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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
January— February 2013

January—February 2013

Looking Back to Look Ahead

By Tanni Anthony

There is always something about a new year—that clean slate before us that invites us to try new things or make good on what was left undone from the last year. I personally like the idea of a little designated time to reflect—what worked /what did not work from the last year and, as such, what is worth continuing, discontinuing, and/or finding a new way.

My own list of what has worked over the past several years includes the following: annual state trainings help to ensure that our TVIs, COMSs, and braillists have the most current information in the field; Vision Coalition—a most supremely dedicated group of individuals who serve in an advisory and catalyst capacity; state braille testing—like it or not, our braille skills have grown and our procedures have attracted national attention; the low-vision regional clinics remain strong; and the annual visual and tactile bias review of our state assessments support test-accessibility for our students who are blind/visually impaired. There is good data support for these activities to suggest their value for our students, families, and teachers. I can remember a time when most of these above things were not in place. We have moved forward in so many ways.

What has not worked so well has been a systemized way to get everyone on board with the advances in technology. We have made some good dents with Bonnie's consulting, regional TVI meeting content; an occasional national webinar, and the CSDB loan bank. The mentoring program for braille competency assistance is doing well, but not so true for the state mentoring program for new TVIs. The latter one receives few requests.

In the next few weeks, I will be preparing my annual state budget requests for the next fiscal year. The focus of the budget will be specific to improving student outcomes in literacy and numeracy. I will be asked to defend how such activities expand our performance results for students who are blind/visually impaired. Let me know what is important to you. What should we continue, discontinue, or try anew? The CDE is one of many important state resources to parents, students, and school personnel. What can we do to increase our collaboration and leveraging of resources? Be in touch with me with your ideas— anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

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2012-13 TCAP Tests and Students Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired: General Recommendations

By Tanni Anthony

The 2012-13 TCAP Test Administration period is just around the corner! Please review these general recommendations **well before** administering a TCAP test to a student who is blind/visually impaired.

Before the Test: Be in the Know and Get Prepared

<u>TCAP Administration Dates</u>	<u>Early Testing</u>	<u>Testing Window</u>
Grade 3 Reading and Lectura	2/11/2013 – 2/22/2013	2/25/2013 – 3/8/2013
Grade 3 Writing and Escritura	3/4/2013 – 4/5/2013	3/11/2013 – 4/12/2013
Grades 4-10 Reading & Writing	3/4/2013 – 4/5/2013	3/11/2013 – 4/12/2013
Grades 3-10 Mathematics	3/4/2013 – 4/5/2013	3/11/2013 – 4/12/2013
Grades 5, 8, 10 Science	3/4/2013 – 4/5/2013	3/11/2013 – 4/12/2013

Test Protocol Formats: The TCAP test is published in six possible formats for students who are blind/visually impaired: (a) regular print; (b) standard large print of 18 point (printed in black and white format); (c) extra large print (printed in black and white format); (d) black and white (high contrast) in regular print; (e) uncontracted braille; and (f) contracted braille.

If the test is received in braille format, **it is mandated** that the person who is administering the test can read and write braille. The test should be administered by a TVI with a current CDE Certificate of Braille Competency.

Preview of Braille-Format TCAP Protocols: For this testing administration, the District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) will be given instructions that TVIs may have advance access to the braille-format TCAP tests for purposes of being fully prepared to administer these tests. The intent is not to review the actual test items, but to complete the following checks:

1. Ensure that the test has been received and is the correct grade / content for your braille student(s).
2. Determine any material needs for the test: what may be included in the test and what may need to be brought by the TVI to the test. Please be proactive with reading the provided materials list and confirming that you have the right materials for the student the day of the test.
3. Be fully prepared for the test by reading the Transcriber Notes, Special Symbols Page, and Teacher Notes involved with each test.

Transcriber Notes / Special Symbol Page / Teacher Notes in the Braille Tests: All braille-format TCAP tests will include Transcriber Notes, Special Symbol Pages, and/or Teacher Notes. Please go through the braille test(s) ahead of time to become familiar with this information. Further, TVIs should work with their students to scan for braille Transcriber Notes and Special Symbols Pages using other instructional materials well before the test administration period, so they are able to scan for this information on the actual days of testing. This skill may need to be an actual IEP goal for some students to ensure that the student has this ability.

1. 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.
2. Please note that when a Transcriber Note has been added using dot six, dot three, the contraction that follows it is not contracted
3. Teacher Notes have been added in some instances to clarify what is appropriate for a student response when drawing is required and/or if there are special materials that are permissible to bring to the assessment setting for a particular item.

Preview of the Test and Gather Needed Testing Materials: It is critical that the TVI check with the DAC well in advance of the scheduled assessment date to make sure that the appropriate format TCAP test has been received for each student.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY BEFORE THE TEST TO CHECK THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TEST FORMAT AND EACH VOLUME OF NEEDED TEST BOOKLETS.

It is the responsibility of the TVI to read through the braille-format TCAP test one to two weeks ahead of the test administration date, in order to determine if there are any needed and allowable “other materials” for the test. The TVI should look in the back of the braille-format test booklet for the envelope with any of the provided materials / tools for that particular test. For example, math tests may come with a paper braille ruler and/or a plastic APH protractor.

Also the TVI will need to determine what other materials to bring to the test situation. For example, some of the math tests will require materials such as graph paper, material to plot points for making a line graph, and appropriate manipulatives. Other needs may include 3-D geometric shapes. It may be helpful to bring a tactile clock, tactile diagram kit, wikki sticks, graphing pad / cardboard paper, and thumbtacks for some items on the math tests. **It is the TVI’s responsibility to ensure that the student has the needed materials on the day of the assessment.**

Protractors, Rulers, Pattern Blocks, and Tangrams: If the test requires a protractor, an American Printing House for the Blind (APH) plastic protractor will be included in the envelope at the back of the TCAP test booklet. It is 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).

A paper braille ruler will be provided in the math tests. You may want to bring the ruler that the student has used for everyday instructional purposes so that the student is using a familiar tool during the assessment. 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.

Pattern blocks and tangrams will be provided for the math tests needing these materials. Please be proactive to ensure that these materials have been sent with the test. Read the Teacher Notes to determine if you should bring extra pattern blocks for particular test items that require more than what is provided with the test.

Graphs: Students who are blind/visually impaired should have grade-appropriate graphing skills. The person administering the braille-format tests should know in advance of the testing date that that student is expected to graph an answer. In this situation, the student will need graph paper separate from the braille-format testing booklet. In these situations, TVIs should be prepared to bring graph paper, graphing pad / cardboard, push pins, etc. This is the same situation that braille students face when asked to graph in everyday instruction.

Please be aware there may be an instance where there is not sufficient space on a tactile graphic to include numbers or complete set of numbers on the X and Y axis lines.

Tactile Graphics on Single and Multiple Pages: Tactile graphic have been produced on facing pages whenever possible. When graphics are not situated on facing pages, it is because it was not possible to do so. Also due to the content of some of the tactile graphics, one graphic or a series of graphics may be produced across several pages. The latter is particularly true for graphs.

Also be aware that table or chart may be altered from its print counterpart, so that its presentation is vertical rather than horizontal. This is done to ensure all of the information is included in the graph. This happens specifically when there is an abundance of information in the print version on the horizontal presentation that will not fit on one braille line. Another instance of when this may occur is when the graph is presented vertically and is also presented in a “stair-step” fashion.

Drawing as Response: Items asking for a student to draw continue to be a “red flag” for some personnel completing the annual item analysis. Please be aware of how to work with a student to complete a response that requires drawing. As in everyday instruction when print readers are asked to draw, the TVI can work with the braille learner to accommodate a “drawing response.” A student may use an item to trace, a ruler to draw a straight line, and/or use the test evaluator as a scribe to draw the needed response.

Accommodations: The *Colorado Accommodations Manual* is at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/AccommodationsManual.pdf>>. All TVIs should be aware of the allowable accommodations for their students.

Please review the manual for allowable accommodations both in general and specifically for learners who are blind/visually impaired. These accommodations must be on the student's IEP for instruction and testing purposes.

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. For example, during TCAP items that require drawing, it may be best for the student to describe what needs to be drawn to the test administrator or the student can dictate his or her thinking as a math problem is worked on the abacus when the problem asks for the student to show written work for the problem. Some students who use braille may choose to do their own drawing. For other students, it is permissible for them to verbally indicate what needs to be drawn or physically use manipulatives to demonstrate knowledge of the answer specific to the math tests.

A scribe cannot be used when the test is actually measuring writing skills unless the student dictates needed punctuation etc. It is recommended that rules on scribing be read prior to test administration.

-For tasks requiring writing or graphing, students can use a separate piece of paper(s) for their answer. As appropriate, this information may need to be transcribed back to the regular-print test booklet by the test administrator.

THE DAY OF THE TEST: COME PREPARED AND KNOW WHAT TO DO

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). For this year's testing, the following TCAP tests have suppressed items: 5th Grade Science, 8th Grade Science, and 9th Grade Math.

The Role of the TVI: The TVI should be an active proctor during the entire test administration to ensure that the student is progressing through the items, understands the directions, has the needed tools to work through math problems, complete graphs, write constructed responses, etc.

Special Symbols Page and Transcriber Notes: The test administrator should take the time to read and review with the student the Special Symbols Page and Transcriber Notes. This will prepare the student for symbols and formatting that may occur in the test.

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 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 that guides the student to the answer.

Test Question Format: It may be necessary to inform the student that some test items may have multiple narrative parts, even if they are not labeled A, B, C, etc.

Transcription of Results in the Regular TCAP 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 TVI or a district brailist should complete the transfer of this information into the regular print assessment booklet. The data grid should indicate it was a braille test.

Storage and Returning Completed Tests: Please remember that the braille version of the test is always considered to be a part of the secure materials and must be secured on a daily basis. No versions of the TCAP may be stored in classrooms.

All transcribed regular-print test booklets, along with the original braille and standard and nonstandard large print testing materials must be returned to your administrative unit District Assessment Coordinator.

ADDITIONAL TEST INFORMATION

Visual Bias: All items have been reviewed and cleared for not having bias for students who are blind/visually impaired. Look at what the test question is measuring. It may appear that a test question has visual bias because content referenced in the question causes initial concern, but in actuality the student does not have to have direct experience with that situation to be able to answer the question. Look for the underlying test construct. For example, the question may not truly be about a tennis court, but some aspect of math, such as using the dimensions of the court to determine its area. |

Suppressed Test Items: There are a handful of suppressed items in the braille version of the TCAP tests. This should not be a surprise to the TVI administering the test(s) – each test item is previewed ahead of time for its accessibility and/or whether it may require excessive time for student to complete. 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 test item has been suppressed, it's omission from the test has been done so through a strict peer-review process. Reasons for an item to be legitimately suppressed include: (a) there is not a good way to illustrate the graphic tactually and there are no corresponding easy-to-get objects to accommodate the missing graphic; (b) there are no commercially-produced manipulatives, such as a geometric shape that correspond to a question where the tactile graphic is highly confusing; and (c) the amount of time needed to tactilely review the needed graphics that correspond to the test question is inordinate (we test this onsite at the National Braille Press and have instances where it took the braille reader on the review team 30 minutes just to acquire the needed tactile information to answer one test question).

For this year's test administration, the following TCAP tests have suppressed items: 5th Grade Science, 8th Grade Science, and 9th Grade Math.

Contributing to the Annual Item Analysis Process: I will send out an electronic form to gather information about the 2012-13 large print and braille-format TCAP tests. If there are particular test items that had a problematic graphic or braille errors, this information is critical to further test development. We also want to know if the test had no concerns. This item specific information is reviewed annually with the CDE Office of Student Assessment, the test publisher, and the braille vendor.

-The TCAP questions have been reviewed over the past 10-11 years for visual-and-tactile-item bias. We have been diligent in removing questions that are too visually based for accommodation and, on rare occasions, would be too time intensive to complete. Further, the tests are also analyzed each year to ensure high quality tactile graphics.

Be familiar with grade-level expectations and content standards for your students. Be familiar with the terminology used with different content areas such as "reflection" and "rotation" specific to math concepts. These examples are not visual bias, but appropriate terminology for the subject area.

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., graphing, scatter plots, Venn Diagrams, reading above and below number lines, etc.).

Thank you so much for taking time to read this information and be truly prepared for your students to take the TCAP tests for this administration period. Colorado is fortunate to have a sequenced step-by-step process in place to ensure that our TCAP assessments are accessible. Please be in-the-know of the above narrative so that your students have the needed tests and materials on the day(s) of testing.

TVIs are key to the final step, test administration of the tests to their students. Your preparation and active attention to what is happening on the day(s) of testing is vital.



Bits From Bonnie

By Bonnie Snyder

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<http://TVIVIP.org>

When I am wandering around the Net, I always keep an eye out for interesting and useful sites that address the needs of people who are blind or visually impaired. Here are just a few to get you started.

Suggestions for Creative Activities

<http://www.sensorysun.com/2013/01/are-you-tired-of-wikki-stix-3-creative-activity-ideas-for-your-blind-children/>

NASA Summer Internships

<https://www.learningally.org/nasa-offering-summer-internships-for-students-with-disabilities/>

Exciting directional app for people who are blind is in development

<http://www.todayonline.com/Hotnews/EDC130103-0000119/Ngee-Ann-Polytechnic-designs-navigation-app-for-visually-impaired>

For those of you who have students with Android phones or other Android devices, here is a site that recommends some accessible apps.

http://techandscience.com/techblog/ShowArticle.aspx?ID=2074&utm_source=buffer&buffer_share=b7233

An Accessible Form of the Periodic Table of Elements

<http://www.ptable.com/>

Tools to make science class more accessible

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF126DB019FC5C859>



New!!

Great iPad App for Parents

We know the importance of families telling their stories as part of their advocacy efforts and most of us have been engaged in helping families learn how to do that. Now there's an iPad app to help.

"Telling Your Story" is a tool that persons with disabilities, family members, and other advocates can use to compose and practice the personal story they'll present to elected public officials or other policymakers at all levels of government when seeking policy changes or increasing awareness about disability issues. The app guides users through the steps, from introducing yourself to identifying the specific issue to the best methods for presenting a compelling personal story. After entering the text of their story, an audio recording feature allows the user to rehearse their story. Users can also select and preview a photo they may wish to include.

To use all the features of this app, an iPad 2 or newer is required. You can view the app in the iTunes Store at <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/telling-your-story/id541403749>

ACCESSIBLE Spellgate App

Three University of North Carolina computer-science students have created a beginning spelling game app that is totally accessible! Spellgate, a free app, is now in the app store. Zoom and VO work well with the game. They also added an option in settings so that when you use the Refreshable Braille Device (RBD), you can turn off the picture labeling if desired so that the RBD does not spell out the picture label. (Spelling out the picture label provides the answer!) You can also mute VO and the student will have to rely on reading the RBD letters.

The students will continue to work on the game next semester, so please provide your input! They plan to do some fine tuning and hope to add letter recognition (matching letters) and a way for teachers to add their own words. Go to the link below for more information:

<http://www.ifreeware.net/download-spellgate.html>

In the app store, you can simply search for Spellgate.

CVI Apps

10 Apps for children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)

Check out these apps at:

<http://pinterest.com/pin/143904150564706456/>



iPad, iPod, iPhone – iTechnology and Apps That Have Been Used Successfully with Individuals with Deafblindness or with Visual Impairments and Additional Disabilities

Dr. Linda Mamer, British Columbia Provincial Deafblind Consultant/Vision Teacher for BC Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness presented recently at the Canadian Vision Teachers' Conference on iPad, iPhone and iPod apps that they use with students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, deafblindness, or CVI (Cortical Visual Impairment). This is not a research project, but rather a how-to paper, with sample observational sheets that have been filled in, and a list of current apps. The iPad is viewed as an observational / assessment tool to gather information, visually / through audition/ tactually, to be able to design individualized communication systems based on the child's responses.

Included are: **Canadian Vision Teacher's Conference Presentation (2012):**

www.pathstoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/Uploaded-files/Canadian%20Vision%20Teachers%E2%80%99%20Conference%202012.docx

Early Learning Apps 2012:

www.pathstoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/Early%20Learning%20Apps%20April%202012List.xlsx

iPad Observation Sheet: www.pathstoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/LM%20iPad%20Observation%20Sheet-1.doc

Sample of iPad app Observations:

www.pathstoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/Sample%20IPad%20Observations%20Jan%2017%20%26%2019%20-12.doc

iStimulation: Research on iPad Apps for Children with Visual Impairments

Laura Campaña, Director of Infant & Early Childhood Program at Junior Blind of America, gave a presentation on iPad Apps for children with visual impairments at the CTEBVI (CA Transcribers and Educators for the Blind and Visually Impaired) in March 2012. It introduced multiple applications on the iPad iOS platform that have been tested on children with visual impairment. It includes cumulative data collected on iPad use compared to APH Lightbox use with children with visual impairment during a study done by the Junior Blind.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of the Apple iPad as a means to strengthen or initiate visual engagement, parental interaction, communication, visual attentiveness, reaching and/or activation among children with visual impairments and/or multiple disabilities. For more information, please go to the link below:

<http://www.juniorblind.org/site/istimulation-ctebvi-2012-presentation>

Check Out This Web Site for Children with CVI!!

www.littlebearses.org

Welcome to a website dedicated to raising awareness about cortical visual impairment (CVI). One study found that 97% of children with CVI who received visual intervention improved their vision dramatically over a period of a few years. Log on to the website today and get started on your journey of learning more about CVI interventions.

- **VisionAware-Digital Tablets Can Improve Speed and Ease of Reading for People with Moderate Vision Loss:** An innovative new study exploring the potential of the iPad and other back-lighted digital tablet devices to increase the reading ability and reading speed of persons with low vision was presented at the 2012 American Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting, held from November 10-13 in Chicago, Illinois. The study concluded that using a tablet with a back-lighted screen resulted in faster reading speeds for all study participants, regardless of visual acuity. For more information please visit: <http://www.visionaware.org/blog.aspx?BlogEntryID=533&BlogID=9>
- **Colorado Department of Education-Improving Academic Achievement-Results Matter Video Library:** Results Matter, a program of the Colorado Department of Education, has posted a new video to the *Using Technology for Authentic Assessment* section of their Results Matter Video Library. *First Look: Teaching Strategies GOLD Documentation App* (Runtime: 5:45) demonstrates the functions of the Teaching Strategies GOLD Documentation App for iPads, iPod Touches, and iPhones that was released during the week of November 5, 2012. All Results Matter video clips are available for viewing and may be downloaded at no cost for use in educational and professional development activities. Go to: http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/RMVideoSeries_UsingTechnology.htm
- **Edutopia-Assistive Technology-IPAD for Students with Vision Loss:** Much has been said about the iPad being a revolutionary device for education. There are even education conferences that are dedicated to its use. About a year ago *60 Minutes*(3) aired a segment on the potential of the iPad as an assistive technology device with autistic students and how it can also change learning for students with other disabilities or impairments. Please visit: <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/assistive-technology-one-to-one-andrew-marcinek>
- **Perkins-Paths to Literacy:** This site is intended to be an online hub for information related to literacy for students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities or deaf-blindness. Of particular interest are ten free apps for struggle with reading and/or writing. Go to the link to find out more: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/auditory-strategies-struggling-readerscontent/technology/10-apps-learners-who-struggle-reading-andor>



Family Center
on Technology
and Disability

www.fctd.info

FCTD Presents: MEET MASON!

The newest video in the *AT IN Action* Video Series

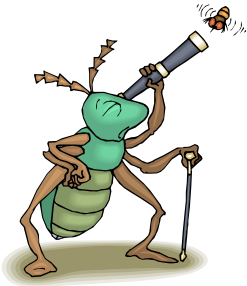
Mason, an engaging first-grader with vision loss, introduces viewers to the assistive technology devices that help him participate fully in an inclusive classroom.

Check it out at:

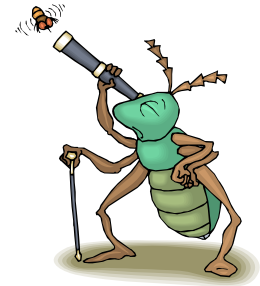
<http://www.fctd.info/show/videos>

*Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.*

(Helen Keller)



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



2012 / 2013 CDE LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC DATES

REGION	DATES	PAPERWORK DEADLINE	SITE COORDINATOR
Metro (Anchor Center for Blind Children)	Wed Feb 27, 2013 Thurs Feb 28, 2013 Fri March 1, 2013	Friday, February 8, 2013	Nancy Knight
Southern 3 (CSDB low vision room)	Fri April 12, 2013	Wednesday, March 27, 2013	Donice Fennimore

Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

By Debbie Haberkorn

The second Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic of 2012-13 was held November 16-17, 2012 at the Enight Skills Center in Fort Collins. The two-day clinic provided evaluations for eight students from six administrative units (Boulder Country, St. Vrain Valley Re-1, Centennial BOCES, Larimer County Poudre R-1, Larimer County Thompson R-2J, Logan County Valley Logan RE-1, and Weld County District 6). Eight sets of parents and five TVIs attended the evaluations with their students. The LVE Clinic Team would like to thank Vicki Pearson and Rita Albright for coordinating the clinic. Vicki's help setting up the room, the support that she provided during the clinic, and her assistance in packing all the equipment back into the van were very much appreciated! The team would also like to acknowledge the Enight Skills Center for hosting the clinic

Clinic Paperwork for Remaining Clinics

Please work with you Site Coordinator to secure the needed paperwork for the next two clinics of the two year. Your cooperation will completing the paperwork in a timely fashion is most appreciated. Please be aware that the clinic team cannot accommodate students without the needed paperwork, as all collected information is used to fully prepare for each student's clinic appointment. Thank you!

Spotlight on



Spotlight on Down Syndrome

Information retrieved from: www.rightdiagnosis.com/d/down_syndrome/intro.htm; www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000997.htm; <http://downsyndromeie/index.php/vision/visin-problems-in-down-syndrome>; www.tsbvi.edu/seehear/summer98/downsynd.htm; and www.intellectualdisability.info/

What is Down Syndrome? When a group of symptoms collectively indicate or characterize a condition or a disease, it is often called a syndrome. John Langdon Down, an English physician, first published an accurate description of a person with Down syndrome. It was this scholarly work, published in 1866, that earned Down the recognition as the “father” of the syndrome. Down syndrome occurs in 1 out of every 691 births and is the most frequently occurring genetic disorder. Approximately 400,000 Americans have Down syndrome and about 6,000 babies with Down syndrome are born in the United States each year. The condition varies in degrees from mild to severe and from individual-to-individual. Not all children with Down syndrome have all the characteristics and complications. What is not as widely known about Down syndrome is that a large number of affected children have vision and/or hearing loss that may contribute to learning challenges.

What are the Genetic Implications of Down syndrome? There are three main types of genetic situations associated with Down syndrome: the first is referred to as *Trisomy 21* and is the result of an individual having an extra chromosome 21; the second is called *translocation* in which an individual’s extra chromosome 21 is attached to another chromosome; and the third is *mosaicism*, where an individual has 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46. Statistics have shown that 95% of individuals with Down syndrome fall into the trisomy 21 category. The cause for this extra chromosome has yet to be determined. The diagnosis of Down syndrome must be confirmed by a chromosome study (a karyotype) that will provide a visual display of the chromosomes as they are grouped by their size, number, and shape.

What is the Cause of Down syndrome? Down syndrome is often caused by an error in cell division (called nondisjunction). It is not known why this occurs. Nondisjunction occurs at conception and is not related to any prenatal events. The incidence of Down syndrome increases with advancing maternal age. However, 80% of children with Down syndrome are born to women under 35 years of age.

What are the General Physical Characteristics of Down Syndrome? As noted by the National Association for Down syndrome, the most important fact to know about people with Down syndrome is that they are more like others than they are different. Because of common physical traits, Down syndrome is usually identified at birth or shortly thereafter. There are physical traits such as: specific facial features (a slightly flattened facial profile and an upward slant to the eyes), low muscle tone, a single crease across the palm of the hand. Individuals with Down syndrome are often smaller in stature when full-grown, and may weigh less. There may be greater risks for many health conditions such as congenital heart disease, leukemia, hypothyroidism, gastroesophageal reflux disease, and celiac disease. With age, there may be greater risks for obesity, chronic neurodegenerative disease, epilepsy, and Alzheimer’s disease. Medical interventions are important for ensuring optimal health. Early intervention and high-quality education programs are key for ensuring high expectations and academic results.

What Vision Concerns are Associated with Down Syndrome? Children who have Down syndrome are at risk for visual problems, although actual legal blindness is not common. Sixty percent of children with Down syndrome have a significant refractive error and will require prescriptive glasses. More recently this population of children has been identified to also have accommodation errors, which require early prescriptive bifocals. A significant number of children with Down syndrome are highly myopic (nearsighted) with a high incidence of retinal detachment. Twenty percent have



strabismus (poor eye alignment). Congenital nystagmus also has a small statistical prevalence. A small percentage of children with Down syndrome are born with cataracts. Other common vision problems may include glaucoma and/or keratoconus (the cornea of the eye thins to a cone shape). Typically eye glasses will correct any blurred vision due to nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, and/or accommodation problems. Accommodation problems may result in a need for bifocals. Surgery will help to correct cataracts. An eye care specialist should also prescribe a clinical treatment plan for any eye crossing behavior and resulting amblyopia.

What Hearing Concerns are Associated with Down Syndrome? Many children with Down syndrome also may have some degree of hearing impairment. It is estimated that between 38% and 78% of children with Down syndrome are hearing impaired. The classifications of hearing loss that are possible fall into two categories: conductive and sensorineural.

Conductive hearing loss: People with Down's syndrome may produce copious mucus, which leads to repeated middle ear infections (otitis media) with effusion (glue ear). The child may have narrow eustachian (inner ear) tubes, which are more horizontal than typical. This condition restricts oxygen flow into the ear, causing inflammation which leads to infection. Children with Down syndrome may produce more ear wax, and the wax is harder than typical and sometimes becomes impacted, which further reduces hearing ability. Hearing deficit may be mild or moderate in degree. With proper diagnosis and treatment, many children may achieve normal hearing levels.

Sensorineural Hearing Loss: Children with Down syndrome are more likely to have congenital permanent inner ear hearing loss than the general population (which has an incidence of 1:1,000). From teenage years onwards they are likely to develop accelerated cochlear changes, such as missing or degenerative-prone cochlear hairs, which transmit electrical acoustical signals. The outer ear canal is also narrow due to abnormal physical attributes, and the ear's inherent self-cleaning abilities may not be adequate. It is estimated that most individuals with Down syndrome will have significant hearing loss by the age of 40.

What Treatments are Available for Hearing and/or Vision Loss?

Children with Down syndrome should have their hearing and vision tested regularly and be in the care of appropriate vision and hearing specialists for prescriptive aids and other medical treatments. Medical and school sensory specialists can work together and with the child and family to:

- Explore the need for hearing aids or other amplification device to increase hearing and/or filter competing background noise.
- Treat visual acuity problems with prescriptive lenses, including bifocals for accommodation problems.
- Provide magnification and high contrast tools, if the child has low vision.
- Ensure the child's learning success through consistent evaluations and by obtaining and providing the appropriate supports, modifications, and/or adaptations needed. An school audiologist, teacher certified in deafness, teacher certified in visual impairment, and/or an orientation and mobility specialist may need to be part of the IEP team.

Where Can People Get More Information about Down syndrome?

National Association for Down Syndrome: <http://www.nads.org/>

National Down Syndrome Society: <http://www.ndss.org/>

Resources and Materials

BRAILLE OR PRINT??

A new assessment tool to determine the most appropriate reading medium for students who are blind or have low vision was introduced in November by the National Federation of the Blind. The National Reading Media Assessment (NRMA) was designed to help to ensure that a student's reading medium is appropriately identified both for current and future need, and to ensure that student success is not hampered by incorrect identification of literacy needs.



Developed and tested over a three-year period in collaboration with the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University, the NRMA is the first nationally validated assessment of its kind for youth with low vision. This tool will determine whether each child who is assessed should be taught braille, print, or both. With the NRMA, teachers can evaluate emergent readers and students in grades K-12 who have an identified visual impairment and who have enough visual functioning to identify print letters or shapes by sight.

To learn more or participate in the National Reading Media Assessment, please visit www.bfbrna.org.

Innovative Elementary Math Manipulatives! A New Learning Approach

The new "Slide-A-Round Math Manipulatives" program provides visual aids and a unique hands-on approach designed to increase students' comprehension of mathematical concepts. Jim Franklin, a special education teacher in Rome, Georgia, developed this series of movable, interchangeable slides that address a number of mathematical standards. In developing his product, Mr. Franklin consulted with math teachers and specialists, administrators, parents, and students from several different schools and school systems. In addition, he consulted with an occupational therapist, a hearing specialist, and vision-impaired specialist.

Slide-A-Round math manipulatives are manufactured in the United States of a strong, recycled plastic with steel reinforcement to combine durability with function and ease of use. Students of various ages and ability levels can easily manipulate the movable slides as they work to solve problems and check responses to lessons in a cost-effective manner. One specific feature allows students to snap the movable slides into the main piece when they are finished with a lesson to provide easy storage!

For more information, updates, and how to order this new tool, please visit: <http://slidearoundmath.com/>

Large Print 2013 Calendar

You can still buy ACBCO; American Council of the Blind of Colorado 2013 Large Calendar for only \$10.00. One may either go online to <https://secure.goemerchant.com/secure/custompayment/acbco/322/default.aspx> or call the ACBCO; American Council of the Blind of Colorado Toll Free: 888.775.2221; Mailing Address: 1536 Wynkoop St., Suite #201 Denver, CO 80202.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Perkins Training & Educational Resources Program Presents Just Released Webcast Person-Centered Transition Planning with David Wiley

David is a staff member of the Texas Deafblind Project at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired with many years of experience working in the area of transition.

In this webcast David discusses the benefits of Person-Centered Planning and how this tool can benefit students and their families as they prepare for transition from school-to-work. He also talks about ways to prepare students for transition and participation in transition planning.

Also in this webcast, two parents, Sandy Mack from Rhode Island and Mary Hancock from Florida share their experiences related to each of their respective sons.

The webcast chapters are as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Person-Centered Planning vs. System-Centered Planning
3. Preparing the Student to Participate in Transition Planning
4. Gathering Input for the Person-Centered Transition Plan
5. Conclusions



HKNC YOUNG ADULT SUMMER PROGRAM

The dates for the 2013 Young Adult Summer Program at the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults (HKNC) are: **July 29th through August 9th, 2013**

For more information about this two week opportunity for students who are deafblind or have a dual sensory loss, please visit:

<http://www.hknc.org/VTHSSUMPROG.htm> or contact Ellie Carlson at Ellie.Carlson@hknc.org or at 303-934-9037.

"Disabilities At Work" Newsletter

The Disabilities At Work newsletter is provided four times per year to Human Resource professionals and others as a source of information regarding the issues surrounding employment of qualified people with disabilities.

Disabilities At Work also focuses on identifying companies that either go above and "beyond compliance" in their employment recruitment practices of people with disabilities or provide strong philanthropic support for disability issues. Disabilities At Work encourages the members of the disabled community, their friends and families to patronize these businesses.

To see the full newsletter, go to: <http://www.disabilitiesatwork.org/daw-newsletter.html>

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

Structured Discovery Cane Travel (SDCT)TM

A Question and Answer Opportunity with Dr. Edward Bell

<http://www.pdrib.com/pages/canetravel.php>

A discussion about Structured Discovery Cane Travel (SDCT) methods and principles was moderated by Maurice Peret, Jennifer Kennedy, and Joanne Laurent at one of the breakout sessions of the SOMA/COMA Conference in Richmond October 1, 2012. The presenters asked the audience to submit questions regarding myths, assumptions, and rumors they had heard about SDCT practices. The goal of this exercise was not to compare and contrast SDCT and traditional training, but rather to provide an opportunity to gain a more accurate understanding of a training methodology with which many are not familiar. Kevin Hollinger, Chair of the AER O&M Division, documented the questions posed by attendees.

The link above contains those questions and Dr. Bell's responses and/or explanations. Dr. Bell works with the Institute on Blindness at the Louisiana Tech University. The questions are in the order that they were recorded during the discussion. Those present at the session fully anticipate that in answering these questions, many more will arise, and Dr. Bell and the discussion moderators welcome the opportunity to participate in future exchanges of information and strategies.



The White Cane Freedom March



To the Tune of: "As Those Caissons Go Rolling Along"
(song reprinted from the E-Connector, November 2012)



Over hill, over dale, we will hit the concrete trail;
As our white canes go tapping along.
Down the block, cross the street, walking on our own two feet;
As our white canes go tapping along.
On the job or at home, wherever we may roam,
Yes, independent and free! NFB!
We can find our way at night or in the day;
As our white canes go tapping along.

Check Out Assessments Now Available in the CDE Resource Bank

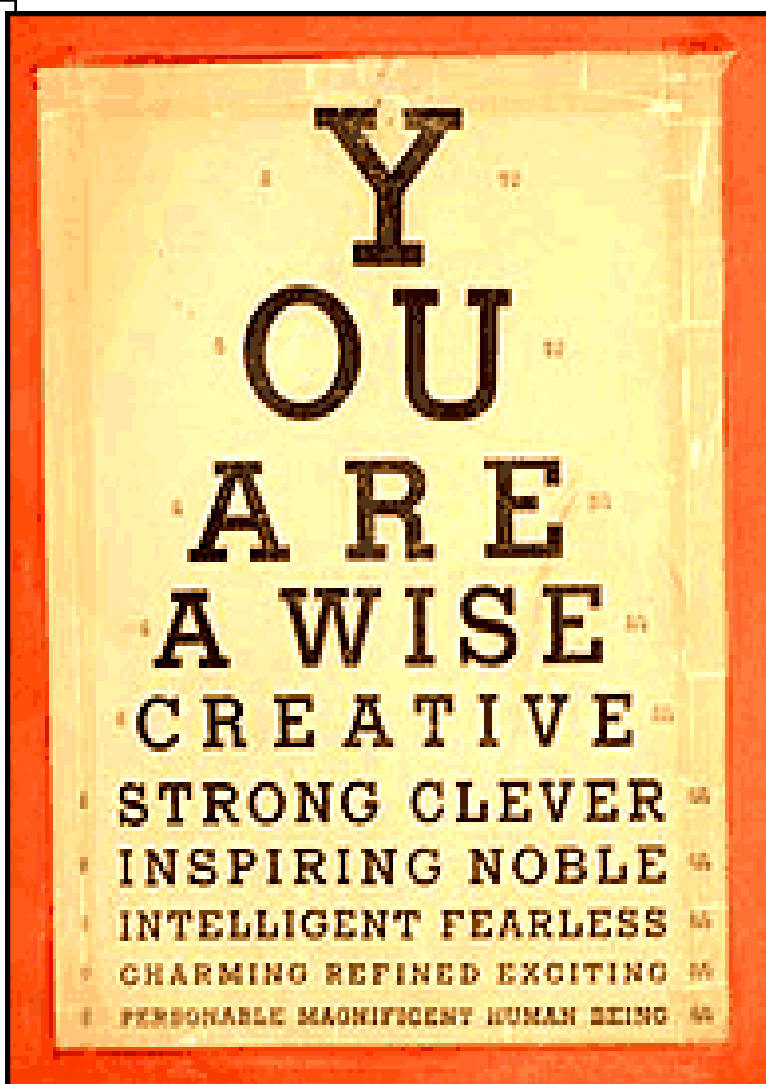
The CDE Resource Bank consisting of high quality assessments that are aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards has launched. This initial launch includes assessments reviewed by the Colorado Content Collaboratives for music, dance, drama, social studies and some reading, writing & communicating. Please watch the Scoop for updates on availability of additional assessments. We are loading more reading, writing & communicating assessments as well as assessments for visual arts. Additionally, in January, assessments from Cohort II which includes the subjects of comprehensive health, mathematics, physical education, science, world languages and career & technical education will be added to the CDE Resource Bank. While the bank will continue to be updated with more assessments and instructional supports, this launch will allow pilot districts to field test assessments for use in teacher evaluations this year.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.coloradopl.org/assessment>

TVIs are Invited to Participate in a Survey

Lori Johnson, TVI, M.A.T., a Doctoral Candidate & NCLVI Fellow at the University of Louisville is inviting all TVIs to take her survey entitled "Perceptions of U.S. Teachers of the Visually Impaired on Commercially-produced Described Video within Educational Multimedia" posted on Survey Monkey. She is hoping to reach as many employed U.S. TVIs as possible for adequate representation of this important population. This is crucial for her study's research.

If you have any questions, please contact her at: Lajohn01@louisville.edu or call (502) 386-2785. Thank you in advance for taking part in this study!



A poster encourages the students who are visually impaired and who use a special resource room at Brooklyn's Edward R. Murrow High School. Credit: Sara Ring

just for PARENTS

Sign Up for the Family, School, and Community Partnering: "On the Team and At the Table" Course

Learn how families, schools, and communities can partner in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (Response to Intervention (RtI)/Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) to support positive academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for all students.

This training is for all education stakeholders, including family and community members. Administrators, teachers, related service providers, higher education faculty, advisory groups, school board members, advocates, and accountability committee members are all invited to participate. For more information, please go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/RtI/ProfDevelopmentRtI.htm>

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Parents: If you are moving out of state or your child has graduated, please be in touch so we can remove your name from our newsletter mailing list. If your child is still enrolled in a Colorado school district and you have a new mailing address, please be in touch with your address changes.

TVIs and COMSs: If you have any changes in program contact information, please help us out and send Tanni these changes.

Thanks to everyone for helping to keep our mailing list up-to-date! Send changes to anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175, Denver, CO 80202. Or leave a voice message at (303) 866-6681.

Connecting Families

There are several organizations that can connect families to advocates in Colorado. PEAK Parent Center is Colorado's Parent Training and Information Center. PEAK has parent advisors on staff and can provide families with the names of advocacy organizations. For more information, visit:

- PEAK's website at www.peakparent.org.
- The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People (www.thelegalcenter.org) and
- The Arc of Colorado (www.thearcofco.org) are other resources for families looking for advocates.

If your family is looking for support groups and/or are trying to connect with other families, Parent to Parent of Colorado is a useful resource - www.p2p-co.org

The Parent Information and Resources page on the CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit's website has information about conferences and training opportunities. Every year CDE offers three Parents Encouraging Parents Conferences for families and educators throughout Colorado.

There are two remaining PEP Conferences yet this school year—one in Este Park on February 28—March 2, 2013 and one on May 2-4, 2013 in a location yet to be determined.

For more information, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>

DOTS OF INTEREST



Colorado Braille Competency Testing

By Tanni Anthony

All TVIs working in Colorado school districts must demonstrate braille competency by the end of their first instructional year. To date a total of **174** persons (149 TVIs and 25 braillists) have demonstrated braille competency according to Colorado Department of Education guidelines. High applause to all who have demonstrated braille competency, especially to the braillists. This group of professionals are not required by state law to demonstrate braille competency, although it is an excellent way to confirm their skill set in reading and writing literary braille.

Over the years since demonstration of braille competency by TVIs was required by state law, there have been four different ways that Colorado personnel could demonstrate braille competency. We started with two Braille Refresher Courses back in 1997. A total of 46 individuals demonstrated competency. For a brief period of time, we allowed an independent portfolio or a proctored session portfolio testing experience. A total of 20 individuals demonstrated braille competency by this means. Starting in 2002, the sole method offered by the CDE for TVIs and braillists to demonstrate braille competency has been a proctored testing session. The details of the test, can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_GuideDocs.asp. To date **107** individuals have demonstrated braille competency using the state test. Seventy-two individuals have passed the test on the first time (with 28 completing a retake braille sample). For TVIs who do not pass the test on the first taking, the CDE offers ten hours of free mentoring service. In almost all situations, a person receiving braille mentoring has gone onto pass the CO Braille Test.

All TVIs must renew their CDE Certificate of Braille Competency over a five year period following their initial certification. The braille renewal process, which involves 15 one-hour modules, is detailed on the aforementioned web link. Based on TVI request, the modules are offering to individuals only and not in small group sessions.

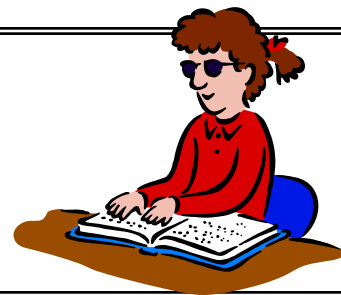
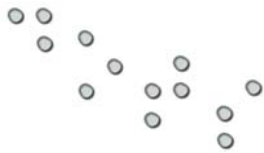
All procedures associated with testing and renewal practices have been reviewed by the Colorado Attorney General's office and approved by the Colorado State Board of Education. Most changes in recent years have been the result of TVI input to the process.

There are five members of the CDE Braille Competency Committee: Tanni Anthony, Lucia Hasty, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein. Their roles involve proctoring braille testing, co-development of products and testing / renewal procedures, and review and recommendations tied to requested testing accommodations. Whenever a new situation arises that may need further guidance, Tanni brings this information to the State Director of Special Education and, as needed, to the Colorado Attorney General's office.

The goal has always been to have a standardized state testing process that measures both the accuracy and efficiency of reading and writing literary braille per the state mandate to do so. There is strong evidence that the state testing has supported both an individual and collective higher skill set in braille competency in Colorado.

The CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) has an annual budget to fund the proctors, mentors, and professional development tied to statewide braille competency. The bulk of the budget is designed to assist TVIs in demonstrating braille competency. A practice test has been recently developed and will soon be posted on the aforementioned webpage with the other documents specific to braille testing in Colorado. There is a 25 item multiple-choice quiz and a passage to be brailled that is approximately one page long. Both can be taken and checked independently for the correct answers. This will give people a chance to "test" their braille skills ahead of taking the state test or be used as a "how am I doing" update check for those who have already demonstrated braille competency. As the Unified English Braille Code changes are implemented on a national and state level, the CDE ESSU will offer a braille refresher course(s) for the TVIs and braillists in Colorado. As you have questions about the braille competency testing and renewal procedures and/or ideas for training /support, please be in touch with me at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6681.

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Weblinks to Braille Items

Jewelry: Elegant Insights creates hand crafted Braille accented bracelets, charms, earrings, etc. made from brass, copper, stainless steel and sterling silver. The unique feature of this jeweler is that the designer will customize the Braille on the piece just for you! www.elegantinsightsjewelry.com

Puzzles: Go to www.flaghouse.com and put tactile puzzle in the search box.

A Jungle themed Tactile Puzzle is available at: <http://www.learninghouse.com.au/start-shopping/kids-puzzles/tactile-puzzle-jungle.html>

Many games and puzzles are available from the Braille Book Store: www.braillebookstore.com

Coloring Books: Tactile Vision, Inc. offers a series of raised-line coloring books, as well as other raised line picture books with Braille descriptions. www.tactilevisioninc.com

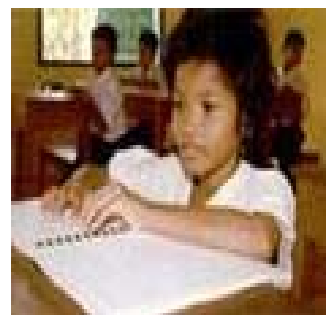
Find raised line coloring books and other toys from www.LSSproducts.com; click on children's products.

Markers with Braille labels and coloring books are available from: www.Playabilitytoys.com

For more toys and games take a look at these websites: www.blindmicemart.com, www.squidoo.com and www.specialneedstoys.com

FREE BRAILLE BOOKS FOR KIDS!!!

Temple Beth El Sisterhood Braille Bindery, a volunteer organization located in Michigan, will ship, for free, to a child's home or school any of 1,200 children's books in Braille. Many age levels are included, and you can view the complete list by following the link below:



http://www.tbeonline.org/childrens_braille_books_temple_braille_bindery/

For an order form, contact Barbara Mandelbaum at 248-542-7736 or email asmandel1@sbcglobal.net>. All books are free and there is no limit to the number that may be selected.

DOTS OF INTEREST



Braille Code Change for the United States

Frequently Asked Questions

This document was taken from the BANA website: <http://www.brailleauthority.org/>

Q = Question and A = Answer



Q. Where did the idea of braille code change come from?

A. The braille code has changed many times since its creation in the 19th century. Changes have been made to assist braille readers in better understanding the text being communicated and to allow the production of braille to become more efficient. In 1991, more than 20 years ago, Dr. Abraham Nemeth and Dr. Tim Cranmer presented a paper to BANA discussing the urgency of the need to unify the various braille codes used in North America. The development of the computer braille code in the late 1980s had created yet another set of braille characters for common symbols such as the dollar sign, the period, and the comma. The desire to create a unified code was partially in response to the perceived complexity of having multiple symbols for the same meaning. Later that year, BANA initiated a project to act on the recommendations in the Nemeth/Cranmer memorandum; that project became international in 1993 when BANA invited participation by the International Council on English Braille (ICEB). This process led to the development of the Unified English Braille Code (UEBC), which became known as UEB (Unified English Braille).

Q. Would changing the braille codes bring any real improvements?

A. Making changes to the braille codes would help braille readers, braille transcribers and producers, and teachers of blind students in a number of ways. For example:

- More consistency, less ambiguity, and fewer exceptions to braille rules would make braille easier to produce and would remove some barriers to learning braille.
- The ability to show more symbols in braille would give the braille reader better access to the same information that is available to print readers.
- Computer translation and backtranslation could be produced more quickly and with less human intervention than currently required.
- More accurate computer translation from print to braille and from braille to print would:
- Reduce the errors and ambiguity experienced by those reading contracted braille on refreshable braille displays, which are the equivalent of a screen on a computer or mobile device;
- Improve the backtranslation of braille that is written using electronic devices, so that braille users can write in braille to communicate easily and accurately with non-braille users.

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- Increase the timeliness of many types of braille production by permitting braille transcribers to focus more on advanced aspects of braille production rather than spending time on routine matters.
- Reduce the labor required in braille production, allowing teachers to spend more time working with the students instead of braille materials for their students. Mitigate, to some extent, the difficulties experienced by a reader who is required to read computer-produced braille that has been prepared by someone who has not been trained in braille transcription

Q. How much would braille really change?

A. The literary code would be easily read by those familiar with the current braille code. The following list is not comprehensive, but is provided to give a general sense of how literary braille would change. Out of the current 189 contractions, nine would be deleted to make room in the code for greater consistency and less confusion in the representation of other symbols. The nine eliminated contractions are: ally, ation, ble, by, com, dd, into, o'clock, to.

Some rules for when and when not to use contractions would be changed. Some contractions would be used more often than they are now. Words that are currently written together such as "and the" would be spaced apart as they are in print.

Most of the punctuation would remain the same, but some would change; for example, the opening parenthesis would become dots 5, 1-2-6 and the closing parenthesis would be dots 5, 3-4-5. This means that braille, just like print, would have separate and unique symbols to differentiate opening and closing parentheses. The period would be shown as dots 2-5-6 so that, just like in print, the same symbol is used regardless of whether it means full stop, decimal point, or dot.

Some symbols, such as asterisk, percent sign, dollar sign, and degree sign, would change. Some of the newer symbols, like copyright, trademark, and crosshatch, would remain the same.

The methods of indicating emphasis, such as italics, boldface, or underlining, would be changed. These attributes would not be shown more frequently than they are in current braille, but now a braille reader would be able to distinguish, for example, whether a word is in italics or was underlined.

A major limitation of the base literary code we use today is that there is no good way to show the math symbols that sometimes occur in everyday writing and may or may not be related to actual math at all. Operational symbols such as plus and equals that do not currently exist in the literary code would be added.

The rules for formatting of headings, paragraphs, contents pages, and other items involving spacing or placement on a page would not be affected.

It would no longer be necessary to switch into a special code to read and write web and email addresses.

Q. Why can't we just modify existing code?

A. BANA has made small changes to the literary braille code from time to time. More and more, however,

DOTS OF INTEREST



proposed changes would result in conflicts with existing codes.

Q. Would all the other codes we use now disappear?

A. No. The Nemeth code would still be available for use wherever it is needed. The music code and the International Phonetic Alphabet code would not be affected. Books and materials that have already been produced in older codes would still be available for readers who want them. Nothing would be removed from circulation in the near future.

Q. How hard would it be to change existing translation software?

A. UEB is already built into the Duxbury Braille Translation software and into popular refreshable braille devices, such as products from Freedom Scientific, HumanWare, and HIMS. It is also available for the Mountbatten Braille. Individuals using iPhones or iPads with refreshable braille displays can use UEB now because it is available in the VoiceOver screen reader that comes with every computer or mobile device sold by Apple.

Q. Would all the old braille books still be usable?

A. Existing braille books would remain in libraries and still be quite readable.

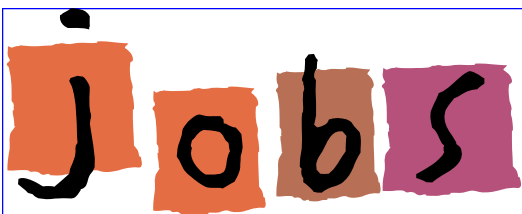
Q. How long would the braille code change take?

A. A change to UEB would not happen overnight. Careful planning would be undertaken to determine the best ways to introduce teachers, transcribers, students, and general readers to the changes in the braille code. Full implementation would no doubt take many years.

Q. Where can I get more information about UEB?

A. More detailed information about the background of BANA's consideration of code change will be published over the next few weeks. Additionally, information about UEB can be found at <http://www.iceb.org/ueb.html>.

Editor's Note: Tanni has been in touch with Frances Mary D'Andrea to determine the roll out plan for change. Many of you will remember that FM was one of our speakers a few years back at our reading course. She is on the BANA Board. FM shared that the adoption vote just happened and it will take a good long time before we see implementation. The CDE and, specifically, the CDE Braille Competency Committee, will keep a close watch on UEB changes in our state textbooks and our university training programs to ensure that the Colorado Braille Competency Test is updated properly. As these changes are implemented across the country and specially in our state, the CDE will offer a braille update course for TVIs, braillists, and other interested parties.



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for this school year or the one starting in fall 2013. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your job openings. 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 Specialist. 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!

TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairment.
COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist

Metro Region Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (2 FTE): Aurora Public Schools. Apply online at www.aps.k12.co.us. For more information contact Jo Cunningham at jmcunningham@aps.k12.co.us or 720-271-9668.
- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE): Jefferson County Public Schools. For more information, contact Karie Yenter in Human Resources at (303) 982-6515.

Southern Region Jobs

- ✓ **CSDB** is actively recruiting and accepting applications for positions for the 2012-13 school year. Those interested in TVI positions specific to early childhood, the School for the Blind, and/or the Outreach Program should contact Chelle Lutz at clutz@csdb.org or (719) 578-2114.

Statewide

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (hourly contract work): Colorado Virtual Academy position. Flexible to your schedule. Contact Stacy Altman at 720-379-3985 or saltman@covcs.org
- ✓

TVIs and COMSs—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE teaching and support services licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing in the future with part-time or sub work. Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement!



Calendar of Events

2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| February 6 | CAER Meeting – 5:30 – 8:30 Centretech, Aurora Public Schools
<u>Contact:</u> Heather Parson - hwparsons@hotmail.com |
| February 9 | USABA/Boulder Parks & Recreation Expand Judo 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm—Boulder, CO
<u>Contact:</u> Jen Heilveil at 303-413-7474 or heilveilj@bouldercolorado.gov |
| February 21—23 | 2013 Texas Deafblind Symposium: Hands Matter —Austin, TX
<u>Visit:</u> http://events.SignUp4.com/2013_TX_Deafblind_Symposium |
| February 24 | CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB in Colorado Springs
<u>Contact:</u> Veronica Crim - vcrim@csdb.org |
| February 25 | Southern Region TVI Meeting —1:00 pm to 3:00 pm— CSDB Lions Conference Bldg.
<u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org |
| February 28-March 2 | Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference - Estes Park
<u>Visit:</u> http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp |
| March 1-3 | Snowshoe Weekend
<u>Contact:</u> Diane Covington at dcovington@csdb.org or (719) 578-2225 |
| March 6 | CAER Meeting – 5:30 – 8:30 (via telephone)
<u>Contact:</u> Heather Parson - hwparsons@hotmail.com |
| March 9, 16, 23 | NSCD Snowshoeing Program —9:00 am to 11:00 am— Devil’s Thumb Ranch, CO
<u>Visit:</u> www.nscd.org or call (303) 316-1518 |
| March 14 | CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB in Colorado Springs
<u>Contact:</u> Veronica Crim - vcrim@csdb.org |
| March 16 | USABA/Boulder Parks & Recreation Expand Goal Ball —Boulder, CO
<u>Contact:</u> Jen Heilveil at 303-413-7474 or heilveilj@bouldercolorado.gov |
| March 20 | CSDB Career Day — CSDB in Colorado Springs
<u>Contact:</u> Diane Covington at dcovington@csdb.org or (719) 578-2225 |
| March 30 | NSCD Snowshoeing Program —8:00 am to 4:00 pm— Devil’s Thumb Ranch, CO
<u>Visit:</u> www.nscd.org or call (303) 316-1518 |
| April 10 | CAER Meeting – 5:30 – 8:30 (Nancy Cozart’s home)
<u>Contact:</u> Heather Parson - hwparsons@hotmail.com |
| April 11 | CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB in Colorado Springs
<u>Contact:</u> Veronica Crim - vcrim@csdb.org |

More Calendar of Events

2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013
April 18—20										AFB Leadership Conference/Illinois AER Conference — Chicago, IL Visit: www.afb.org/afblc
April 18—20										National Braille Association Spring 2013 Conference —Washington DC N/Gaithersburg Visit: www.nationalbraille.org
April 29										Southern Region TVI Meeting — 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm— CSDB Lions Conference Bldg. Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
April 30										ACBCO Visually Impaired People’s Fair (Denver) Contact: TBD
May 1										Last Day (Please and Thank You!) to order braille books with the CIMC for 2013-14 SY
May 2										Vision Coalition – TBD Contact: Tanni Anthony - anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
May 2—4										Colorado State O and M Training - Denver Contact: Tanni Anthony— Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
May 2-4										Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference - (location TBD) Visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp
May 11										USABA/Boulder Parks & Recreation Expand Cycling —Boulder, CO Contact: Jen Heilveil at 303-413-7474 or heilveilj@bouldercolorado.gov
June 3 - 7										Assistive Technology Conference —Denver Contact: TBD
June 10-14										Summer Institute on Deafblindness and SSN —Denver Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6681
June 14—16										Family Learning Retreat —CSDB Contact: Diane Covington at dcovington@csdb.org
June 13										CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB Contact: Veronica Crim - vcrim@csdb.org
June 19—21										WREIC/Northern Rockies AER Sensory Disabilities Conference —Jackson Hole, WY Contact: website will be up soon
July 25—28										CHARGE Syndrome Conference —Scottsdale, AZ Contact: http://www.chargesyndrome.org/
July 29—August 9										HKNC Young Adult Summer Program Contact: Ellie Carlson at Ellie.Carlson@hknc.org or at 303-934-9037
October										National Braille Association Fall 2013 Conference —Colorado Springs, CO Visit: www.nationalbraille.org
December 11—14										AER International All-Orientation & Mobility Conference — New Orleans, LA Visit: www.aerbvi.org

2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014
July 30-Aug 3										AER International Conference – San Antonio, TX Visit: www.aerbvi.org



SAVE THE DATE!!
Western Regional Early Intervention Conference
On Sensory Disabilities
in collaboration with
Northern Rockies AER Conference
Jackson Hole, Wyoming
June 19 – 21, 2013

**“Assessment and Strategies for Infants, Toddlers, Students,
And Adults with Sensory Loss”**

FULL DAY PRE-CONFERENCE PROGRAMS JUNE 19, 2013
Cost \$35.00

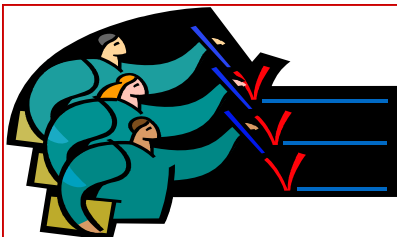
- ✦ **The Van Dijk Assessment** – Dr. Jan Van Dijk and Dr. Cathy Nelson will be presenting the new Research on Brain Development and Assessment strategies Utilizing the Van Dijk Approach for Students who are Sensory Impaired. It has been scientifically proven that “The Van Dijk Approach to Assessment” brings out the best in a child. It was initially considered a “Van Dijk thing” that only he could conduct, based on his experience, knowledge and personality. The research of Nelson, Janssen, Oster & Jayaraman (2010) has convincingly shown, however, that after a rather limited period of training, practitioners are able to implement the assessment with fidelity in order to develop appropriate goals for their students.
- ✦ **Auditory Neuropathy** - Dr. Charles Berlin - Simon and Garfunkel sang of the joys found in the sounds of silence. But children’s silence--either due to a hearing problem or an inability to process in their brains what they do hear--leads to difficulties in understanding language that, without intervention, can affect kids their entire lives. Charles Berlin, Ph.D., the Kenneth and Frances Barnes Bullington Professor of Hearing Science and the director of the Kresge Hearing Research Laboratory at Louisiana State University Medical School in New Orleans, is renowned for his skill in diagnosing rare hearing problems in children and for identifying genes that cause deafness.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM June 20 – 21, 2013
Cost \$125.00

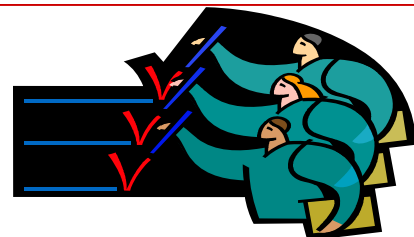
- 🌻 Instructional Strategies for the Student with Dual Sensory Loss / Multiple Impairments, Kathee Scoggin & Callie Spotted Elk
- 🌻 Language & Brain Development, Jill Morford
- 🌻 Autism in the Visual Impaired Population with Early Literacy, Megan Mogan
- 🌻 Expanded Core Curriculum Instruction for Students with Multiple Impairments, Robin Keating
- 🌻 SAM: Symbols and Meaning Kit, a Kit for Students with Visual Impairments / Multiple Disabilities, Millie Smith
- 🌻 Communication Matrix, Phil Schweigert
- 🌻 Shaken Baby Syndrome and How It Presents in Children with Multiple Impairments, Phil Schweigert
- 🌻 Working with Children Who Have Multiple Needs, Paula Pittman
- 🌻 Co-Hear: Strategies for the Development of Pragmatics, Dianah Beams and Christie Yoshinago Itano
- 🌻 Ski-Hi & Beyond the Big Books, SKI-HI & Paula Pitman
- 🌻 Transportation & Independence, Penny Rosenblum
- 🌻 Visual Conditions that Affect Adults and Appropriate Accommodations, Carol Baron

And MUCH MORE!

Contact Joanne Whitson, joanne.whitson@wyo.gov
the website will be up soon!



CHECK IT OUT!




Boulder Parks & Recreation
EXPAND Visual Impairment Sport Abilities Program

Sport opportunities allow people who are blind and visually impaired to develop independence through recreation. Come join us at the East Boulder Community Center for this collaborative sport program with the staff of the United State Association of Blind Athletes (USABA). We will offer goal ball, running, swimming, biking, and judo. Participants will receive healthy snacks and incentives for participating. Specific transportation pick up points will be provided. The cost is \$15 and includes all 5 dates below:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Judo | February 9th |
| Running | April 13th |
| Goal Ball | March 16th |
| Cycling | May 11th |



Note: Time for all events is 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

For more information, contact Jen Heilveil at:

303-413-7474 or heilveilj@bouldercolorado.gov.

ECEA Rules Posted

The ECEA Rules amendments approved by the State Board in September are effective as of October 30, 2012. These amendments include the changes to the disability categories.

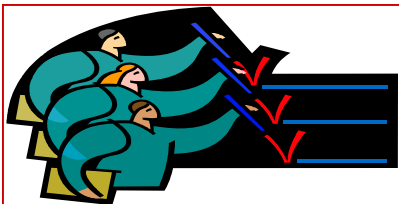
They have been posted to the following website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/rules.htm>.

Winter Video Contest Begins!

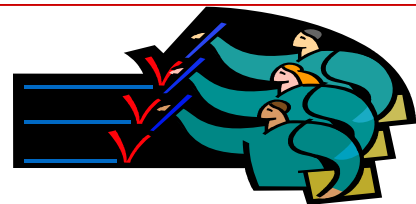
The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is announces the deadline for their 4th Unforgettable APH Star Contest. Send them your videos demonstrating your favorite APH products by February 13, 2013, and you'll be eligible to win cash prizes.



Read about the contest in our Unforgettable APH Star page at: www.aph.org/contest>. While visiting the page, check out at the wonderful videos from their previous contests.



CHECK IT OUT!



Cooperative Agreement to Advance Accessible Science Technology for the Visually Impaired

News Release

November 7, 2012

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – The recent cooperative agreement between Independence Science (ISci) and ViewPlus Technologies (VPT) will greatly help students with blindness or a visual impairment (BLV) participate in hands-on science laboratory experiments. Combining the accessible scientific data collection technology from ISci, with the advanced Braille Printers from VPT, a student with BLV can experience full inclusion within the science laboratory.

The future seems a lot brighter for students with BLV entering chemistry, biology, physics, earth science and other high school or college science courses with the partnership between ISci and VPT. Sci-Voice Access Software and the Talking LabQuest, developed by Dr. Cary Supalo and researchers at ISci, will become more widely available due to the vast North American dealer network maintained by VPT.

“We at Independence Science are very excited to announce this new partnership with ViewPlus Technologies and believe this new channel will serve the blind community in having better access to science in laboratory settings.” Said Dr. Supalo, “This partnership will help our products get into the hands of those who need them most and be very beneficial to the blind community, teachers of students with visual impairments, and science teachers across North America.”

John Gardner, President of VPT said about the agreement, “The ISci lab access technologies are an ideal complement to ViewPlus’s strong math/science accessibility products. We are delighted that Independence Science has selected ViewPlus to be their partner in making their products available to blind and low-vision science students.”

Incorporating VPT Braille Printers into the Sci-Voice Lab Solution completes the compilation of experiment data collection translated to graph analysis for a student with BLV, allowing them to fully participate alongside their peers in the science classroom. The agreement to further advance scientific access technology is crucial for students with BLV to increase their confidence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields of study and provide another career path for people who are blind/visually impaired.

About Independence Science LLC

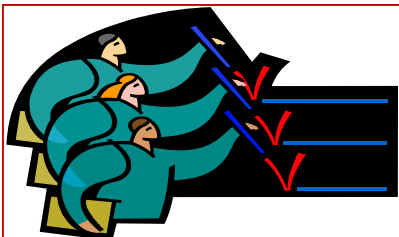
Founded in 2009 and based at the Purdue Research Park in West Lafayette, IN, Independence Science (<http://www.independencescience.com>) researchers are making their expertise available to help school districts, colleges and universities, and state rehabilitation agencies across the country meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements in the science curriculum. Sci-Voice Access Software and talking scientific access products have been developed to help build confidence through a hands-on education for students with blindness or low vision entering Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) fields of study.

Independence Science contact: Roger Tower, 866-862-9665, rtower@independencescience.com

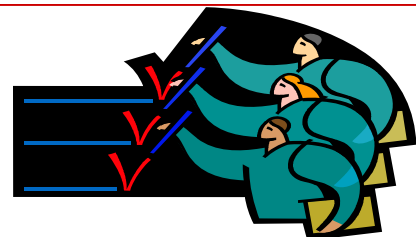
About ViewPlus Technologies

Founded in 1996, Corvallis-based ViewPlus Technologies is an international leader in tactile graphics and braille technologies. Current ViewPlus products include the Tiger® Braille printers, IVEO Hands-on Learning System, Tiger Software Suite braille translation software, and the Audio Graphing Calculator.

ViewPlus Technologies contact: Gayle Parrish, 541-754-4002, gayle.parrish@viewplus.com



CHECK IT OUT!



JUST RELEASED WEBCAST!

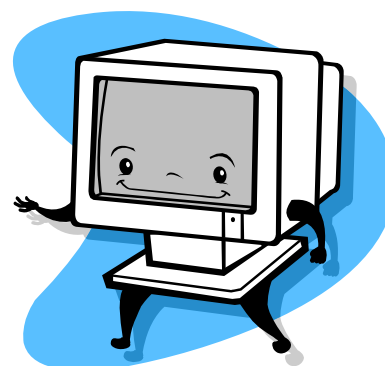
Universal Design for Learning with Elizabeth Hartmann, Ph.D.

Presented by Perkins Training & Educational Resources Program

In this webcast, Dr. Hartmann presents the three principles of Universal Design for Learning. Universal Design for Learning is a new way of thinking about education and has the potential to reform curriculum and make learning experiences more accessible and meaningful for all students. Dr. Hartmann is currently an assistant professor in education at Lasell College in Newton, Massachusetts and a teacher of students with multiple disabilities, including visual impairments and deafblindness.

The webcast chapters are as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Multiple Means of Expression and Action
3. Multiple Means of Engagement
4. UDL Approach to Curriculum
5. The Case for UDL in Curriculum Design

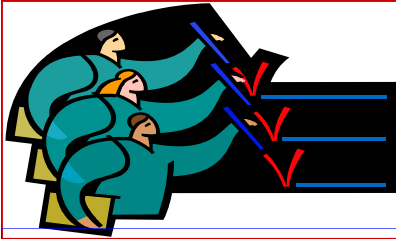


Brain Power Video

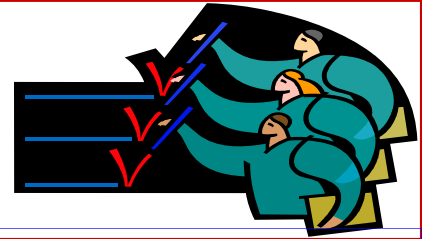
This video is worth watching - especially if you have a young child in your life!

Brain Power: From Neurons to Networks is based on new research on how to best nurture children's brains from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child and University of Washington's I-LABS, the film explores the parallels between a child's brain development and the development of the global brain of Internet, offering insights into the best ways to shape both. To watch the video, please go to:

<http://letitripple.org/brain-film/>



CHECK IT OUT!



ITEMS OF INTEREST

Save the Date: The American Conference on Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment, Children's Hospital and Medical Center, Omaha, NE, April 12th, 2013: <http://www.childrensomaha.org/UpcomingConferences>

CHARGE Syndrome Foundation-Recorded Webinars: Resources for providing support to individuals with CHARGE syndrome and their families: <http://www.chargesyndrome.org/resources.asp>

Center for Disabilities Deaf-Blind Program report: Minimal Hearing Loss-is not always so minimal:
<http://www.usd.edu/medical-school/center-for-disabilities/upload/Minimal-Hearing-Loss.pdf>

National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness-All Children Can Learn to Read: For literacy resources that provide ideas, answers and hope for children with deaf-blindness. <http://www.hknc.org/NCDBLiteracyWebsite.htm>

Courses on Diabetes

The Carroll Center invites you to take one of our online diabetes courses designed for consumers and professionals to improve knowledge and skills on diabetes and visual impairment. These online courses were developed by award winning author, instructor, and former Director of Admissions and Diabetes Educator for The Carroll Center for the Blind, Margaret E. Cleary, MS, RN, CHE, CVRT®.

These second generation continually updated courses give you an opportunity to refresh existing knowledge and learn new facts about diabetes mellitus self-managing. They provide resources to enable all involved to work closely together, highlighting important roles of each. After completing a course, you will be able to identify factors necessary for successful diabetes self-care with visual impairment or blindness. Choose the course that is right for you!

Diabetes and Visual Impairment: A New View for Health Professionals
<<http://carroll.org/online-courses/diabetes-and-visual-impairment-a-new-view-for-professionals>>

Diabetes and Visual Impairment: A New View for Patients and Families
<<http://carroll.org/online-courses/diabetes-and-visual-impairment-a-new-view-for-patients-and-families/>>

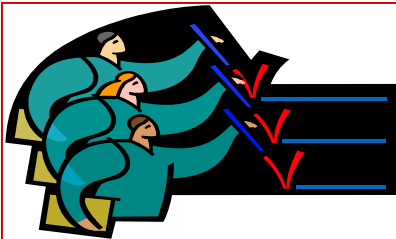
Diabetes and Visual Impairment: A New View for Vision Professionals
<<http://carroll.org/online-courses/diabetes-and-visual-impairment-a-new-view-for-health-professionals/>>

CDE's New Facebook Page

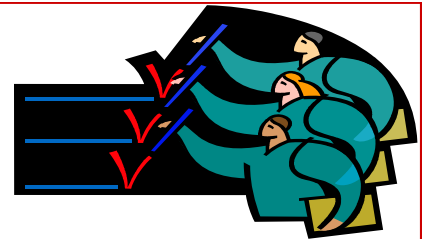
Join the conversation! CDE's new Facebook page is an opportunity to engage with others and share information, news, questions, suggestions and conversation around education!

The Facebook page will also include pictures from events and opportunities to share stories about educators who are making a difference in their community.

For more information, please go to: <https://www.facebook.com/codepted>



CHECK IT OUT!



Submit Your Nomination for the 2013 State People First Award

The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee is pleased to announce a call for nominations for the 2013 People First Award. This award serves to recognize individuals for their exemplary work in supporting students with disabilities. Recipients of this award go above and beyond to make a difference in another person's life. Please go to the following link to read about last year's recipients of the award and to find out how to make a nomination: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp>

Print Your Educator License Online

Beginning in January, CDE's Educator Licensing Office will no longer print and mail paper copies of educator licenses, endorsements, credentials or authorizations. These documents will be available online and can be printed by the licensee.

This new process will allow licenses to become available much quicker; cutting three weeks of print time. Teachers/educators receive instant verification and licenses will be easier to keep track of.

For more information, visit: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/Printing_faqs.htm

See the December Educator Effectiveness E-newsletter!

Check out the Educator Effectiveness e-newsletter for important updates on Colorado's education improvement efforts and access to new resources!

The newsletter is located at:

<http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=bee6c43ae6102530cf98cadf9&id=d38b580c9c&e=8fead0140b>



The Importance of Sports Camps for Youth with Visual Impairment

See what a child who is blind/visually impaired can experience at camp and enjoy the best song ever written to promote the "power of a dream" and "what it really means to be blind." The American Printing House for the Blind presents a collaboration between 2X Olympian, Marla Runyan, and singer/songwriter extraordinaire, Terry Kelly. This new Feature on the APH Physical Education

Web site is the result of APH staff and a dedicated group of professionals who spent a week at Camp Abilities in Brockport, NY. Terry performs one night at the camp every year, and the campers look forward to dancing and singing to his music. Marla, a teacher of children with visual impairments, came to camp as a track coach and as an APH consultant on a motor development curriculum written by Lauren Lieberman, Ph.D., and Pamela Haibach, Ph.D., both professors at The College of Brockport, SUNY. Amanda Tepfer, an adapted physical education teacher and doctoral student at Oregon State University, has been the camp photographer for over 10 years. Marla paired Amanda's amazing photos with Terry's lyrics to make this inspirational video. The video can be found at: <http://www.aph.org/pe/features.html>

To check out Sports Camps across the country, please go to: <http://www.aph.org/pe/camps.html>


11th Annual Snowshoe Weekend

Students who have
Visual Impairments,
ages 8 – 18 years old

March 1, 2013, 4:00 p.m.–March 3, 2013, 1:00 p.m.
YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch, Granby, CO

Cost: \$50.00 / person

(A matching amount will be provided by the
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind to defer expenses)



Experience a snowshoe weekend
in the mountains with
old and new friends.

Registration Deadline:

January 18, 2013

Mail registration form and check to:

Diane Covington

CSDB

33 North Institute Street

Colorado Springs, CO 80903

dcovington@csdb.org

Please make checks payable to CSDB

Sponsored by



33 N. Institute Street ~ Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719-575-8100, www.csdb.org



Colorado Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Parents are responsible for providing transportation to
and from the YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch .



NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER FOR THE DISABLED

SNOWSHOEING PROGRAM

March 2013



Join NSCD for a four session snowshoeing program March, 2013.



When: March 9, 16, 23 and 30th
*Please note, details for March 30th differ from other three dates

Time: 9am- 11am
March 9, 16, and 23

Where: Meet at Denver west pick up, head to snowshoeing location. Snowshoeing location will be based on best snow conditions. Transportation will be provided!

***March 30th Details**

Time: 8am- 4pm
March 30

Where: Devil's Thumb Ranch. Transportation will be provided!



Cost: \$60 for all four sessions

Includes: Equipment including snowshoes and poles.
*Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring your own lunch and water.

For additional information visit www.nscd.org or call 303-316-1518

Vision Coalition Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2013

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Barb Galgano, Charlotte Javier, Jennifer Langely, Judy Mumford, Jim Olson, Everett Romero, and Angela Sims.

Persons Unable to Attend: LaVerne Dell

Visiting Guests: Mira Monroe and Collin Bonner (Assessment Unit of the Colorado Department of Education)

MISSION OF THE VISION COALITION

The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired.” (April 1998)

LEGEND OF ACRONYMS

CAER	=	CO Chapter - Association of the Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired
CDE	=	Colorado Department of Education
CIMC	=	Colorado Instructional Materials Center
COMS	=	certified orientation and mobility specialist
CSDB	=	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
DVR	=	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ESSU	=	Exceptional Student Services Unit
TVI	=	teacher certified in the area of visual impairments

MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

Anchor Center for Blind Children – Charlotte Javier

Colorado AER Chapter – Barb Galgano

Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – LaVerne Dell

Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Adams School for the Blind – Jennifer Langley

Colorado Parents of Blind Children – Everett Romero

Metro TVIs / COMS– Nancy Cozart

Northern TVIs / COMS – Paula Conroy

Southern TVIs / COMS – Judy Mumford

Western TVIs / COMS – Angela Sims

GUEST PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Mira Monroe and Collin Bonner provided a presentation on test accommodations being investigated (a) by CDE’s new Social Studies and Science tests being created by new state test vendor Pearson and (b) the national PARCC assessment for English Language Arts and Math. PARCC stands for Partnership for Assessment and Readiness for College and Careers and is one of the two national assessment consortia developing state assessments tied to the Common Core. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of 23 states plus the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. The PARCC assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year. The current TCAP assessment with CTB McGraw Hill will be administered this school year and in school year 2013-14. These latter tests will phase out as the new state Pearson tests and PARCC tests phase into Colorado. The Pearson and PARCC tests are online test – none are adaptive tests.

The chart below provides an overview of the three assessments that Colorado is involved in and or planning for in the next three years.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
English Language Arts	TCAP (testing as Usual)	TCAP (testing as usual)	PARCC online grades 3 – 11 with a comparable braille copy option
Mathematics	TCAP (testing as usual)	TCAP (testing as usual)	PARCC online grades 3 – 11 with a comparable braille test option
Social Studies	Pearson pilot online 4 and 8 with a potential fall HS field test	Pearson new Online 4, 8 and HS with a comparable braille form	Pearson online grades 4, 8 and HS with a braille form option
Science	TCAP for grades 5, 7, and 10 Pearson pilot online 5 and 7 with a potential fall HS field test	Pearson new 5, 7 and HS with a comparable braille form	Pearson online grades 5, 7 and HS with a braille copy option

Colorado Science and Social Studies: The first assessments that was addressed was the Social Studies and Science tests that are currently being developed with Pearson. These are online tests. There will be a pilot field test period in spring 2013. It is anticipated that students who are braille readers will not be a part of the field test opportunity as the current assessments are not fully accessible. Students with low vision may be part of the pilot process, it will depend on whether there is such a student in the selected district/school. Not every district will be involved in the pilot and not every school in the volunteer districts will be involved.

There will be accessibility options built into the new Colorado Science and Social Studies tests. Students across the state will have an opportunity to practice the navigation tool ahead of time when example items are posted on Test-Nav, the Pearson test engine. There is expected to be a link to this “practice” site from the CDE website. The Accessibility Panel will allow for changes in contrast, zoom features, and text to speech. It is anticipated that a student could use his or her existing screen enlargement program instead of the built-in test access features IF that screen enlargement program is compatible. Tanni will send Collin a list of the screen enlargement programs that TVIs have noted are used in districts per a recent TVI Technology Survey.

It is anticipated that there will be “braille compatible” tests for students who cannot take the online versions. The braille-compatible tests will be different from the online version (in actual items, but not in the content assessed) and will be scored on a different rubric.

There is a text-to-speech option built into the test navigator. It will highlight the words as they are announced. These accessible options are accommodations so they must be documented as an accommodation and someone will need to set them up ahead of test administration. The student can turn something off and on – but only if this has been an approved accommodation. Currently the plan is for the School Assessment Coordinators (SAC) will be responsible for setting up the needed accommodations for all students who need them. It may be as simple as “turning on” or “turning off” these accessibility features, which would be less time consuming as customizing the accessibility features for each student. This discussion still has not been finalized.

The contrast features will allow for four choices. The Colorado contrast options have not been finalized, however there will be up to four contrast options beyond the standard black text on and a white screen. The current choices are: black: cream and white: black – as well as purple overlays or red overlays.

A question was asked whether there an option to pause the test for visual breaks? (This might include a student taking the test in multiple sessions). Collin will check on whether the test can be paused. The test can be downloaded and saved in a local network session – can figure out where student responses are stored. Is there a time limit? That decision has not been made – as to whether the test will be timed. There are still many testing aspects that are in process.

PARCC: The PARCC assessments were then discussed. There is a national group looking at accommodations for students with disabilities. This is also a computer-based assessment. Accommodations being proposed for students who are blind/visually impaired include: screen readers text to speech software; font size / graphic enlargement; choice of background / text color (color contrast); graphic organizers; reducing visual distractions surrounding the text, option responses: adapted keyboard, Sticky Key, MouseKeys; filter keys; and braille printing or refreshable braille devices

Diane Spense is on the PARCC Technical Advisory. PARCC will be holding a second meeting with about 50 organizations specific to accommodation needs. Included in the 50 organizations will be representatives from the blindness community.

There is recognition that for students for whom braille is the primary learning medium, that auditory may be a secondary learning medium. But not all students who read braille are equally as proficient with this medium. Braille access can be provided through a refreshable braille display connected to the computer. The drawbacks include: (a) the software must allow for access technology to be compatible with the delivery system; (b) only shows part of a line of text at a time; (c) sometimes inaccurately display Braille code; and (d) connect display graphical material such as a bar graph. Test items should be reviewed with refreshable braille displays by someone who is proficient at reading Braille to determine the accuracy of the display.

Students who reward Braille do not learn to interpret graphical materials by descriptions only. Tactile graphics, real objects, real tools, and manipulatives are important. Some graphics are best presented to braille readers in a tactile graphic format rather than an auditory. It is recommended that the test form also have the option of a tactile graphics supplement. The recommendation for PARCC is to have a uncontracted and a contracted Braille version of the tests. This is being considered. There will be opportunities for visual bias review.

Test items based on the ability to click, drag, or drop to specific visual locations. This is an unknown as far as accessibility. Students with low vision will have the ability to modify font size /style/color/ background colors.

CoAlt: Mira concluded with a review of some of the visual and tactile bias review procedures that are occurring with the CoAlt, which is Colorado's alternate assessment to each of the state summative assessments. The tests that are currently undergoing test development include social studies and science. All CoAlt items are tied to the Extended Evidence Outcomes (Colorado's alternate achievement standards), which are rigorous.

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

On November 8th, 2012, the metro region had their 2nd meeting of the year. We were lucky to have guest speakers come to Denver to talk about technology and skiing. First, Mark Davis and Randy Witte from ForeSight came up from Colorado Springs to give specifics about their ski program. This was a follow up for many of us that got initial information from Foresight at the VI state conference. We hope to have more students across the state expanding their skills on the slopes. Kevin Hughes came from HumanWare with another colleague. They brought a number of their products with them for some hands on opportunities.

February 7th will be our winter meeting date. Aurora Public Schools will be hosing. Nancy Cozart will review the TCAP reminders that are sent out each year in the newsletter. In addition, we hope to meet with Dr. Ensenaer in April for a Q and A. It was very valuable session when we had him to a meeting a couple of years ago.

Nancy Knight, as the metro low vision clinic coordinator, is reminding teachers to get fully completed paperwork to her by Feb. 8th

Discussion: *The TVI is responsible for completing the TVI/Parent form for the LVE Clinics. TVIs should not give this form to the parents to complete. It should be completed by the TVI with parent input. A reminder is that the clinics are reserved for only students with active IEPs. Late paperwork will likely result in a student not being accepted into the remaining Low Vision Evaluation Clinics.*

Southern Region (Judy Mumford)

CSDB has continued to host the Southern region TVI meetings with an internet conferencing option (video is optional for the camera shy) this school year to allow TVIs to join the meeting from a computer location of their choosing. The October 22, 2012 meeting topics included updates from the APH Annual Meeting, an update on the Unified English Braille code, a demonstration of the Braille Institute ViA app for iOS devices, and viewing/discussion of the Common Core materials developed by the Maryland School for the Blind. The app is about apps – it rates apps and provides information about apps.

The November 26, 2012 Southern Region TVI meeting included presentations by three guest speakers requested by TVIs in the Southern Colorado region. Jon Vigne, CSDB Director of Special Education presented on the various types of placements available at CSDB. Colleen Head, Director of The Resource Exchange (Community Center Board) explained their services for students in the Pikes Peak region. Dr. Laura Douglas presented on CSDB's Outreach Programs and Services.

The next southern regional meetings will be January 28, February 25, and April 29. All meetings start at 1:00.

Western Region (Angela Sims)

The Chapter FY of the PEO Sorority and Treadz in Glenwood Springs has honored teacher of Students with Visual Impairments, Brooke Miller as an outstanding and deserving local woman to receive a scholarship that will assist in her gaining an additional teaching license in the area of Orientation & Mobility for Students with Visual Impairments Including Blindness.

The Mountain BOCES Vision Department went on a field trip that was sponsored by the CSDB activity fund and organized by Brandon Mapes. Six students, three teachers, and two parents were able to go to an indoor climbing wall in Summit County, where a couple of students showed their latent Spiderman/Spiderwoman skills! All students had a great time on the wall and on the slack line, and teachers were belaying any and all students many times on the 35 feet high wall. Afterwards, eight people went out for a Japanese lunch, where everyone tried at least one new dish!

Barbara Adams is going to retire in June 2013 from Mountain BOCES after teaching in the field of blindness since 1998 and in special education for the Roaring Fork School District since 1979.

Discussion: *What is the status of the wording specific to the Literacy Modes selections in the state IEP system tied to the Learning Media Assessment? The Exceptional Children's' Education Act Rules are very specific to "literacy modes" in a student's IEP based on Colorado School Law. The ECEA Rule (October 2013) language notes:*

2.30 Literacy Mode *Literacy Mode means one of the following four systems or methods of achieving literacy applicable to children who are blind:*

2.30 (1) Auditory Mode means any method or system of achieving literacy that depends upon the auditory senses, including the use of readers, taped materials, electronic speech, speech synthesis, or any combination of the above.

2.30 (2) Braille means the system of reading and writing by means of raised points, commonly known as Standard English Braille.

2.30 (3) Print Enlargement means any method or system of achieving literacy that includes optical aids to enhance apprehension of printed material, electronic enlargement or printed material, books and textual materials printed in large print, and any combination of the above.

2.30 (4) Regular Print Mode means any method or system of achieving literacy that depends upon the apprehension of regular-sized printed material.

In the May 2008 Procedural Manual: The Colorado State Recommended IEP noted the following modes were offered as options on the Learning Media Plan: (a) auditory; (b) braille of tactile mode; (c) print enlargement or visual mode with optical enhancement; and (d) regular print of visual mode. These same choices are listed in the current electronic state IEP system.

The wording of the state required modes cannot be changed without a change in legislation. However, if there are concerns with how each choice translate into actual materials and equipment for the student, the VC members agreed that we could do some companion documents. Let Tanni know, if this is a state interest.

Northern Region (Paula Conroy)

The Northern CO teachers met last month for an update on the I-Pad training webinar that Sally Burch attended. Much helpful information was shared-thanks Sally! Several districts don't have access to I-pads yet for their students so this gives them motivation to advocate for this learning tool. It was shared that there will be a TVI opening in rural north-eastern Colorado area soon. Suggestions of how to fund a position in this area were discussed as it is very rural and will take just the right person. The remainder of the meeting was spent catching up and sharing/comparing issues since the group has not met in a while.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 18th in Loveland. The group will be sharing different eye exam reports and trying to settle on one that would serve as a standard for the northern area. Specific issues and strategies will be discussed in order for teachers to support one another.

Discussion: Several districts have a short version of an eye report form. Angela Sims will send Tanni the one from Mesa to share with VC members (who can share it with their TVI regional folks). Barb also recommended one from TX.

CAER (Barb Galgano)

Your CAER Board met on Wednesday January 9, 2013 to start the New Year. With high expectations for the coming year we hope that you will keep an eye out for news of events coming your way.

Please visit our website for events state wide and nationally, mini grants for teachers, students and parents, membership, award nominations, reimbursement, resources, and how you can become more active in CAER! Website address <http://co.aerbvi.org>

Items covered during meeting:

- Fundraising for the future of the mini-grants program was discussed. Heather Parsons, President, has arranged for McAllister's Restaurant in Aurora to give a percentage of their evening profits to CAER in return for CAER volunteers to assist that evening. Watch for details on how to get involved. If all goes well there may be similar opportunities of this nature at CiCi's Pizza.
- Applewood Fix It (plumbing & heating company) has a monthly on line drawing of \$1,000 to a non-profit organization. Please feel free to enter yourself as a CAER member with the profits returning to CAER for mini-grants program. Their website is www.applewoodfixit.com. Look under Caring Community section in the lower right corner the webpage. The more times we enter the greater our chances! Thanks for supporting mini grants!
- News of the CAER annual banquet will be out soon! We hope to see all of you there!
- CAER is a co-sponsor of the Annual Snowshoe Weekend for Visually Impaired students from around the state. Please consider sending your students to this wonderful event. Any questions please contact Mike Plansker at Mike.e.plansker@adams.12.org
- Members are always welcome to CAER Board meetings! Next meeting is February 6th @ Aurora Public Schools CenterTech office.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (LaVerne Dell)

There have been a few changes in DVR over the past few months. Tracy Rushing is now the Client Services Coordinator with the Personal Adjustment Training Program at 2211 W. Evans Ave. Tracy has been a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with DVR for a number of years. There is now a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind in the Aurora office. His name is Michael Bolarinwa. He can be reached at (303) 755-1839. Garrett Mumma, a Vision Rehabilitation Therapist and Orientation and Mobility Specialist from the Pueblo office has transferred to the Fort Collins office. This gives us two teachers in the northern region, which will help with teacher coverage of our northern region. An updated Counselor Contact List will be sent out to the field once completed.

Discussion: There is a small group of state personnel (CDE and CO Division of Rehabilitation Services) and staff from the Colorado Center for the Blind who are addressing the secondary transition needs of students who are blind/visually impaired. LaVerne will be asked to join this group and will keep the VC posted of key activities and decisions.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Charlotte Javier)

New Staff: Anchor Center is so happy to announce the addition of Lorraine Estrada as our new Teacher of the Visually Impaired on our staff!

Training in Action: Zoe Morgese and Cathy Smyth did presentations in late September for family and staff at Foundation for Blind Children in Phoenix regarding development of feeding skills in children with vision loss and multiple challenges. Carol Benson Puchalski, Stefanie Marquardt, and Lorraine Estrada attended the Zero to Three Conference in December, where Carol and Stefanie gave a poster session. Cathy Smyth recently returned from an international conference for the Division of Early Childhood. All will be sharing what they learn with the staff.

Next Steps: Our Program Director, Mindy Doyle-McCall, is sending out a survey to other agencies to gather input about Birth – 3 services needs and wants. Staff is focusing on trying to improve the transition process for toddlers moving up to preschool age. With the New Year we are headed into Strategic Planning with a staff and board retreat coming up to discuss items. Recently Anchor Center received 4 stars with Qualistar. Our preschool is adding a fourth classroom January 2013 to accommodate the growing numbers!

CO Parents of Blind Children (Everett Romero)

A focus right now is fund raising to support summer programming for the Colorado Center for the Blind. Mentor events are being planned!

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

- Check your VI Registration sheets for accuracy (based on January 7, 2013 enrollment)
- Make updates legible (remember to send copies of eye exams)
- Mail spreadsheets to CIMC by January 31, 2013

It is not too early to begin to order books for fall 2012-13! The sooner, the better so that the books can be sourced and, as needed, started to be brailled before the national rush begins across the country (starting May 1).

CSDB – BVI Outreach (Jim Olson)

CDE/CSDB Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: The Ensign Center in Fort Collins, Colorado was the host site for the Northern regional low vision clinics held November 16-17, 2012. Thank you to Vicki Pearson and Rita Albright for their work as regional coordinators. Five TVIs brought eight students from six different administrative units for clinic appointments. There are two remaining clinics for this school year as noted in the Jan-Feb newsletter edition of *Keeping in Touch*.

The Outreach Strategic Plan committee met on Tuesday, November 13th to discuss information and events that have occurred or will occur this 2012-13 school year, as we near the end of our 3-year Strategic Plan cycle. A Strategic Plan focus group will gather on the CSDB campus January 9, 2013 to review progress of the current plan and begin discussions in preparation for the next 3-year plan.

Outreach Events: On November 13, 2012, the CSDB Employability Center sponsored a workshop titled, “What Next? What graduates can expect from community programs and colleges” for Colorado students and families who were invited to join in person, via a phone conference, or by using the internet. Guest presenters included Shannon Ponce (Goodwill Industries Training Programs) and Dr. Laura Marshall (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs). Check the CSDB website for future training opportunities.

Outreach TVIs Karin Hensel and Jim Olson presented an early-childhood-early-vision-screening training for service providers from The Resource Exchange, the local Community Center Board in Colorado Springs, on November 29, 2012.

The “Families Together” event on the evening of December 6th brought Outreach parents, young children with vision loss and their siblings together to discuss upcoming opportunities and resources, to network with each other, and during this meeting, the parents experienced vision loss and guiding techniques while wearing vision simulators and sleep shades.

Calendar of Upcoming Events: For updates, please check the “Events/Training” tab on the homepage of the CSDB website, www.csdb.org>. Also please see the Calendar of Events page on the Keeping in Touch newsletter for specific contact information details.

- January 30 Community Braille Classes start (8-week beginner classes ending Mar 20)
(contact Mary Cuccarro, (719) 578-2270 or mcuccarro@csdb.org)
- January 31 Deadline for Round 2 “CDE VI Registration” spreadsheets to CIMC
- February 28 Health Fair (CSDB, RSVP with Diane Covington, dcovington@csdb.org)
9:00-11:45am Middle and High School students/12:15-3:00pm Elem. Students
- March 1-3 SDB/CAER Snowshoe Weekend
- March 20 Career Day (CSDB)
- April (mid) APH Educational Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) meetings
- June 14-16 Family Learning Retreat

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jennifer Langley)

The students from both the Blind and the Deaf school collaborated on a wonderful production that was performed at the Winter Holiday Concert. Blind student learned how to sign and the deaf student worked on vocalizing. It was a wonderful collaboration!

The middle school students demonstrated a 17month growth in their math skills in the first semester. We attribute this to our wonderful new math teacher along with a schedule of a math class followed by a math lab daily. The students are providing community service as a way of giving back for having the opportunity to ski with the Foresight Ski program. Students at all grade levels are volunteering as peer tutors or reading buddies as a way to promote literacy. CSDB is very proud of their students, this year our office referrals have been reduced by 75% compared to last year. This is attributed to student and staff PRIDE

University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)

Congratulations to our Colorado December graduates: Jeanne Lei, Jamie Lugo and Lorraine Estrada. We look forward to a new semester with many new and continuing students. The VI and O&M programs have a healthy enrollment of about 80 students and that seems to be an ideal number. Our six doctoral students in the VI are continuing to take an active role in research, scholarship and national presentations. We applaud their hard work!

Discussion: It is important to spread the word that the UNC VI program is not a “free masters” program. There are cost requirements even with stipend support. It is also important to recruit people who are a good fit for the field. It is always very helpful to have an actual letter of recommendation from a CO TVI in the field!

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: The project is in its fifth year of a five-year grant cycle. The project’s mission is free technical assistance to parents and services providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21 and who are deafblind or who have both a vision and a hearing loss. The project has a lending library and a website with electronic resources that are available to families and educational personnel.

Census: The December 1, 2012 Census data is currently being tallied. Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to the completion and return of these forms. You are so appreciated!

Project Webpage: The webpage url was recently changed – it is now <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>>.

Teen Bash: The project sponsored a Teen Get Together on January 5th. It was a resounding success with 10 teens and their families attending. In total, there were 40 people in attendance. The late afternoon to early evening event provided great opportunities for kid-to-kid social interaction and parent networking. Ellie Carlson from Helen Keller

National Center – Rocky Mountain Regional Office was also there to talk to families. Thanks to the following folks who organized and hosted the event: Shannon Cannizzaro (project family specialist), Karen Roberts, Renee Klotzbach, and Gina Quintana (project coordinator). The Project thanks Sergio Hernandez who provided the DJ services. *Summer Institute:* The 2013 Summer Institute on Deafblindness and Significant Support Needs will be held in the Denver area on June 10-14th. We will once again featured two internationally-recognized experts in the field of literacy and learners with significant disabilities. This five-day training was a stunning event and continued the trend to ensure that all students are providing literacy instruction. Registration information will be shared in early March. The strong focus will be to target district teams for the trainings. Those personnel who have attended this training in the past will be considered, but not guarantee attendance.

Western Region Early Intervention Conference: The project is involved in this June 2013 regional conference, which will be held in Jackson Hole, WY. The focus is on children ages birth through five who have sensory loss. The CO DB Project is sponsoring Millie Smith to speak on Symbols and Meaning. Be watching for travel scholarship applications for persons interested in attending this training.

Specialized Service Professionals (SPS): Members of the O and M Specialist committee have met twice to address The State Council for Educator Effectiveness has worked through all of the subgroup’s recommendations for Standards, Elements, and Definitions. These recommendations will go before the State Board of Education at their January meeting. The next SPS meeting will be January 16th.

Annual O&M Conference: This year’s training will be held in the Denver area on 2-4, 2013. The topic will be low vision and the featured speakers will be Dr. Audrey Smith and Dr. Duane Gerschatt.

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: The most recently held clinic was held in the northern region. It was a great success. Thanks to the clinic team and to co-coordinators Vicki Pearson and Rita Albright. Two more clinics remain for this school year; one in the metro region and one in the southern region.

State TCAP Assessments: Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, and Sarah Sonnier returned to the National Braille Press in early December to preview the 2013 braille-format TCAP assessments in the area of reading, writing, math, and science. Also in attendance was Mira Monroe from CDE’s Assessment Unit, Dan Dube from CTB McGraw Hill, and several of the wonderful folks at the National Braille Press. The tests were in great shape upon our arrival – all personnel involved in these tests are working so closely together to ensure high quality test items and full accessibility.

Recruitment and Retention: We currently have, 1 FTE in Jefferson Country, and positions specific to CSDB. The Anchor Center has filled their position with Lorraine Estrada. Two new TVIs are on board in Adams 12 (Cheri Aumeuller and Pankaj Gaur) and Brighton has a new TVI (Rich Cordell). Aurora has just hired a new TVI as well.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Eligibility Definition - Visual Impairment, Including Blindness: The new eligibility definitions have been in effect since October 30, 2012. Training on the new criteria will begin this January. Administrative units have until July 1, 2016 to adopt the new definitions and eligibility criteria. Tanni shared a series of PowerPoint slides with VC members that detail the eligibility criteria for Visual Impairment, Including Blindness. The training slides will go through a series of feedback opportunities and once revised, will be posted on a CDE webpage dedicated to eligibility training guidance for all the disability categories. A statewide training will occur at the May 2-4, 2013 low vision training.

CDE ESSU Approved Funded Projects: The VC membership discussed what projects should be funded for school year 2013-14, pending internal CDE approval. The TVI reps are encouraged to talk to their regional colleagues on what projects should continue to be funded or should be considered for new funding.

Task	Person Responsible	Date Due
Send Tanni program report updates	All VC members	April 29, 2013
Write a Q and A on APH Quota Funds	Jim Olson	April 29, 2013

Spring Meeting Date: May 2, 2013



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- 🔊 “Good On Ya” to **Jackie Jackson**, new TVI/COMS in Jefferson County, and to **Jennifer Langley**, CSDB School for the Blind Principal, for each earning a CDE Certificate of Braille Competency. Folks earning braille renewal hours included: **Anitha Muthukumar, Carol Davidson, Elsa D'Angelo, Jamie Lugo, Leslie Kelly Watrobka, Donna Keale, Elaine Brown, Peg Collins, Edie Smith, Jeannie Lei, Taryn Galow, and Mary Chambers**. Thanks to proctors **Julie Wetzstein, Brenda Shepard, and Lucia Hasty**.
- 🔊 Hats Off to **Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, and Sarah Sonnier** who participated in December 3-4, 2012 braille-test preview of the 2012-13 TCAP tests. Two days were spent at the National Braille Press in Boston for this purpose. The review process also included the item analysis feedback that was sent in last spring on the 2011-12 TCAP tests. Thanks to those folks who took the time to send in their comments: **Rita Albright, Karen Auld, Elaine Brown, Linda Campbell, Michelle Chacon, Nancy Cozart, Judy Dixon, Diane Fitzkee, Kathy Gallina, Bertha Guerrero, Amy Gunning, Barbara Jack, Karen Jamison, Elaine Karns, Nancy Knight, Jeannie Lei, Jamie Lugo, Brandon Mapes, Shannon Martinez, Debbie Mendoza, Mike Plansker, Angela Sims, Sarah Sonnier, Morgan Turner, Leslie Kelly Watrobka, and Julie Wetzstein**.
- 🔊 Congratulations to **Dr. Silvia Correa-Torres**, who has been elected to the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) Division of Visual Impairment (DVI) Board of Directors for the new two-year term. Silvia is one of six new people to this board.
- 🔊 Thank you to **Wendy Stoltman** who participated in a two-day item review of the new Co-Alt tests being developed for our learners with significant intellectual disabilities. We are so grateful for her expertise on the review team! We also thank Wendy for technical assistance work specific to the state deafblind grant.
- 🔊 We welcome **Cheri Aumueller** to Colorado and specifically to Adams 12! Cheri comes to us from NYC, where she worked primarily as an COMS for 15 years. She is a graduate of San Francisco State University. We are happy to have her on board with us!
- 🔊 Happy (belated) Birthday to **Louis Braille** on January 4th! Louis Braille was born on January 4, 1809. According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Braille), he was the inventor of braille, a system of reading and writing used by people who are blind or visually impaired. As a small child, Braille was blinded in an accident. As a young man – still a student at school – he created a revolutionary form of communication that transcended blindness and transformed the lives of millions. After two centuries, the braille system remains an invaluable tool of learning and communication for the blind, and it has been adapted for languages worldwide.



Editor's Note: I think Mr. Louis Braille would be very pleased with all that has happened since he first invented braille. I am confident that he would be proud of all of the Colorado TVIs and braillists who have made a commitment to excellent in braille and to our CIMC staff for their dedication to ensuring high-quality and on-time braille books for our students. What a nice birthday present to you, Mr. Braille!



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2013 Migel Medal Recipients

AFB Names Kay Ferrell, Ph.D. and Jim Fruchterman

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has announced the 2013 winners of the Migel Medals, the highest honor in the blindness field. This year's recipients are Kay Ferrell, Ph.D., and Jim Fruchterman. "I am honored to present these medals to Jim and Kay for their exceptional accomplishments in the blindness and low vision field," said Carl R. Augusto, AFB president and CEO. "This year's awardees have dedicated their professional lives to advancement of education and technology so that people with vision loss can thrive in the classroom, the workplace, and in their daily activities."

The Migel Medals will be presented to the recipients at the 2013 AFB National Leadership Conference in Chicago, Illinois, in April 2013.

About the Awardees

Kay Ferrell, Ph.D. is Professor of Special Education, University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Greeley. She is the author of *Reach Out and Teach: Helping Your Child who is Visually Impaired Learn and Grow*, and has taught all ages of individuals with visual and multiple disabilities, from infants through adults. She holds a special interest in working with young children and their families, having written extensively for parents and professionals, and has published on topics including education, personnel preparation, distance education methodologies, and image description.

Dr. Ferrell has received numerous state and national awards for her work with and on behalf of children and youth who are blind and visually impaired, including the Mary Kay Bauman and Josephine L. Taylor Awards from the Association for Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired (AER), AFB's Corinne M. Kirchner Research Award, the Ray McGeorge Award from the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, UNC's Winchester Distinguished Scholar Award, the Distinguished Service Award from the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments, and the Alumni Award for Research in Special Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Jim Fruchterman has a long track record as a high technology and social entrepreneur. He helped create two of Silicon Valley's leading companies building optical character recognition products, for commercial and government applications, including routing the mail for the United States Postal Service. He founded Benetech in 1989 as a nonprofit technology organization to make affordable reading machines people who are blind or have low vision. In 2002, he launched Bookshare, now the world's largest online library of accessible digital books for people with disabilities, with more than 170,000 titles. Jim has received many awards for his work helping people with disabilities, including the MacArthur Fellowship, the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, and the American Library Association's Francis Joseph Campbell award. He has served on three federal advisory committees addressing national accessibility policies and assisted the World Blind Union in creating the proposed global Treaty for the Visually Impaired.

Colorado congratulates both Kay and Jim. We have benefited from the work of both individuals and say a collective "THANK YOU!"

State of Colorado Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

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