with frequently updated pointers to help people learn about new applications and new programs.

The Access Technology team works with the relevant manufacturers or developers to obtain the tips listed here, to make sure that they provide the latest about anything new in the world of non-visual access technology.

To access this webpage, go to:

http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Access_Technology_Tips.asp



AFB's Latest Training

Initiative Includes Webinars

The American Foundation for the Blind began offering webinars to meet service providers' needs for innovative, affordable training resources. The first targeted subject area was National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) implementation strategies: **Leverage Your Resources and Expertise to Implement NIMAS Mandates in Your School District**. This webinar was offered in June 2008 and is now archived at www.afb.org/nimas.asp.

They learned a lot in this first effort and went on to present our second webinar on October 21, 2008: **Implement NIMAS in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Build New State Strategies**. In this webinar, we shared perspectives about implementing NIMAS solutions in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students who are visually impaired or print disabled. This training session will also be archived on www.afb.org/nimas.asp.

Additional webinars are planned for 2009 and will focus on NIMAS and the Expanded Core Curriculum, including a career education webinar scheduled for April 2009. If you are interested in attending the career education webinar, please contact Scott Truax at struax@afb.net. Additional offerings in 2009 will be soon be announced. Keep checking the <http://www.afb.org/Community.asp?Type=Events> for more information.

HADLEY COURSES

The Hadley School for Professional Studies offers affordable distance education course to help you meet the needs of you students or children with visual impairments.

- ☞ Study anytime, anywhere
- ☞ Enhance your professional or parenting skills
- ☞ Earn continuing education units
- ☞ Scholarships and group pricing available

For more information, please go to:

www.hadley.edu/hsp



The Colorado Chapter of the Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Online Courses, On Demand!

Featuring O&M, Itinerant Teaching, Adult Services, Low Vision, Info & Technology, Deafblind, Vocational Rehab, and more topics! Online Continuing Education Courses Featuring AER 2008 International Conference

Presentations

- ☞ Audio and power point presentations from the 2008 AER International Conference, plus handouts that may be downloaded. Easy to earn continuing education credit.
- ☞ 30 minute (.5 CE credits), 60 minutes (1 CE credit), 90 minutes (1.5 CE credits), and 120 minutes (2 CE credits) courses...Only \$25 per credit hour for member or \$50 for non-members (USD).
- ☞ For more information contact AER at 1(877) 492-2708, (703) 671-4500 or via email at onlineCE@aerbvi.org.

www.aerbvi.org to get started today!



NAPVI's Families Connecting with Families 2009 International Conference

Co-Sponsored by the Braille Institute and Junior Blind of America
July 17, 18, 19, 2009

*at the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
3050 Briston Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626*

*(Within 15 miles from Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm Amusement Parks,
5 miles from Newport, Laguna, and Huntington Beaches!)*

COLORADO CENTER FOR THE BLIND

2233 W. Shepperd Ave. Littleton, CO 80120

Phone: 303-778-1130 Toll Free: 800-401-4632 Fax: 303-778-1598

Email: ccb@cocenter.org Website: www.cocenter.org

2009 YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMS

“Confidence Camp for Kids” Elementary Program

Program dates: June 8-12 and June 15-19 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm each day

The Colorado Center for the Blind is sponsoring an interactive, two week program for blind and visually impaired children ages 5 to 10.

“Initiation to Independence” Middle School Program

Program dates: Monday, July 20th – Saturday, August 8th

The Middle School Program is a three week residential program for young teens, ages 12 to 14. These students will participate in job shadows where they will meet competent blind role models. Students work on basic skills such as Braille, daily living and travel and share in the extra-curricular fun.

“Earn and Learn” High School Program

Program dates: Saturday, June 13th – Saturday, August 8th

For eight weeks high school teens live in apartments with summer counselors. The students work part time at local businesses. They participate in a wide variety of classes and build confidence through challenge recreation activities.

“Summer for Success” College Prep Program:

Program dates: Saturday, June 13th – Saturday, August 8th

The College Prep Program is an eight week residential program where students learn all aspects of higher education as well as skills to be fully independent. Topics covered include using technology effectively to master classes in math and science, orientation around college campuses, and being a full part of college life.

The National Federation of the Blind Youth Slam A 2009 STEM Leadership Academy

Observe! Discover! Evolve! Launch rockets, perform astronomy, examine new technology, learn about engineering, solve crimes like on CSI, design solutions for the environment, meet new friends from all over the United States, play goal ball, watch movies, dance, make podcasts, meet blind role models, and experience many other adventures at the NFB Youth Slam!



From July 26-August 1, 2009, two hundred blind and low vision high school students will stay at the University of Maryland, College Park, to be mentored by blind role models during fun and challenging activities meant to build confidence, expand leadership and advocacy skills, and increase science literacy. Participants will also attend various social events as well as workshops on topics such as leadership, career preparation, and advocacy. The NFB Youth Slam will culminate in an inspiring rally in Washington DC!

Those interested in participating as students or mentors should complete an application by March 1, 2009. After an initial screening process, eligible students will be accepted into the program through random selection. Students and mentors need not have a strong interest in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) in order to participate, enjoy, and benefit from this academy.

If you are interested in being a student or mentor participant or if you'd like to learn more about the NFB Youth Slam visit: <http://www.blindscience.org/ncbys/youth_slam.asp>http://www.blindscience.org/ncbys/youth_slam.asp.

Also, for more information contact Brent Batron at the Colorado Center for the Blind at 303-778-1130 extension 222 or bbatron@cocenter.org.

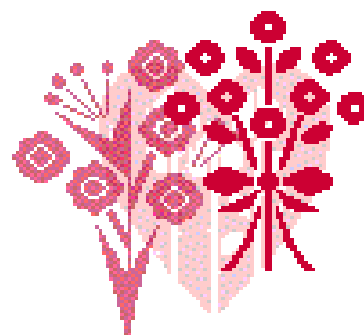
The Colorado Braille Competency Documents Have Been Updated

To locate the documents, please go to the CDE Blindness/ Low Vision webpage at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-BLV.asp>

CDE Guidelines/Support Documents, ECEA Regulations, and National-Level Documents Related to Blindness/Low Vision

Colorado Braille Mastery Test Documents

- ◆ [Braille Competency Testing Guidelines](#)
- [Braille Mastery Test Accommodation Procedures](#)
- [Preparation for the Colorado Braille Mastery Test](#)
- [Braille Competency Renewal Testing Guidelines](#)



Vision Coalition

January 16, 2008

Persons in Attendance: Barbara Adams, Tanni Anthony, Stephanie Isbell, Jim Olson, Trina Boyd Pratt, Cathy Smyth, Wendy Stoltman, and Julia Zanon

Special Guests: Laura Douglas, Lindsay Pacheco, and Jackie Geib

Persons Absent: Nancy Cozart, Kay Ferrell, Lou Tutt, Donna Keale, and Rene Harrell

PROGRAM UPDATES

Northern Region (Wendy Stoltman)

Kudos to CIMC! We appreciate the CIMC letting us know when they have shipped a text and what part of the text to our district. This helps us be on the look out for it, etc.

504 plans/kids and FVAs/RTI: This year, we have received a significant number of requests from 504 school coordinators to have input into the functional vision of kiddos they have as vision disabled on a 504. When we inquire as to what qualified for initial 504 placement, I'm hearing strabismus, convergence issues, etc. Acuties are usually in the 20/25 and 20/20 range. (We are not at these qualification meetings, and it doesn't seem to matter with them that these students don't meet the vision disability requirements, only that the kiddo is struggling with reading.) With RTI, it is assumed that TVIs will conduct functional vision evaluations on any child. Is it everyone's understanding that we hold fast to the State and federal regs? District 504 directors or coordinators need to have correct information as to what constitutes a vision disability and this information MUST be available to the person at each school who is responsible for 504. WHO does this sharing of information---CDE?

Discussion: The 504 Plan is a general education plan and must be funded through general education funds. In some AUs, the TVI is being asked to contribute to the assessment and intervention activities of students who are not blind/visually impaired. This has been a challenge when the TVI has a full caseload of learners who are visually impaired and IEP service commitments. CDE has two documents specific to 504 listed on its website that can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/504Info.asp>.

It is once again time for the Ensign Skills Center to have their annual fundraisers. This year there will be two fundraisers, one in Greeley and one in Fort Collins. The Ensign Center was asked to take over the Curtis Strong Center in Greeley last year. In addition, the Center will be opening an office in Denver sometime in the month of January. As you may recall, the Northern Low Vision Clinic is held at the Ensign Center and they have funds available to families for the purchase of recommended devices or equipment. The Center has also provided funding to districts during the school year. If you are not able to attend one of the fundraisers, please consider making a contribution to the Center.

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our winter regional meeting had to be postponed and we are in the process of rescheduling it. The focus will be to plan an evening for TVIs and parents with local eye doctors to discuss specific eye conditions as well as network about how to communicate with families between medical offices and schools. There is a lot of interest in doing this activity. The other focus was to get the Braille instruction for parents up and running. This stemmed from a Braille class offered last summer. It had to be put on hold but we know there is a lot of interest in having ongoing opportunities for families and other community members to learn Braille. So, this next meeting would also generate ways to implement the class in the metro area. April 17th will be our final meeting of the school year. It will be at Anchor Center from 2:00-4:00. The topic(s) have not been determined yet. If anyone has particular topic ideas, please let me know.

Southern Region (Stephanie Isbell)

Our last meeting was held November 19th. Bonnie Snyder shared new assistive technology with us. We received hands-on experience with the Acer one laptop and a new wand scanner. Bonnie Snyder is scheduled to do another training at our April meeting. We have had a low turn out at the meetings to date. Hopefully our 2009 meetings will show more in attendance. Upcoming meeting dates and topics are as follows:

January 21	12:30 - 3:00	CSAPA	February 18	2:30 - 3:00	Transition
April 15	12:30 - 3:00	Bonnie Snyder	May 13	2:30 - 3:00	APH @ CIMC

The Southern region Low Vision Evaluation clinic was very successful.

Western Region (Barbara Adams)

As far as updates, everyone seems to be hunkered down, plugging away, doing what they do best. Barbara took two students to the Judo - Self Defense Course that Shelley Moats announced for Coach Tim Cullen of Chaparral High School in Parker, in December. It was conducted with Scott Moore, who won a gold medal at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney, the first American in the history of judo to do so. The weather was terrible, schools were on delayed schedule, but the course was not cancelled! There were only 3 students that made it! It was a great course, and we tacked on a trip to the Museum of Nature and Science, since we were down that way.

CAER (Trina Boyd Pratt)

The CAER board is looking forward to an eventful spring semester. Board meetings will continue to be held on a regular basis. All board meetings are open for any member to attend. If you are interested in attending, please contact any board member to get directions. The dates of the upcoming meetings are February 3rd, March 3rd, and April 7th. Meetings and locations are listed on the CAER website under Calendar at <http://co.aerbvi.org/calendar.htm>

CAER will once again hold the annual meeting and awards banquet the weekend of the O&M conference, which is occurring on May 7th-9th. Please consider making a nomination for one of our annual awards. The awards include the Gary Schmidt Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Community Link Award. Information about the awards will soon be available on our website: <http://co.aerbvi.org/index.htm>. We will also hold officer and board member elections at the annual meeting. Please consider serving on the board. If you have questions or would like to volunteer to run for a board position, please contact any current board member and let them know. There is a list of current board members on the website.

CAER is selling water bottles as a fund raising project. Please see Trina Boyd Pratt, if you are interested in purchasing a water bottle.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Julia Zanon)

DVR is still accepting applications and processing eligibility for individuals who have disabilities and would like to apply for DVR services. Once the counselor has determined eligibility and severity of disability, the individual then will be placed on a wait list for services and will be notified as soon as the wait list is opened. It is important to go ahead and apply for services and be placed on the wait list because the date of application will be part of the determination when it comes time to open the wait list. In addition, the rehabilitation counselor can often provide referral information for other services that are available while the person is on the wait list. DVR is continuing to provide services for those individuals who were determined eligible prior to October 16, 2008. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Julia Zanon at 303-866-3562.

Julia is a member of the Commission of the Blind. The next meeting will focus on strategic planning.

Anchor Center and CSDB Early Intervention News (Cathy Smyth)

Happy New Year to all! The holiday season started off with much excitement here at Anchor Center for Blind Children as Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived in grand style in a horse drawn carriage. Real reindeer were available for the children to

pet and a good time was had by all. Our holiday party has grown into a much anticipated event for everyone involved, thanks to the generous gifts of time and funding given by all.

Work continues on the Gerber Foundation Research Grant. This month we have sent off a Journal Article to Young Exceptional Children and we are hoping it will be accepted. We are looking forward to presenting at WREIC in April 2009 and will be keynote speakers for the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind State Conference later in the year. Several consultation requests have come in from a variety of school districts in Colorado and we would like some guidance on how to address them as they are for school age children and the Gerber Foundation Grant funds Birth to three only. Would this be something that CDE could put in the budget on a case-to-case basis, like technology consultation?

I am looking forward to putting together a Deafblind VIISA presentation at Anchor Center later this spring/ Summer. We will be inviting service providers from all the Community Centered Boards across the State! Stay tuned!

Discussion: A recent discussion on the tvicoms listserv was whether to work on modifying the state eligibility criteria for visually disabled to exude the diagnosis of ocular motor apraxia. The eligibility criteria are twofold: (a) a physiological impairment of vision and (b) educational need. The concern of retaining it is that there are limited educational strategies to accommodate the condition that do not classically warrant the services of a TVI. The concern of not retaining it is that a child's teachers may not have someone to reinforce the few educational strategies that there are to help the child. This will continue to be an area of discussion.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

VI Registration and APH Quota Count: Vision Coalition reps are encouraged to submit feedback and recommendations for improving the data collection process to the CIMC in an attempt to streamline the process for next year. The Phase II mailings left the CIMC during most district's winter break in preparation for the APH count day, the first Monday of the current calendar year. We are happy to report all but 7 districts had submitted their Phase II mailings by the requested January 9th deadline.

The CIMC is preparing the "student assessment fee" invoices based on the final count data for the Directors of Special Education for each administrative unit. These are scheduled to be mailed the week of January 26, 2009 in time for the figures to be included in each district's 2009-2010 budget planning process.

Orders for next year (2009-2010) May Day! May Day! No, really...May Day! The CIMC is requesting that all orders for the 2009-2010 school year be submitted by the end of the working day on Friday, May 01, 2009 (with accompanying ink copies please). As of this update, the CIMC has been receiving daily inquiries from other states about book orders for next school year. Remember to check with your district's curriculum department to see if any subjects are going to change textbooks for next year. Please note on the order form if a book is for a one semester class only. Be prepared, order early, and know that we appreciate all of your efforts.

CSDB – BVI Outreach (Laura Douglas)

The CSDB Outreach team is working hard to help with the Western Region Early Intervention Conference that will be held in Colorado Springs in April 2009.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Lou Tutt)

February is always a busy month at CSDB and this year is no exception: February 4th, at 9:00 a.m., we will hold our school Oratorical Contest, sponsored by the Optimists. The topic for this year's contest is "For me, optimism is . . ." The top three winners will receive medals and monetary prizes. They may also compete in the next level competition on February 17th. February 6th, we are hosting the National Braille Challenge. 30 students have signed up Braille Challenge and 14 have entered the rookie competition. We are looking forward to a day full of Braille activities.

CSDB will be closed on February 13th and February 16th in observance of President's Day

The CSDB Board of Trustees will meet February 12th at 9:30 a.m. For additional information, please contact Sue Pfaffenhauser at 719 578-2102 or by email at spfaffenhauser@csdb.org. The CSDB Accountability Committee meets on February 4th at 5:00 p.m. The Board of Trustees will meet on February 12th, and members of the public are welcome to attend.

UNC – (Paula Conroy)

UNC congratulates our eight graduates from last semester and we welcome 15 new students this semester. The numbers of active students in the VI and O&M programs consistently remain around 45 each semester. Paula Conroy and Madeline Milian are conducting a study investigating the family experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students who are visually impaired. We hope to be finished with data collection this spring. Diversity is a focus of the university over the spring semester and the Vision Impairment program sits in a good place due to the emphasis of our recent OSEPS grants. There are still openings for instate and WICHE qualified students on the new grant.

National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities (Kay Ferrell)

Kay recommends that people check out the NCSDD's website for new postings. The center is currently working on their strategic plan. The website is: <http://www.unco.edu/ncssd>.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss began its new five-year cycle on October 1, 2008. The final report (over 250 pages) was submitted to the Office of Special Education Projects in late December. We have received a record number of requests for technical assistance. Gina Quintana oversees these requests is working closely with the two TA specialists, Ann Gillmeister and Shawn Barnard. The annual census of children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss is underway and most forms have been returned from agencies and administrative units. Thanks to all of you who worked to complete the forms and return them back to CDE.

The Paraeducator Module CDs and materials were sent to administrative units in December. This was the culminating work of a summer 2007 work group – so thanks to everyone for their patience. The committee hopes the product will be put to good use.

Sixty participations are or have been involved in the literacy course, 15 taking the course for one semester credit and 45 are taking the 3-semester hour version. The second onsite session will be on February 27-28, 2009 at the Anchor Center for Blind Children.

Sarah Sonnier, Nancy Cozart, and Tanni Anthony traveled to Boston in mid December to review the braille-format CSAP tests. See the article on CSAP and CSAPA testing in the *What's Happening Out There* newsletter for more information. Tanni will be sending out CSAPA and CSAP review forms for the 2009 testing administration – TVIs are encouraged to report any concerns or accolades of the tests.

Tanni is in the process of contacting individual Special Education Directors about the status of their TVI's braille competency certificate. Thanks to all the TVIs who are being proactive with their initial or renewal braille competency status. The revised procedures / guidance documents about braille testing are posted on the CDE webpage on blindness/low vision.

A number of Colorado personnel are working with other folks in the western region on the Deafblind and Blind/Visual Impairment strands for the upcoming April 23-25, 2009 Western Region Early Intervention Conference. The line-up of presenters includes Dr. Barbara Smith (baby PBS), Dr. Joy Brown (NICU practices), Dr. Toni Linder (transdisciplinary play-based assessment), the Anchor gals working on the Gerber Grant (Cathy Smyth, Zoe Morgese, Carol Spicer), Eagle

Eyes, Darla Fowers (brain development), and more!! To register for the conference, go to www.csdb.org!

Tanni has made a request to Dr. Jami Getz of the CDE Licensure Unit to review the exiting PLACE VI test. The first step was to determine whether the current licensure standards for the Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment are still valid. A review with Paula Conroy indicated that our standards are still appropriate.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

PAT Program

Lindsey Pacheco and Jackie Geib came to discuss the Personal Adjustment Training Program (PAT).

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation offers specialized training programs to help people who are blind or visually impaired become independent at home, in the community and in employment. Training may be provided through the Center-based Personal Adjustment Training Program or the Field-based Rehabilitation Teaching / Orientation and Mobility Program. Instructional services are provided at the Center, at the individual's home, on the job site, and/or in other community settings. Referrals for evaluation and/or instructional services are made by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Once accepted into the program, the individual is evaluated in the following areas: adaptive communications; basic computer skills; basic travel skills; financial management skills; home management skills; low vision; medical management skills; and personal management skills. A training program is then designed to meet the individual's needs. College-bound students are taught note-taking skills and/or use of note takers; how to obtain adapted texts and materials; how use of adaptive technology; effective use of readers and scribes; how to build instructor/student relationships; and time management skills. For more information, contact the DVR at 303 866-2500.

Other rehabilitation services: It is important to work with secondary-aged students and families to be proactive with their application to rehabilitation services. People on the VC have had varying experiences with the responsiveness of vocational counselors. Contact counselors are assigned to individual schools. We discussed that it would be very helpful to have a follow-up article on transition / vocational services for the next newsletter.

Assessment Practices for Learners

This is a huge topic! There are many types of assessments that our students take within their school programs. The list below is not meant to be exhaustive, but details common assessments and some of the efforts that are in place for our students who are blind/visually impaired and/or where there continue to be challenges.

CSAP: We have systems in place for visual bias review of the test questions. The braille format CSAP is previewed annually for tactile graphic quality. The State Accommodations Manual lists standard accommodations for students who are blind/visually impaired. TVIs have an opportunity to provide annual feedback to the accommodations process. Tanni will work with the Unit of Student Assessment to be proactive with ways to contribute information about appropriate accommodations for learners who are blind/visually impaired.

CSAPA: There are concerns about the number of picture-dependent questions. It was suggested that there be an advisory group to the CSAPA to discuss some of the highly problematic issues such as questions that are picture-dependent or administered with an object.

CELA: The CELA tests starting at the third grade can be ordered in braille format. These tests have been reviewed for appropriate item substitutions for items that are picture dependent in the print version. For students who cannot read or write braille, it has been suggested that there be guidelines on best practices for building a body of evidence of the learner's language abilities and needs.

District wide Assessments and District wide Alternate Assessments: CDE has guidelines posted on its websites about district alternate assessments.- <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Distassess.asp>>. Common concerns include the challenges of poor picture quality for learners who have low vision and picture dependent questions for students are blind.

Progress Monitoring Tools: It would be helpful to have guidance on these tools to cover very basic do's and don't such as involving the TVI to make appropriate accommodations.

Curriculum Tools that are Online: We started work on a guidance document. on computerized assessments and service delivery tools. This document will be shared in its first released draft format after the VC members have finalized the first version.

Results Matter: Anchor Center organized a feedback opportunity to the Part C personnel who oversee the Results Matter testing of infants and toddler. Information was shared about needed accommodations and the need to suppress items that are visually-dependent.

Psychological Testing: Laura Douglas offered to write up some guidance information on psychological testing of students who are blind/visually impaired. This document will be shared upon completion.

ACVREP Fee Increase and Certification Changes

Two announcements were recently posted on the ACVREP website. One announcement addressed adjusted fees for certification-related activities. The second announcement addressed new certification policies and procedures. The announcements resulted in considerable field response. The biggest field concern was with the announced track process for O&M certification. The announcement detailed that beginning March 1, 2009, ACVREP would offer two distinct tracks for ACVREP certification. The requirements under the new system would not mandate preservice training in the field of O&M before an individual could sit for the O&M certification exam. Due to the outpouring of concern from the field on the new certification policies and procedures, the ACVREP board has currently rescinded these proposed changes.

The Vision Coalition reviewed the Colorado requirements for ACVREP certification for the initial CDE licensure as an O&M instructor and the mandate for ACVREP certification for individuals in school districts who bill for direct services as an O&M service provider. The CDE has made a field commitment to offer its professional development activities for approved ACVREP clock hours.

It was suggested that we wait to see if the track procedures are further modified or forever rescinded. If the track system prevails, we will need to determine as a State whether to rescind our ACVREP requirements.

School Year 2009-10 Budgets (CDE and CSDB)

The CDE Exceptional Student Leadership Unit budget process for the next school year has begun. Tanni asked the Vision Coalition for their input on budget priorities for next year. Given state funding cuts, it is probable that not all proposed activities will be funded or funded in their proposed entirety.

Current Budget

CDE ESLU Budget:

Reading Instruction for Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired course

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:

CSAP / CSAPA / CELA (adaptations specific to BVI)

Vision Coalition

TVI Mentor Program

Technology Consultation

Braille Competency Testing

O&M Workshop (specific to RtI)

Ideas for Training in 2009-10

Potential topics for needed further training:

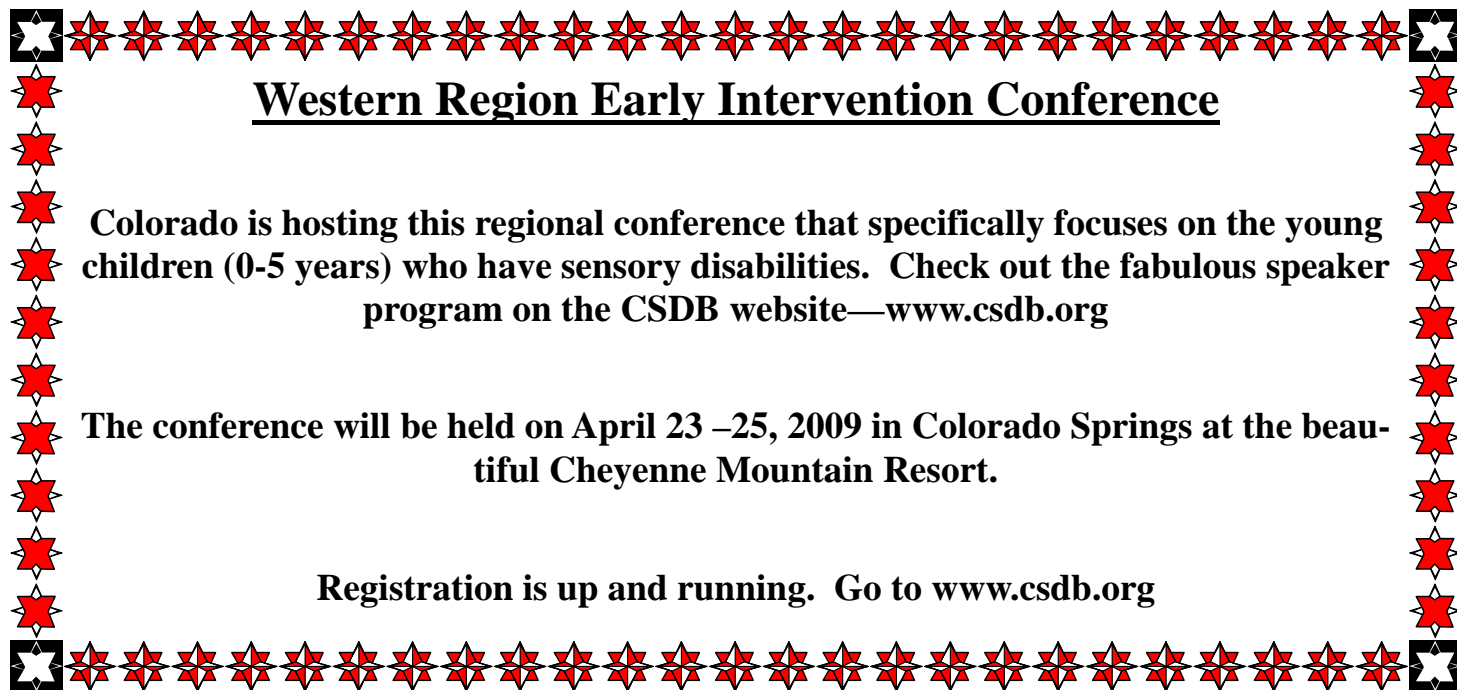
- *Septo-optic dysplasia / optic nerve hypoplasia*
- *Progress monitoring*
- *Collaborative assessment*

Another consideration is how to spend the technology funds. It would be helpful to work to build a technology loan bank with some of the funds in addition to having a person on board to help with technology consultation. Anchor is interested in assisting administrative units with their young children with visual impairments who may have feeding issues. The question is whether or not funds could be used for these consultation visits.

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
All	Send their program update to Tanni	April 3, 2009
TVI reps	Discuss budget priorities with regional TVIs	immediately
Julia Zanon	Update the DVR Q and A document she wrote last year	February 2009
TVI reps	Discuss topics for proposed state conference for Fall 2009	immediately

Next Meeting:

April 8, 2009 at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Center

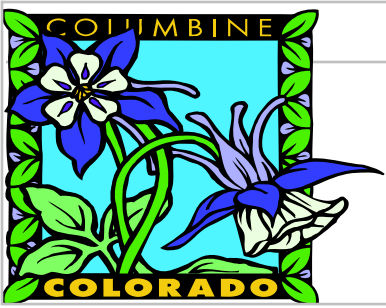


Western Region Early Intervention Conference

Colorado is hosting this regional conference that specifically focuses on the young children (0-5 years) who have sensory disabilities. Check out the fabulous speaker program on the CSDB website—www.csdb.org

The conference will be held on April 23 –25, 2009 in Colorado Springs at the beautiful Cheyenne Mountain Resort.

Registration is up and running. Go to www.csdb.org



COLORADO CONNECTIONS



A big thank you to **Nancy Cozart** and **Sarah Sonnier** who, along with **Tanni Anthony**, traveled to Boston's National Braille Press on December 11 and 12. The reason for the trip was to meet with NPB staff and a CTB representative (the publisher of the CSAP test) to review the 2008-09 Braille-format CSAP tests. This is hard work! Each item is reviewed for the quality of the tactile graphics. The team discusses how to improve the graphics, add picture descriptions, add transcriber and/or teacher notes, AND whether an item should be omitted for the Braille version test. An item is only omitted after extensive discussion and that every effort has been to create the needed tactile graphics and/or to add a picture description. At times, an item is omitted because of the extreme visual nature of the question. The other rare reason for the omission of an item is that the content of the question

requires such extension tactile exploration, that it goes well beyond the realistic time limits of the CSAP test. Omissions do not occur because the team believes that a student who is blind/visually impaired is not capable of demonstrating their knowledge of the particular testing item, but because it is impossible to fully adapt in a standardized manner or requires extensive (20-30 minutes) of completion time for that one item. This is verified by the hands-on review of the test by individuals on-site who are Braille readers.

Janet Rose, former librarian and teacher at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, is embarking on a journey that will take her to Thailand for 2.25 years. Through the Peace Corps she will be working with teachers teaching English to 4th-12th grade students. After 2 1/2 months of training on the language, culture, and safety issues, she will be assigned to small villages either in the north or northeast of Thailand. As her mode of transportation, she will be given a bicycle to get from village to village. We wish Janet all the very best!

Courage to Risk Conference

Sensory disabilities were well represented at the recent Courage to Risk Conference held in Colorado Springs. **Jim Olson** presented on *Mutli-Media Low Vision Portfolios*, **Tanni Anthony** co-presented with **Julie Richter** and **Sue Wiles** on *Literacy Modules for Students with Significant Support Needs (Part 1 and Part 2)*, and **Helen Freeman** and **Bonnie Ottmar** from CSDB presented on *My Students Can Hear! Help!* CSDB had a vendor booth with lots of good outreach information that **Jim Helen**, **Bonnie**, **Donna Keale**, and **Diana Lynn** attended. **Marci Reid** from Denver Public Schools was the other TVI in attendance. And **Lou Tutt**, a national CEC Board member, came in for the state CEC meeting that included **Gina Quintana**, the current state CEC President.

THREE CHEERS!!!

- ☞ to the following folks who recently earned their CDE Certificates of Braille Competency: **Carol Jordan** (Douglas County TVI), **Debbie Mendoza** (Adams 12 TVI), **Shelli Rauen** (Mesa Valley brailist), and **Angela Sims** (Mesa Valley TVI). Good work to **Michelle Chacon** for working toward her braille renewal certificate by completing more Braille modules. Thanks to proctors **Lucia Hasty** and **Julie Wetzstein!**
- ☞ Congrats to **Melinda Carter** for passing the ACVREP exam for her O and M certification!

Welcome New AER Members!!

- Holly Guinan**
- Stephanie Johnson**
- Heather Parsons**
- Roberta Wiedemeyer**



State of Colorado Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

Marcia Neal
3rd Congressional District

Randy DeHoff
6th Congressional District

Vacant Seat
2nd Congressional District

Peggy Littleton
5th Congressional District

Elaine Gantz Berman
1st Congressional District

Jane Goff
7th Congressional District

Bob Schaffer
4th Congressional District

Dwight D. Jones
Commissioner of Education



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202

25-23B-3401

MAIL TO:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a mailing address.