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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

October 2013

Nothing About Us, Without Us!

By Tanni L. Anthony

The title phrase came about as a slogan in the disability movement. It reflects the deep desire and real right of people who are the recipients of policy development, reform efforts, and legislative change be involved up front and during the discussions that drive change that affects their education, civil rights, etc.

There are many educational reform movements sweeping the country and currently rolling out of the Colorado Department of Education. The ultimate goal is to increase outcomes for students—all students—every student. As a community of teachers, braillists, paras, parents, students and adult consumers with visual impairments specifically—we have worked hard to address braille books on time, state assessments that are accessible for the student with low vision or who is a braille reader, etc. We have had decades of training on what is *special* about special education. Colorado has some of the finest talent in the country when it comes to ensuring that our students who are blind/visually impaired have accessible and meaningful instruction. That has been a long and proud history and it should never change.

So with all the current (and sometimes new) reform efforts such as Multi Tiered System of Supports, the Individual School Readiness Act, the READ Act and standards-based education—we are not exempt for what has been designed for all students. Our students are general education students first—deserving of the finest instruction in all subject areas and ongoing attention to their instruction progress and possible needs for additional supports. It is time that we are equally involved in the general education school reform movements. We must be at the table to discuss and highlight what are the same needs and abilities, as well as what might be different or *special* because of a sensory loss. When we focus on the ultimate target—student outcome, we find our common footing and can share skills to bring results for students.

The recent CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment offered an opportunity to learn about a handful of state work that is geared toward general education practices and our over arching education system of a variety of supports. This work includes all students—every student. We all need each other to do what is right for our students. To function well and achieve our target for improved outcomes for our learners, the system must address “nothing about us, without us.”

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Why Students Who Are Blind Are Not Missing School When Learning to Ski and Snowboard with Foresight Ski Guides



BREAKING NEWS—From Foresight Ski Guides

When students who are blind or visually impaired (VI) learn to ski and/or snowboard in Foresight Ski Guides program, they may be out of the traditional classroom for a few days a year—but they are NOT missing their education! They are challenging themselves to learn recreational sports that they can enjoy throughout their lives with their family and friends—and they are directly addressing the learning objectives of the National Agenda/Expanded Core Curriculum for the Blind (ECC) at the same time. These learning objectives are necessary for persons with VI to become participating members of their community.

According to the ECC, to feel successful, a person must develop the ability to set goals, experience some failure and success, reach goals, and extend this learning to other areas of life. (In some settings, this is referred to as Challenge Recreation; it has been practiced for over 50 years by therapists, Outward Bound, and the VA.) The Foresight Ski Guides program immerses students in an environment rich with opportunities to be successful, both on and off the slopes. We are currently working with experts from the international conference of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) to continue making an impact through our direct instruction/implementation of the essential elements of the ECC to our Visually Impaired Participants (VIPs) through:

- Self-Determination, Confidence and Pride (a key program feature): students are challenged to set a goal and achieve it. VIPs who skied/snowboarded at least two times last season told our evaluator, Dr. Paula Conroy, that this experience empowered them to be more independent in other areas of their lives.
- Sports, Recreation, and Leisure Skills: The majority of public schools focus on team sports, leaving mainstreamed students with VI few safe and structured opportunities for exercise. Foresight's activities are carefully planned and taught, with core focus on developing life-long skills.
- Social Interaction Skills: Foresight VIPs must deal with a variety of new people (ski instructors and guides, hotel, rental shop, retail store and restaurant personnel). In her evaluation report, Dr. Conroy noted that *"The participants all discussed their reported lack of comfort in initiating conversations with others. This ski opportunity reportedly 'forced' them to establish a relationship with their guide. They had to develop trust before skiing, so it was to their benefit to get to know the individual guide. The group atmosphere...was also beneficial in developing social skills by encouraging peer interaction. The shy participants were drawn out by the more assertive ones."*
- Physical Skill and Fitness Development: People with VI are far more likely to be sedentary than the general population, which increases their risk of developing significant health problems. Foresight has instituted physical fitness skill development as a *mandatory component*, making our program safer and more effective. These skills can be translated into a healthy lifestyle off the mountain.

- Employability/Career Education (a popular addition to our program): The American Foundation for the Blind notes that “the disadvantage facing the learner who is blind/visually impaired is the lack of information about work and jobs that the sighted student acquires by observation.” Our VIPs have welcomed lectures by managers and department heads from various resort businesses because they included information about real people with VI and other disabilities who work in those organizations. The lecturers discussed the importance of attitude and what is involved in the college application or job interview process. The chosen topics are basic acquisitions for sighted students but are huge barriers for VIPs.
- Orientation and Mobility: Students learn to negotiate their way around the resort area (i.e., ride the town buses, walk) before they may navigate the mountain on a pair of skis or a snowboard! This includes the resort hotel, on-mountain ski lodge, rental shop, and village. They are bombarded with sensory input regarding balance and movement, and they learn to control their bodies in a completely new way.
- Sensory Efficiency Skills: Students will incorporate new sensory skills when communicating with guides, instructors and other skiers. They have totally new kinesthetic experiences while gliding downhill on skis, with the feel of cool crisp mountain air and the noise of the skis crunching in the snow.
- Compensatory/Functional Academic Skills: Our program welcomes all participants, from high-achieving academic students to students with cognitive and developmental concerns (appropriate staff, medical caregivers, and one-on-one instructors from Vail Adaptive Ski and Snowboard School are provided). We work closely with the TVIs to ensure that each child’s functioning level is clearly understood and accommodated so that our VIPs’ academic and physical goals are supported.
- Independent Living Skills: The program component for VIPs in middle and high school may involve overnight stays that provide opportunities to learn independent living skills as students prepare for both ski and leisure time. Students also learn the importance of management of clothing, equipment and possessions.
- Technology: Our goal is to see our VIPs use technology to maintain a link with their school by posting a ski report for fellow students, doing a homework assignment and emailing it to the teacher, or using a talking GPS to find the ice skating rink or favorite ice cream store!

Safety is Foresight’s number ONE priority, and having fun is number TWO!

Your students will:

- love this exhilarating experience;**
- welcome the opportunity to face new challenges; and**
- grow more independent each day!**

Come join us!

Friend us on Facebook or visit us at foresightskiguides.org

Email us at: foresightskiguides@gmail.com

Call us at: (303) 506-6965

Mark G. Davis, President

Randy Witte, Senior Program Coordinator

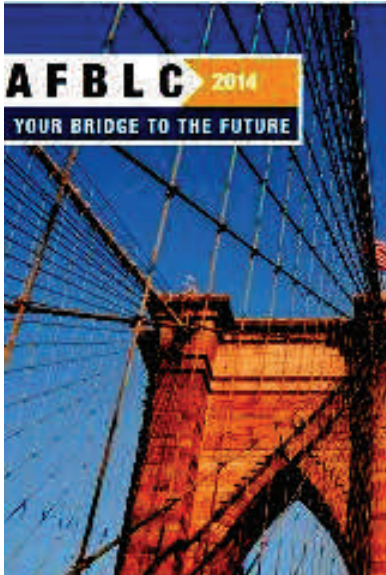


AFBAmerican Foundation
for the Blind

Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss

AFB LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

February 27-March 1, 2014 • New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge

afb.org/afblc

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) invites you to register today for the 2014 Leadership Conference, which will take place February 27-March 1 at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge.

This year's conference theme is "your bridge to the future," and our sessions will focus on

Technology
Leadership
Employment

Education
O&M
Rehabilitation

New IDEA Data Center Awarded

September 20, 2013

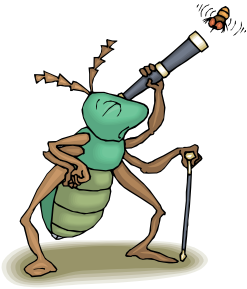
Contact: Press Office, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov

The U.S. Department of Education today announced the award of a \$6.5 million grant to Westat Inc., of Rockville, MD to create a national center aimed at improving the quality of data on educating America's 7 million children and youth with disabilities.

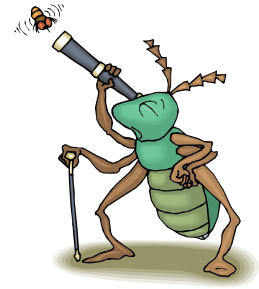
To be known as the National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Accurately Collect and Report IDEA Data, Westat will focus on assisting states to upgrade their ability to report high-quality data they are required to provide under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The grant to Westat is being made under the Technical Assistance to Improve State Data Capacity program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

For more information, go to: www.ED.gov



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



2013 / 2014 CDE LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC DATES

REGION	DATES	PAPERWORK DEADLINE	SITE COORDINATOR
Northern Region	November 8-9, 2013	Wednesday, October 23, 2013	Elaine Karns and Carol Love
Metro Region	February 27, 28, March 1, 2014	Wednesday, February 12, 2014	Amber Rundle Kahn
Southern Region (Alamosa)	November 22, 2013	Wednesday, November 6, 2013	Kathy Gallina
Southern Region (CSDB)	April 11, 2014	Wednesday, March 26, 2014	Donice Fennimore



Low Vision Clinics Coming Your Way - Be Prepared

The five regional low vision evaluation clinics are once again funded for a new school year. For many TVIs, this has become a standard annual event in their region. For new TVIs, this will be the first time to partake in great opportunity to address the low vision device needs of our Colorado students. Whether you are a newbie or a veteran, please take time to do your part to help the involved students and families be prepared for the clinic and to have the best follow-up experience possible with any prescribed devices.

Your onsite coordinator will be sending out the required paperwork. Please take time to complete the forms so that the clinic team has advance information on each student. Dr. Theune needs an eye report that has been completed within three years of this appointment. The student's eye care is the responsibility of the family's eye care specialist. Come prepared with examples of your student's work products. It is an expectation that a TVI attends the clinic with his or her student. Be on time. If you need to cancel, do so as soon as possible. Ask questions and seek assistance on how to follow-up with any prescribed devices. It takes a team to make our clinics a great success - so please do your part to ensure a great experience for your student.



Keratitis-Ichthyosis-Deafness Syndrome (KID) syndrome

Information retrieved from: <http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/gard/3113/kid-syndrome/more-about-this-disease>; <http://disorders.eyes.arizona.edu/disorders/kid-syndrome>; and http://firstskinfoundation.org/content.cfm/Ichthyosis/KID-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet/page_id/899

What is KID Syndrome?

KID syndrome is a rare genetic multi-system disorder. In the time since it was first described in 1915, only about one hundred cases have been published. Based on a review of many of these published cases, it appears that all occurrences of KID syndrome have skin abnormalities of the palms and soles and severe hearing impairment (sensorineural deafness).

What Causes KID Syndrome?

Since KID syndrome is genetic, it can be transmitted from parent to child in an autosomal dominant way (each individual affected with the disease would have one abnormal and one normal copy of the disease gene). When, by chance, the abnormal gene copy is passed on to the offspring, the child will be affected. When the normal gene copy is transmitted, the child will be unaffected. The risk for an individual with KID syndrome to have an affected child is 50% for each pregnancy. Nevertheless, nine out of ten patients carry a new, spontaneously occurring mutation that is not present in either biological parent.

Researchers at the Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Biology, Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia discovered the gene whose mutations cause KID syndrome. It is called gap junction protein beta 2 (GJB2) and is located on the long arm of human chromosome 13. This gene encodes the structural protein 'connexin-26' (Cx26), which forms gap junction channels that connect neighboring cells and permit the exchange of small molecules and ions. About 80% of KID patients carry a common mutation replacing an aspartic acid residue at position 50 of Cx26 with an asparagine. The remainder of patients usually harbors unique mutations. It is thought that the protein made from the abnormal gene copy interferes with the assembly of gap junctions and the function of normal Cx26 in a 'dominant negative' manner. Therefore, the direct cell-cell communication in the skin and other tissues, such as cornea and inner ear, can be impaired.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of KID Syndrome?

KID syndrome is present at birth. This syndrome belongs to a group of skin disorders known as the ichthyoses due to the palms of the hands and soles of the feet typically having thickened, hardened skin. In most cases, more skin-surface areas than that of the palms and soles are affected. Symptoms include red, rough, thickened patches that are sometimes scaling. A large number of individuals develop eye problems, such as cornea defects (keratitis) causing the eyes to be extremely sensitive to light. Keratitis is an inflammation of the cornea, which is the clear dome-shaped window in



front of the eye. The keratitis can be superficial (involving only the top of surface of the cornea) or involve deeper layers of the cornea. It may involve one or both eyes. Other abnormalities that may occur involve the eyes, such as neovascularization, in which small blood vessels grow from the iris over the cornea, and progressive vision loss. Also, a small number of patients may have recurrent or chronic conjunctivitis (inflammation or infection of transparent membrane that lines the eyelid and covers the sclera or the whites of the eyes).

The hearing loss associated with KID Syndrome is present at birth and is a non-progressive sensorineural loss. The severity of the hearing loss and need for amplification will need to be determined by an audiologist.

Sparse hair growth or areas of baldness (alopecia) is relatively common; but a complete lack of hair is rare. Less common abnormalities are absent or abnormal nails, recurrent infections, abnormal teeth, reduced sweating, and mental or growth delay. Some of the rare features include an increased risk for developing skin or mucus-membrane cell carcinoma or malignant scalp tumors, which may lead to early death, and life-threatening infections during the newborn period. The symptoms vary greatly between affected individuals and can change over time.

What is the Treatment for KID Syndrome?

Because several organ systems are involved, and there is increased potential impairment of hearing, speech, and sight, patients usually require multidisciplinary treatment. The use of a lubricant in the eyes may provide significant relief from symptoms but scarring may eventually require corneal transplant surgery (penetrating keratoplasty). The threat of skin cancers and fatal liver (hepatic) failure requires monitoring throughout life. Nevertheless, the exact pathomechanisms leading to KID syndrome are still not fully understood and continue to be the subject of current and future research.

What are the Medical and Educational Implications of KID Syndrome?

A child with KID syndrome should be followed by medical practitioners to determine his or her health needs, including eye and/or audiological care needs. The child may or may not qualify as a child with a disability based on special education eligibility criteria. Vision and/or hearing loss will need to be quantified to determine a child's need for specialized instruction and the possibility of related services.

Resources

First—Foundation for Ichthyosis and Related Skin Types
http://firstskinfoundation.org/content.cfm/Ichthyosis/About-FIRST/page_id/735

Resources and Materials

Three New Resources for Childfind Coordinators

- I. **Child Trends Video on School Readiness** Source: Child Trends - Retrieved September 13, 2013
Child Trends has published a new video, [Child Trends On Topic: School Readiness](#) (runtime: 3.08 minutes), which explains what is meant by "school readiness" and looks at what families, schools, and communities can do to get children ready for kindergarten.
- II. **Guide on Using Data for Informed Decision-Making and Action Planning** Source: Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific - September 11, 2013
A new facilitation guide from the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific, *Five Steps For Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education* (September 2013), describes five key steps education teams can follow to better use data for informed decision making and strategic action: (1) setting the stage, (2) examining the data, (3) understanding the findings, (4) developing an action plan, and (5) monitoring progress and measuring success.
- Full citation: Kekahio, W., & Baker, M. (2013). *Five steps for structuring data-informed conversations and action in education* (REL 2013-001). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. Retrieved from http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2013001.pdf
- III. **EYE ON AUTISM: Build motor skills to improve social interactions for students with autism** — Recognize and address the connection between motor and social skills for young children with autism.

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

Rebekah Felix, a young blind woman who has grown up in the NFB and Colorado Parents of Blind Children, is a published author! Bekah wrote a novel for teens about a blind high school girl, Aliyah, who deals with teasing related to her blindness, friendships, and loyalty as she falls in love for the first time. Bekah says, "Among all the dreams I've ever had, there have always been two that have never changed And those are writing and working with kids." Bekah, who graduated from high school in 2012, aspires to be a pre-school teacher and is working on her bachelor's degree. She worked in the NFB of Colorado BELL Braille enrichment program last summer with young blind children. Purchase the book from www.amazon.com in hardback, paperback or for the Kindle. You can find Bekah on Facebook, YouTube and more...go to her website: <http://bekahfelix.tripod.com> to learn more.



Resources and Materials

CDE Resource Bank Update

The CDE Resource Bank (<http://www.coloradopl.org/assessment>) supports teachers by providing tools and resources that reinforce standards-based teaching and learning. About 550 assessments have been added to the Resource Bank through a review or development process by Content Collaboratives. The assessments provide Colorado educators with a starting point in understanding student learning and may be used for educator effectiveness. They also support Colorado Academic Standards content areas as well as career and technical education pathways.

The most recent addition to the CDE Resource Bank are performance assessments (<http://www.coloradopl.org/node/12765>) developed by Content Collaboratives this summer. Twenty performance assessments have been added and an additional 15 performance assessments are in process. Additionally, school districts or BOCES can now submit an assessment for inclusion in the bank. For an assessment to be considered for inclusion, a team of educators needs to review the assessment using CDE's Assessment Review Form.

Check it out at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/educatoreffectiveness/downloads/implementation%20resources/assessment-content-review-tool.xlsx>



T E C H N O L O G Y U P D A T E

Product and Access Technology Talk

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) has been busy behind the scenes—check out the technology section of the NFB Web site--there is a new blog post up on talking magnifiers at <https://nfb.org/at-blog>.

In addition, their 2013 Technology Resource List is now available for download from <https://nfb.org/technology-center> in BRF, straight from their desks to your embosser!



Library of Congress Braille and Talking-Book Program Releases Book Download App through Apple

The **Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) Mobile app** is now available through the Apple App Store. This free app allows readers to download audio and braille books to their iPhone, iPad or iPod touch from their NLS BARD accounts, if they are registered with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) in the Library of Congress.

Access to BARD is provided through local cooperating libraries and contains nearly 50,000 books, magazines and music scores, with new selections added daily. According to NLS Director Karen Keninger, "It's a library in your pocket. With BARD Mobile, patrons can play talking books and magazines on their iOS devices. Patrons may also read electronic braille books, magazines and music scores using a refreshable braille display connected to their iPhone, iPad or iPod touch through Bluetooth." Patrons will be able to receive their reading materials faster and won't have to be weighed down with bulky volumes or playback equipment.

"Audiobooks are provided on cartridges for use with digital playback equipment that provides high-level navigation capability, high-quality sound and other features," Keninger says. "When the NLS launched BARD, the app permitted patrons who had access to high-speed Internet to download their audiobooks, as braille readers had been doing with the Web-Braille system since 1999. BARD now merges the two systems."

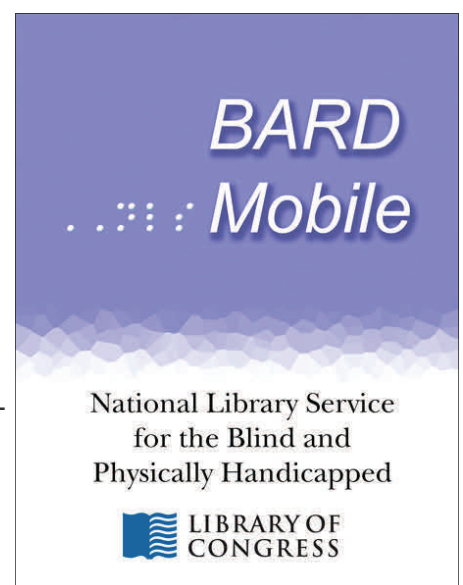
"NLS developed the BARD Mobile app in response to demand from its borrowers. Blind and disabled Americans are as keen as everyone else to use mobile devices. Younger patrons are particularly eager to use the same gadgets as their peers." BARD Mobile will make reading not only more accessible, but more portable. "We anticipate that significant numbers of readers will adopt the app as their primary reading device," Keninger said. "As a growing percentage of blind and disabled Americans adopt mobile devices, the app will provide a highly valued avenue to NLS materials."

NLS is also working on a version of the app for Android devices.

NLS has provided free library service for people who have visual disabilities for more than 80 years and for people with physical disabilities since 1966. Best known as the talking-book program, NLS upgraded its analog program to digital in 2009. The NLS braille and talking-book programs are available to residents of the United States and its territories and American citizens living abroad whose low vision, blindness or physical disability makes reading regular print difficult. Through its national network of cooperating libraries, NLS mails media directly to enrollees. Music instructional materials are available in large-print, braille and recorded formats. Select materials are also available online for download.

To learn more, call 1-888-NLS-READ or visit:

www.loc.gov/nls/find.html.



ASSESSMENT NEWS

State's New Assessments Now Have a Name: Colorado Measures of Academic Success

With input from parents, education officials at the state and local levels, communication experts and other education stakeholders, the Colorado Department of Education has developed a name for new state assessments coming on board over the next year. The state's new assessments will be the Colorado Measures of Academic Success and will measure student achievement on the state's updated academic standards.

Following past practice of referring to the collective state assessments by its official name - Colorado Measures of Academic Success - individual assessments will be referred to by subject. The new assessments will measure student achievement in English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

The new assessments will replace the aging CSAP/TCAP tests which were primarily based on 16-year-old standards. The final round of TCAPs will be taken this spring. Also, the first round of the new science and social studies portions of the Colorado Measure of Academic Success assessments will be administered this coming spring in elementary and middle school levels. New English/language arts and math assessments will be taken in the spring of 2015.

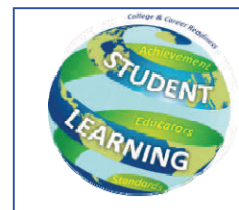
CDE is developing communication tools to assist districts in their communication efforts with staff and parents. Included in that will be a specific information graphic which will be a visual bookmark to help easily identify information about the new assessments. Messages will focus on "new assessments, new name, new scores."

New Assessment eNewsletter

CDE recently launched a new e-newsletter providing important monthly updates to help with the implementation of new assessments in Colorado. Please subscribe at:

[http://state.us5.list-manage.com/profile?u=bee6c43ae6102530cf98cadf9&id=cf9e14d90d&e=\[UNIQID\]](http://state.us5.list-manage.com/profile?u=bee6c43ae6102530cf98cadf9&id=cf9e14d90d&e=[UNIQID])

To view the archive: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/e-newsletters>



PARCC News

A new PARCC fact sheet is available in the assessment communications resources on the CDE website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs-assessment>>. For more information about PARCC, contact Stephanie Boyd at boyd_s@cde.state.co.us

just for PARENTS

Join Jewish Guild Healthcare's National Tele-Support Network

When your child is diagnosed with a serious eye condition that can cause blindness or vision impairment, you may feel lost and unsure of what your child needs.

No matter where you are, there's a community of caring parents who understand, because they're going through the same thing. The Guild's National Tele-Support Network connects parents of children with the same eye condition to share resources, experiences, strength and hope.

These free tele-support groups meet by phone every week. They are facilitated by a psychologist or social worker with live input from experts in the field on medicine, vision, education and rehabilitation.

To register call Dan Callahan at 800-915-0306 or send an email to CallahanD@guildhealth.org



Go to:
<http://www.peakparent.org> or call PEAK Parent Center at 719.531.9400 or 800.284.0251

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 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.

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

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.

just for PARENTS

October 2013 is **Family and School Partnership in Education Month**

The **State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE)** is pleased to announce that Governor John Hickenlooper has designated October as Family and School Partnership in Education Month. The goal of this special month is to actively share information and support families and educators working together to ensure learning success for every student, from pre-school to postsecondary and workforce readiness, and including higher education. Over forty years of research has found that specific home-school partnering improves student achievement and homework completion, school attendance, and graduation rates for students of differing cultures, languages, and abilities. The National Standards for Family-School Partnerships are based upon this research and guide educators and families in implementing everyday effective partnering practices. These standards have been incorporated into the legislation that guides SACPIE in its advisory responsibilities and will be highlighted during this month. They are: Welcoming All Families into the School Community, Communicating Effectively, Supporting Student Success, Speaking Up for Every Child, Sharing Power, and Collaborating with the Community (National PTA, 2008).

SACPIE is a legislated council that must review best practices and recommend to policy makers and educators strategies to increase parent involvement thus helping...raise the level of students' academic achievement throughout the state. Members represent specific education stakeholders as identified in statute.



Subscribe to ALLIANCE *Newsline*

The ALLIANCE National Parent Technical Assistance Center (NPTAC) provides Parent Centers, Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), with innovative technical assistance, up-to-date information, and high quality resources and materials. A major goal of the ALLIANCE National PTAC is to build the capacity of Parent Centers to improve results and support the development of positive outcomes for children with disabilities ages 0 -26 in rural, urban and suburban areas and from underrepresented and underserved populations.

The ALLIANCE National PTAC collaborates with the six Regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers (RPTACs) in New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin, **Colorado** and California to increase Parent Centers' capacity to serve families of children with disabilities. Together, the ALLIANCE NPTAC and RPTACs support 104 Parent Centers. Other partnerships include Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) Network, researchers, state education agencies (SEAs), Part C Lead Agencies, local education agencies (LEAs), teachers, businesses and families. The ALLIANCE National PTAC, six Regional PTACs and the 104 Parent Centers are funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

The ALLIANCE National PTAC Newsline publishes an informative monthly e-newsletter with current resources relevant to parents of children with disabilities and their families. To get more information and/or subscribe, go to:

www.parentcenternetwork.org/assets/newsline/current.php



**NATIONAL PARENT TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE CENTER**

1-888-248-0822

just for PARENTS

Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences

What is PEP?

- ♦ PEP Conferences promote partnerships that are essential in supporting students with disabilities and their families in schools and the community.
- ♦ PEP brings parents and professionals together to share ideas, discuss concerns, celebrate successes and obtain information related to parenting, educating and supporting a child with a disability.
- ♦ PEP Conferences are offered at no cost to attendees.

Who Should Attend?

PEP Conferences are designed for parents of children with disabilities, aged birth to 21. Both parents in a two-parent family are encouraged to come and single parents are encouraged to bring a support person to the conference. Professionals and service providers, who have a working relationship with students with disabilities and their families, are also welcome to attend.

When are Where are the Conferences?

PEP is typically held three times each academic year - in the fall, winter and spring and the Conference runs from 5 p.m. on Thursday to 3 p.m. on Saturday. In order to enable more families and professionals to participate, PEP Conferences are scheduled throughout Colorado.

The next planned PEP Conferences are:

February 27–March 1, 2014 (Location will be announced soon.)

March 27–29, 2014 (Location will be announced soon.)

Sessions include, but are not limited to:

- Parenting a Child with a Disability and Rebuilding Dreams
- The Law and the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Early Childhood Supports and Services
- Transition IEP



Registration Information

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) pays for all lodging and participant meals (excluding Friday evening's dinner). With these provisions to participants, CDE hopes to provide the opportunity of the PEP experience to all interested families and professionals! To learn more about PEP and/or to register, please visit the website: www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp

"We met great people, gained a wealth of knowledge, and it was a treat to get some time away." - Parent

"It is probably the best educational conference I've been to because of the content and participants. I think administrators should be encouraged to attend!" - School Professional

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

Street Crossings

Josée Martin and Denise Guitar have developed an innovative program that involves teaching students about street-crossing in groups. Dona Sauerburger was at their last group teaching and reports that it was a LOT of fun! Videos and pictures from the last one are posted at: www.sauerburger.org/dona/NewB.html



“Let’s Walk Together: Safe Guiding Techniques for Individuals with Intellectual Disability and Vision Loss”

This 23-minute video describes the human guide technique (also known as sighted guide). Throughout the video you will see people using the technique or variations of the technique, in everyday situations including:

Doorways, Narrow Spaces, and Crowded Areas
Seating at a Table and a Couch
Getting Into and Out of a Car and Van

Stairs, Steps and Ramps
Uneven Surfaces

Take a Look: Printable resources summarizing key points of the Human Guide technique are available on the DDS Blindness and Vision Impairment website <http://www.mass.gov/dds/visionloss> (click Training Resources).

Also Available: To request a free DVD of the complete “Let’s Walk Together” video please email Lisa.DiBonaventura@state.ma.us

Please share these resources!

This video was made possible through the support of the **Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)** and the **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)** in collaboration with:
**Emerson College, Shriver Clinical Services, and
The Carroll Center for the Blind**

Video and Printable Resources NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Video only:

<http://carroll.org/video-tutorials/lets-walk-together>

Video and Printable Resources:

<http://www.mass.gov/dds/visionloss> (click Training Resources)



APH NEWS



APH offers a number of recreational books in braille (Quota funds can be used). Each of these titles was originally transcribed and produced by APH for the National Library Service which has graciously granted permission for this offering. New titles have been added to the APH *Louis* Database where you can find thousands of titles produced in accessible formats. Go to:

<http://louis.aph.org/catalog/CategoryInfo.aspx?cid=152>

Note: all books are produced upon receipt of orders, therefore, please allow several weeks for delivery.

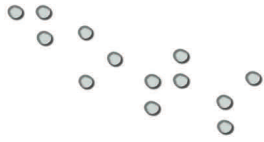
More Teachers! More Talking!

We are pleased to announce a new addition to the Teacher Talks lineup during Annual Meeting. **Dr. Ellen Trief**, Hunter College Professor and author of STACS: Standardized Tactile Augmentative Communication Symbols, will join previously scheduled teachers **Millie Smith** (SAM: Symbols and Meaning), **Susan Osterhaus** (Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator) and **Kristie Smith** (Tactile Town and more) in the APH Product Showcase on Thursday afternoon, October 17, from 2:00 – 5:00. You will have the opportunity to hear brief presentations by the expert teachers along with a chance to meet with them one-on-one to share your experiences and ask your questions. Plan to arrive in Louisville in time to hear what they have to say, talk to the teachers, and return home ready to teach with these great APH products!

APH Needs YOUR Input on a Possible Product for Braille Readers

APH is considering the development of a product to assist teachers with contraction practice for braille readers, and your feedback will be greatly appreciated. Their questions are designed to obtain information regarding students who are on and above a fourth grade reading level.

Please complete our **Take Action on Braille Contractions Survey** by visiting <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1alp8wR4MtmejG2io87ldaqc4ZhFMMEuXsKV-m5ptuvw/viewform>



DOTS OF INTEREST



ETS RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Teachers,

Educational Testing Services (ETS) will be conducting a field test of a computer-based assessment of reading comprehension for braille readers. We would like to invite you and your students to participate in a research study designed to examine a computer-based test delivery platform which includes refreshable braille supports. The platform was developed by Measured Progress and funded by the US Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The purpose of this study is to help researchers identify any issues with the testing platform or administration.

At this time we are looking for teachers with students in grades 9 to 12 who are braille readers to participate in the study as test administrators. The testing involves the individual administration of two assessments to each student (one with paper braille and the other on computer). Each assessment will include reading 4 short passages and answering a total of 28-30 test questions. The following features are included in the test platform: magnification, keystroke navigation, refreshable braille output, braille keyboard input of responses, and an audio presentation of item content.

To participate as a test administrator you must be able to test at least 5 students who read with braille at the 7th grade level or higher. We expect that the tests may take up to 3 hours to administer and you may conduct the test in two sessions. As a thank you, students who participate in this field test will each be given a \$50 gift card. As a test administrator you will receive:

- * An honorarium for your work (equivalent to \$2000 for all tasks attending a 1-day training, testing all 5 students, and providing feedback after testing)
- * Reimbursements for travel expenses associate with attending a 1-day training prior to administration, and
- * Materials needed to test students (refreshable braille hardware and laptop) for the duration of the project (November-December 2013).

We are very hopeful that you are willing to help us with this important study. If you are interested in participating in the study or have any questions, please contact Carlos Cavalié as soon as possible at ccavalié@ets.org or 609-734-1398. Please feel free to forward this to other teachers you believe may be interested in participating in this study.

DOTS OF INTEREST



KEEP "B.E.L.L." RINGING IN 2014

"The Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning Program, or BELL is a two week summer day camp for children ages 4 through 12. BELL provides intensive immersion into Braille, Daily Living Skills and Orientation and Mobility. Most importantly it provides children the opportunity to gain self confidence, have fun and grow in the realization that being blind doesn't have to stop people from reaching their dreams." The above quote is taken from the YouTube video that recorded some of the highlights of the 2013 program. For more information, watch the video at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aBTNcasZPQ>>.



Dr. Nemeth Passes Away

Article retrieved from: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/359503>

Nemeth Code is the code for mathematics and scientific notation in North America. It's regularly taught as a form of Braille study, bringing new independence into students' lives. The creator of this life-changing code died October 2, 2014. Dr. Abraham Nemeth, blind mathematician and most well known for creating the Nemeth Code, has died at 94 years of age. Born in New York, Nemeth attended public school before studying mathematics at Brooklyn College despite the repeated affirmations by his counselors that he could never have a career in math because he was blind.

Believing his counselors he majored in psychology, obtaining his B.A. from Brooklyn College and an M.A. from Columbia University, where he worked during the day at the AFB, a job that he didn't like. After encouragement from his wife, he decided to pursue his passion. Nemeth started taking math classes at night at Brooklyn College but stopped when he got a teaching position there. In 1946, after prodding from his wife and his own change of heart, he continued his math studies where he devised his own Braille math code. At that time, people were using the Taylor Code from England, and he thought that the Taylor Code used too many grouping symbols.

He continued devising his code with readers in college after he established code rules to tell readers how to read mathematics aloud. He then began creating code symbols which simulated his rules for speech. The AFB published the code after another blind employee, Dr. Clifford Witcher, a physicist from Columbia University, presented Nemeth's code to the Mathematics Subcommittee of the Joint Uniform Type Committee, an ancestor of BANA. Eventually APH published the code, and it became known as the Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation.

Nemeth worked for 30 years at the University of Detroit and helped to launch the computer science program there in the 1960s. He remained active after retirement well into his 90s through committees at the NFB and transcribing Hebrew prayer books to braille among many other endeavors. Nemeth's code is still used today and his pioneering work has greatly helped to advance the accessibility of mathematics for the people who are blind/visually impaired.



“Exploring All Options”

December 11—14, 2013

New Orleans, Louisiana

Outstanding sessions from new and seasoned presenters promise to provide attendees with updated, practical, and current educational content for professionals serving those who are blind and visually impaired.

To register go to <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/>

AER International Conference 2014: A Towering Event

The AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, will have so much to offer in addition to the fantastic programming that you always find at an AER International Conference.

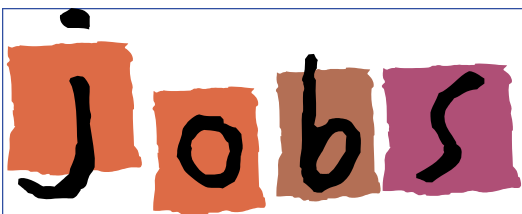
Make sure the dates of **July 30-August 3** are on next year’s summer calendar for the AER International Conference 2014 and our 30th Anniversary. Remember that professional growth through knowledge, networking, and fun are sure bets for the conference. Keep checking the AER national website for more details!



New AERBVI Position Paper on Literacy Assessment and Instruction for Students with Visual Impairments

Members of Division 7, Dr. Kelly Lusk, Dr. Holly Lawson, and Dr. Tessa Wright, wrote a new AER Position Paper related to best practices for addressing learning media decisions and literacy instruction for students with visual impairments who are participating in a conventional literacy program. The paper addresses the needs of students who have low vision, are tactile readers, and those who are dual media learners. The paper emphasizes the need for a variety of assessment data, including input from family members, to determine the appropriate literacy medium or media for a student with a visual impairment. Furthermore, the paper is aligned with IDEIA and highlights the need to consider a wide range of assistive technology tools and accommodations. Although the Position Paper was written through the Division 7 committee, numerous professionals across AER provided feedback and the final version was approved by the AER board this summer. Members of the review committee included Dr. Anne Corn, Dr. Amanda Lueck, and Dr. Barry Kran.

The Position Paper can be found on the Division 7 webpage <http://lowvision.aerbvi.org/>



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

Southern Region Jobs

- ✓ **COMS** (1 FTE): Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind is actively recruiting and accepting applications for the 2013-14 school year. Apply online at: www.csdb.org. For exact details contact Chelle Lutz at clutz@csdb.org or (719) 578-2114.

Statewide

- ✓ **COMS** (contract): Colorado Virtual Academy, an online charter school, is seeking an O&M specialist to work with one of our students in the Parker area. This is a contract position that is billed monthly and paid monthly. Mileage will be reimbursed at \$.565 per mile. Must be certified as a teacher for O&M and be licensed through CDE. Possibility of additional students depending on enrollment needs. Please contact Lana Turnbull at 303-670-3127 or email at lturnbull@k12.com.

Western Region Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE) for San Juan BOCES. Please contact HR Director Paula Sublett at (970) 247-3261 x 203 or psublett@sjboces.org.
- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (part-time/sub): For the 2013-14 school year in Mountain BOCES. Please contact Joy Yudnich at 719.486.2603 or joyy@mtnboces.org for more information.
- ✓ **TVI/COMS** position open for NW BOCES and Moffat School District. Please contact Robin Tschider (NW BOCES) at rtschider@nwboces.org or (970) 879-0391 or Renae Dove (Moffat SD) at renae.dove@moffatsd.org or (970) 826-4249

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

October 24—26	National Braille Assoc 2013 Professional Development Conference — CO Sprgs Visit: www.nationalbraille.org .
November 4	TVI/COMS Meeting/Tour at Children’s Hospital —Denver, CO (2:15—4:45 pm) Contact: Jeannie Lei (jlei@cherrycreekschools.org) cell: 720-441-9825 OR Mimi Schaper (mschaper2@cherrycreekschools.org) cell: 720-519-8026
November 8—9	Northern Region Low Vision Clinic Contact: Elaine Karns (970) 231-2854 or Carol Love— love_carol@svvsd.org
November 12	Southern Region TVI Meeting —CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
November 22	VIIB Database (Round 1) due back to CIMC
November 22	Southern Region Low Vision Clinic —Alamosa Contact: Kathy Gallina— kgallina@email.com
December 4—7	2013 Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference —Providence, RI Visit: www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org
December 10	Southern Region TVI Meeting —CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.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

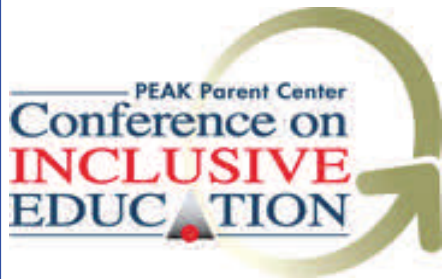
January 3, 2014	VIIB Database (Round 2) mailed from CIMC to AUs in prep for Count Day
January 6, 2014	*CDE statewide VIIB DB count day & *Federal Quota Count Day** AUs to collaborate with district Registrar’s office and SpEd Directors to compare enrollment on 1/6/14 count date with information from Round 2 database.
January 6—February 7	State Testing: ACCESS ELLS Grades K—12/ Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening
January 14	Southern Region TVI Meeting —CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
January 22	Vision Coalition Meeting —DVR Office
January 31	VIIB Database (Round 2) due back to the CIMC

More Calendar of Events

2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	
February 5—March 14	February 10—21		State Testing: CoAlt Reading, Writing, and Mathematics— Grades 3—10 Early Window TCAP State Testing: Reading and Lectura— Grade 3								
February 11		Southern Region TVI Meeting— CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org									
February 13—14		2014 Conference on Inclusive Education— Denver, CO <u>Visit:</u> www.peakparent.org									
February 24—March 7		State Testing TCAP Reading and Lectura— Grade 3									
February 27—March 1		Metro Region Low Vision Clinic <u>Contact:</u> Amber Rundle Kahn— amber_rundle@englewood.k12.co.us									
February 27—March 1		AFB Leadership Conference— New York, NY <u>Visit:</u> http://www.afborg/afblregistration									
February 27—March 1		PEP Conference— TBA <u>Visit:</u> www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp									
March 3—March 21		Early Window TCAP State Testing (May be extended to March 28 for Grades 3—10 if Spring Break is included in school calendar) Grade 3—Writing and Escritura Grade 4—10 Reading and Writing Grade 4—Lectura and Escritura Grade 3—10 Mathematics									
March 10—April 11		State Testing TCAP (It is strongly suggested districts finish by March 28 to provide separation between TCAP & new science and social studies assessments) Grade 3—Writing and Escritura Grade 4—10 Reading and Writing Grade 4—Lectura and Escritura Grade 3—10 Mathematics									
March 11		Southern Region TVI Meeting— CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org									
March 27—29		PEP Conference— TBA <u>Visit:</u> www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp									
April 1		CIMC to mail SpEd Directors— Updated VIIB DB information; CIMC Policy/ Procedure changes for 2014-15; estimate of student assessment fees for 7/1/14 invoice based on 1/6/14 count									
April 8		Southern Region TVI Meeting— CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org									
April 11		Southern Region Low Vision Clinic— CSDB <u>Contact:</u> Donice Fennimore at dfennimore@ppboces.org									
April 14—May 2		CO Summative Assessment Testing (May be lengthened pending results of technology readiness tool) Grade 12 Science & Social Studies TBD, Fall 2014 Grades 5 and 8—Science AND Grades 4 and 7—Social Studies									

More Calendar of Events

2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014
April 14—May 2										CoAlt State Testing (Note: Grade 12 Science & Social Studies TBD, Fall 2014) Grades 5 & 8— Science AND Grades 4 & 7—Social Studies
April 16										Vision Coalition Meeting —TBD
April 23										Colorado ACT Initial Testing —Grade 11
May 1										Due date for textbook orders for the 2014-2015 school year to CIMC
May 7										Colorado ACT Makeup Testing —Grade 11
May 13										Southern Region TVI Meeting —CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
June 15										CIMC due date for tech equip/textbooks *Districts billed for unreturned items
July										CIMC to begin invoicing AUs for equipment /books not returned in complete, usable condition (includes missing/damaged volumes)
July 1										CIMC to mail invoices to SpEd Directors for student assessment fees based on 1/6/14 enrollment of students identified as VIIB
July 30-Aug 3										AER International Conference – San Antonio, TX <u>Visit:</u> www.aerbvi.org
September 1										Due date for AUs to submit payment of CIMC invoices to CSDB



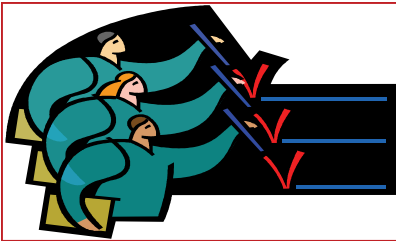
2014 Conference on Inclusive Education February 13-14, 2014 Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center Denver, Colorado

PEAK is excited to announce that the 2014 Conference on Inclusive Education is happening February 13-14, 2014! Registration is now open, some of the featured presenters are confirmed, and it is shaping up to be the best conference yet!

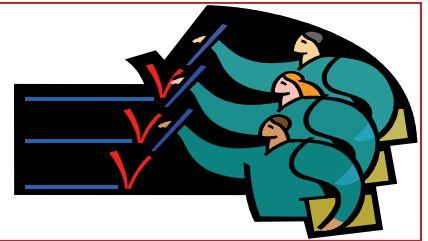
Whether you are a family member, a general or special education teacher or administrator, an advocate, a self advocate, or a professional, this conference is for YOU! This conference has been bringing the nation evidence-based practices for over 25 years, and is exactly the professional development activity you need to reinvent schools to be places where ALL students can achieve success.

To register go to: www.peakparent.org





CHECK IT OUT!



Braille Instruction for the Upper Grades – What’s Your Opinion?

APH is considering the development of a braille instructional program for upper elementary, middle, and high school students who learned to read print in the primary grades. The **Braille Transition Tool Kit** will provide materials, strategies, and resources to support the instruction of braille in a general education setting. The program will incorporate current trends in literacy instruction and the Common Core State Standards. It will encourage high expectations for student achievement and will focus on learning needs and progress directed by the IEP.

The determination may be made that transitioning to braille as the primary literacy medium will provide a student with greater access. However, learning to read and write in a new medium requires diversion of time and energy from other school work and activities. The goal of this instructional approach is to facilitate the student’s transition from print to braille literacy with minimal disruption. Comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome (i.e., what are you currently using? How many students have you had, or do you have now, that might benefit from this proposed product? Would you agree to be a field test site?) Please direct your input to: Susan L Spicknall, Braille Literacy Project Leader, sspicknall@aph.org.

APH Quick Tips

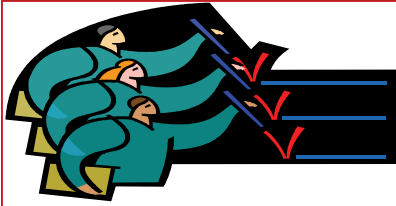
Check out APH Quick Tips at <http://www.aph.org/quick-tips/index.html> —short, weekly video suggestions about all things APH! Discover hints on how to make tactile graphics, how to submit feedback on an APH product, how to keep your US Puzzle Map pieces together, how to incorporate the new Paint Pot Palette into a classroom curriculum—and more! If YOU have an idea for APH Quick Tips, send it to Kerry Isham at kisham@aph.org. We may use your tip, and we’ll give you credit!

APH Libraries Participate in Open Library Project

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) now has expanded access to the APH Libraries. More than 1,600 items from the APH Libraries collections, including APH and public domain materials, already have been made available in a variety of full text formats thanks to an ongoing digitization project with LYRASIS and the Internet Archive. We are now expanding our digitization efforts to include the protected DAISY format available through Internet Archive’s Open Library project.

Books in the protected DAISY format can only be read on compatible reading devices, such as the Book Port DT, with an encryption key from the Library of Congress’ National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). This allows us to provide copyrighted material from the Libraries to NLS patrons.

To locate the expanding offerings of digitized items, visit <http://migel.aph.org> and type in the phrase “full text.” Click on the full text link in the record, and you will be taken directly to the Internet Archive page where you can access the material in a variety of formats, access the Open Library page where you can download the encrypted DAISY book, or select other full text resources. You also can access the entire contents of Open Library directly via APH’s implementation of DAISY Online. For more information about DAISY Online, visit http://tech.aph.org/bpdt_online.htm. For more information on the APH Libraries and our digitization efforts, contact library@aph.org or resource@aph.org



CHECK IT OUT!



Six Things You Might Not Know About IEPs

NICHCY has a website about the importance of knowing your students' IEPs --their learning goals, any accommodations needed to support their learning, and a lot more. IEPs contain valuable information about students that their teachers need to know. Here, we look at six things you might not know about the information you can find in your students' IEPs.

The following is an excerpt:

It's time to start a new school year, and that means familiarizing yourself with the IEPs of your students with disabilities. For most teachers, that means checking out each student's learning goals for the year and, if appropriate, the accommodations the student needs in the classroom. But there's so much more to the IEP! Here are six aspects of the IEP as pre-scribed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all of them intended to support your students' learning:

1. Each student's IEP includes a statement about his or her present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
2. Many students with disabilities need special accommodations when taking standard assessment.
3. IDEA strongly supports educating students with disabilities in the regular education setting, with accommodations needed.
4. The IEP can include supports for school personnel who work with students with disabilities.
5. You have the right (and responsibility) to be familiar with the IEPs of your students with disabilities.
6. Revising the student's IEP doesn't necessarily require a formal meeting.



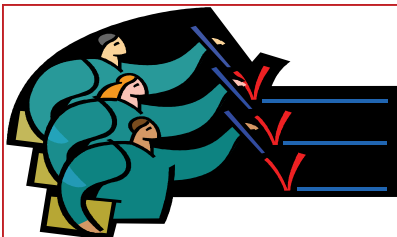
Check out the blog at <http://nichcy.org/six-things-to-know-about-ieps> and visit our other NICHCY blogs at <http://nichcy.org/blog>



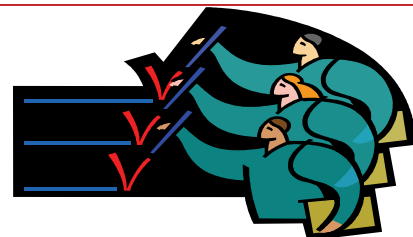
CDE Online Resources

CDE's Educator Effectiveness Webpage has up to date information on the new evaluation system in Colorado. The link below brings you directly to the specialized service provider webpage. The link is: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/specializedserviceprofessionals>. On the left hand side of the page you will see under "options" a tab to subscribe to the e-newsletter. If you choose to subscribe you will receive emails with update information as it occurs from the Educator Effectiveness team.

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



CCB MENTORING PROGRAM RESUMES

The Colorado Center for the Blind will once again be offering a mentoring program to connect blind youth and their families with positive blind role models. All mentors will have been background checked and approved to be a mentor. The kids will get to spend one-on-one time with their mentors while family members have the opportunity to discuss aspects of blindness in a group setting. Family members can even participate in some blindness skills training. Please contact Brent Batron, 303-778-1130 ext. 222, for more information and to enroll your child.



FAMILY SEMINAR

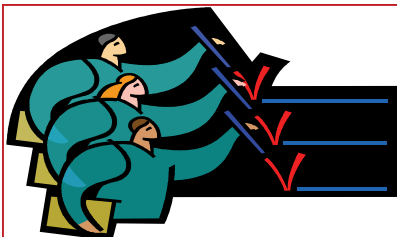
November 8 and 9 – We invite your entire family to participate in an overnight seminar with the Colorado Center for the Blind. You will have the chance to interact with other families who have blind children. The focus of this seminar will be to develop positive perceptions of blindness through several skill development activities such as traveling to and from the Center apartments while using sleep shades. On Friday evening we will meet at the Center at 5 pm. Dinner and entertainment will be provided. Space is limited to 4 families please RSVP as soon as possible to Brent Batron, 303-778-1130 ext. 222.

Reminder to Print Your Educator License Online

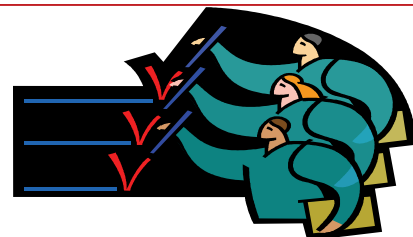
As of January 1, 2013, CDE's Educator Licensing Office no longer prints and mails paper copies of educator licenses, endorsements, credentials or authorizations. These documents are available online and can be printed by the licensee. This new process allows licenses to become available much quicker; cutting three weeks of print time. Teachers/educators receive instant verification and licenses will be easier to keep track of for people.



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



CHECK IT OUT!



The Adaptive Sports Center Outdoor Recreation for All in the Rocky Mountains



The Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) started in 1987 when a group of volunteers saw a need in the Crested Butte Colorado community for a program for individuals with disabilities. With input from former President and First Lady Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter, the Crested Butte Physically Challenged Ski Program (CBPCSP) began. The first several years focused on providing ski lessons. As the program's popularity grew, so did the number of interested individuals with disabilities who wanted to try not only alpine skiing but also snowboarding, back country skiing, snow shoeing, ice climbing, snowmobiling and dog sledding. In 1999, the summer programs were added, and the CBPCSP changed to its present name. Summer activities include mountain biking, on- and off-road hand cycling, rock climbing, challenge courses, hiking, horseback riding and boating. Adaptive sports camps are also offered.



ASC's goal is providing positive outdoor experiences for people with disabilities and their families all year round. ASC uses the latest therapeutic recreation practices and state-of-the-art equipment. Over the past five years, capital campaigns focused on turning the physical facility into a "green village" with universally designed features for participant housing, administrative offices, meet-

ing/conference rooms, equipment outfitting facilities and intern housing. Highly trained, educated staff ensure that participants have personalized, unique experiences that will provide life lessons long after they leave the program (the attention given to each participant is an ASC trademark). Credentials held by staff include Wilderness First Responder, Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS), Professional Ski Instructor of America and American Association of Snow Board Instructors (PSIA/AASI) and professional certifications specific to outdoor summer programming.

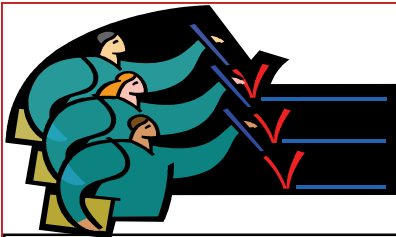
Despite a four-hour drive to the nearest metro area, ACS continues to attract participants from around the world. Reasonable rates and scholarships make the programs accessible to all who wish to attend. Fundraising events such as the 7 hours of the Banana and Bridges of the Butte are open to everyone who would like to help raise money. Local businesses, residents and visitors also support ASC with donations earmarked for specific funds or scholarships and "wish list" items.

After 25 years, ASC continues to set standards that set it apart from other adapted recreational programs.

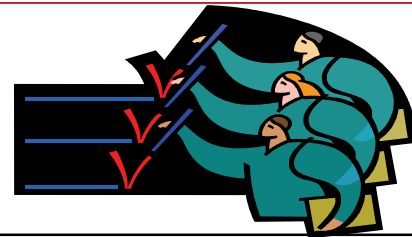


Through a unique partnership with the Brigham Young University Department of Recreation Management, ASC has been evaluating its program benefits after participants leave. A recently completed (not yet published) study shows that 94.7 percent of individuals rated their ASC experience as having a positive influence on their overall health, and 100 percent felt the experience positively influenced their quality of life. **For more information, contact:**

Adaptive Sports Center
10 Crested Butte Way
Mt. Crested Butte, Colorado 81225
1-866-349-2296 / info@adaptivesports.org



CHECK IT OUT!



Field Testers Needed for Functional Skills Assessment

The Functional Skills Assessment is a comprehensive program designed to assess a student's current skill levels in each of four areas: Clothing Management; Food Management; Home Management; and Self Management. Each of these four content areas is assessed at four levels:

- Beginning (preschool through Grade 3 or has not mastered skills assessed at this level)
- Middle (Middle school grades or has not mastered skills assessed at this level; younger students can be assessed at this level if they have already mastered all skills at previous levels)
- Secondary (secondary school or has not mastered skills assessed at this level; younger students can be assessed at this level if they have already mastered all skills at previous levels)
- Transition (transition students or adults in rehabilitation programs; younger students can be assessed at this level if they have already mastered all skills at previous levels)

Each of the four content modules includes an assessment manual and a scoring book. Each level of each module consists of approximately 20-30 student activities to be assessed. Activities to be assessed are described concretely and specific scoring directions are listed for each activity. The manual also provides a Scoring Scenario for each activity so that the examiner can see how scoring criteria are applied to a specific set of student behaviors. Content has been provided by Dianne Bender, a Family and Consumer Science teacher in a residential school for the blind for more than 30 years. It is believed that changes in assessment scores for a given level of a module should reflect parallel changes in student ability in that area. It is also believed that a student's score on specific items can be used to determine those skills that require more instruction and those that are already mastered by the student. A Scoring Book for a specific module can be used to track student progress in that area of functioning from preschool through transition/rehabilitation programs.

Each tester will be given one of the four modules to test. To complete the field test, each tester must:

- Complete testing within a 6-week time frame during the spring of 2014
- Commit approximately 30 hours of time to reading, reviewing, and commenting on the manual and scoring book for a given module
- Read and answer Expert Review questions on all four levels of the Assessment Manual for a given module
- Read and answer Expert Review questions on all four levels of the Scoring Book for a given module
- Use this module with a minimum of two students
- Use a minimum of two levels of the given module
- Administer a minimum of ten test items to each student
- Return Manual Review Forms; Scoring Book Review Forms; and Scoring Books for all students who were tested

If you are interested in testing and believe that you have the time and students required, please contact Terrie Terlau at tterlau@aph.org.

Submit Nominations for the 2014 People First Awards

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. Click on the link below to read about past recipients of the "People First" award and to find out more information on how to submit a nomination. **The deadline for submission is Friday, Nov. 8, 2013.** For more information, please contact: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp>

Vision Coalition Meeting Minutes – September 25, 2013

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, LaVerne Dell, Barb Galgano, Jim Olson, Angela Sims, and Sarah Vallese

Persons Absent: Elaine Karns, Jenn Langley, Judy Mumford, and Everett Romero

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 2013-14 SCHOOL YEAR

Anchor Center for Blind Children – Sarah Vallese
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 – Elaine Karns
Southern TVIs / COMS – Judy Mumford
Western TVIs / COMS – Angela Sims

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome Sarah Vallese, one of our newest members of Vision Coalition. Sarah is representing the Anchor Center for Blind Children!

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

This year we have two coordinators for the metro regions, Jeannie Lei and Mimi Schaper from Cherry Creek Schools. They have been very proactive in trying to get input from teachers on when to meet, topic ideas, and points for discussion. Thanks for your efforts already and the good work we will witness in the future.

We had our first meeting of the year on September 9th. The focus was sharing lesson plans, activities, and/or tools and equipment. We had a variety of materials shared that included some homemade, as well as manufactured products in literacy instruction. Teachers did a variety of demonstrations including an alternate way of teaching shoe typing and the use of a touch box for pre-braille skills. Teachers shared favorite activities such as a play of *Where the Wild Things Are* and *What's in a Pursue?* = Personal Artifacts using a CCTV.

Our November meeting is set for Monday November 4 at Children's Hospital. A tour of the facility is starting at 2:15 and the meeting with ophthalmologists, Dr. Enzenhauer and Dr. Braverman will be from 3:30-4:45. All TVIs and COMSs, including outside the metro area as well as those in training, are welcome to join. You will need a reservation by Monday Oct. 21, so please contact Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org or Mimi Schaper at mschaper2@cherrycreekschools.org

We will meet February 3rd from 3:00-4:30 at Anchor Center with the topic of emergent literacy. Then our final meeting will be on April 14th in Englewood. Topics being considered are abacus and teacher & O&M evaluations. Metro TVIs have just received the information to begin the process to get students signed up for the Low Vision Clinic. This year it will be held Feb. 27, 28 and Mar. 1, 2014. Amber Rundle Kahn is the site coordinator this year. The earlier the paperwork is completed, the more likely your student(s) will have a slot at the clinic.

Discussion Item: Nancy shared that items shared at a recent metro meeting would benefit the whole state. Ideas and resources could be shared via the Keeping in Touch newsletter or posted on the CDE / CSDB / CAER websites, depending on the content.

Southern Region (Judy Mumford)

The first Southern Regional Meeting was held in September. The Colorado Center for the Blind staff (Brent Batron and Jessica Beecham) presented CCB activities for students who are blind/visually impaired. Jim Beal shared information about the Independence Living Center. Jim Strater represented Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Becky Shields talked about a book on people with disabilities – she has two stories. One wonderful thing about this meeting is that it was successfully broadcasted through Lync. This technology allows people to join the meeting without having to travel.

Western Region (Angela Sims)

The western slope had a few staff changes this year. Beth Meyers is the new TVI in Delta, Meghan Crosby is the new TVI in Montrose, and Diane Everhart is the interim TVI in the San Juan BOCES. We are excited to have them on the western slope and wish them the best in their new positions. The September Low Vision Evaluation Clinic held in Grand Junction has been postponed due to the low number of students registered. The Low Vision Evaluation Team will work with the western slope to determine if the clinic can be rescheduled at a later date.

Discussion items:

Are there substitutes for TVIs? It is rare that a community has access to a retired TVI. Most TVIs do not have the option of a substitute in either daily or extended absences. There are occasional possibilities with retired TVIs (who have not let their teaching licenses lapse!). It may be possible to tap CSDB Outreach services for some assistance.

Is there any information about the accommodations being made for low vision and braille readers on the new computerized Colorado Summative Assessments? Is there any information about the computerized CoAlt assessments? Mira Monroe will be a guest of our upcoming State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment on the topic of state assessments. Mira is from the Office of Student Assessment. This will be a time for an assessment update.

Northern Region (Elaine Karns)

The Northern Low Vision Clinic is scheduled for November 8 and 9 at Insights Skills Center in Fort Collins. . Sherry Bainbridge is now working in the Windsor School District and Johnston / Millikin. Abby Beaton is new to the northern region and is working in Centennial BOCES.

CAER (Barb Galgano)

CAER held its Annual General Meeting and banquet on May 3, 2013 at the Cedar Creek Restaurant in Aurora. The meeting and banquet was well attended by members, family and friends. Annual awards were presented to very deserving individuals of our organization and from the community.

Congratulations to all award recipients! The following awards were given:

- *President's Award*: Pam Newton, Visit Coordinator Eastern Colorado Health Care System
- *Gary Schmidt Award*: Brent Batron Youth Services Coordinator from Colorado Center for the Blind
- *Life Time Achievement Award*: Sue Larson, TVI/COMS Jefferson County Public Schools *Connections Award*:
- Kevin Hughes, Humanware

Current Board Members include: President: Heather Parsons-Solberg, Past President: Mike Plansker, President Elect: David Gooldy, Secretary: Nancy Cozart, Treasurer: Trina Boyd-Pratt, Membership/Recruitment: Barb Galgano, Board Members: Sally Burch, Brent Batron, Melanie O'Mea and Bill Muir. Members are ALWAYS welcome and encouraged to attend meetings.

Please see our website for all CAER updates and information. CAER held a spring meeting and fundraiser for Mini-Grant funding at McAlister's Deli in Aurora on June 5th. The Board Members had high spirits for the fundraiser, but once again, poor weather dampened our potential intake. Check the CAER website for upcoming events! Check us out www.co.aerbvi.org

CAER is now taking orders for Colorado White Cane Day t-shirts! All proceeds will go to support the CAER Mini-Grants Program. Please see website for details.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (LaVerne Dell)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has added iPhone training as part of the training program at the Metro Office. This training is typically conducted in a group setting.

Although DVR continues to have a wait list, folks are strongly encouraged to apply as an individual comes off the wait-list based on his/her application date and significance of disability(ies).

It is recently been announced the appointment of Joelle Brouner as Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Brouner's career includes 13 of professional experience developing and leading human services program, eight of which have been directly related to vocational rehabilitation. She will be joining the Department of October 8th.

Discussion Item: There were questions about when a student should be referred to CO Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Please refer high school seniors as soon as possible due to the current waitlist. In addition, please refer students whose focus has shifted from education to vocation, and who is of working age.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Sarah Vallese)

Infants/Toddlers/Home Visits: As we begin our 31st year at Anchor Center for Blind Children, our Infant, Toddler, Home Visit and Preschool programs are brimming with children (43 infants, 50 toddlers and 21 preschoolers)! A new structure for home visit qualification has encouraged large numbers of families to bring their children into the center. Children that qualify for Anchor Center services are invited to come into the center based program Mondays and Wednesdays for Infant / Toddler programming. If the child lives more than 45 minutes from the center, is medically fragile or is otherwise absolutely unable to attend, the family may be offered home visits. *Discussion: There may be a misconception that home visits are going away. For the time being, there are the noted restrictions.*

Members of all of the programs at Anchor Center are working towards increasing referrals from CCBs, Pediatricians and Pediatric Ophthalmologists following concerns that not all children in need of Early Intervention (EI) vision services are being referred.

New Faces: We are thrilled to welcome Chris Clark: Occupational Therapist, Pat Lewis: COMS, and Frieda Elisha-Hunter: Physical Therapist to our program. Katie McLaughlin, a social worker has also come on board to help us more thoroughly address social/emotional support for young children and families. We also have a Lillis Intern from UNC spending this semester with us. Her name is Jen Klyczek.

Preschool: Exciting changes in the preschool program include the addition of a third full day of preschool. Our program is now offered to the 21 attending students Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Also, Anchor Center Preschool Program has taken on *The Creative Curriculum* as a framework for our curriculum. After researching several curriculums; the *Creative Curriculum* “felt” like it fit our program best. We are looking forward to this continued work in progress that we are sure will improve the quality of our preschool program. Lorraine Estrada, TVI has taken on the role of itinerant within our center based program, providing one on one braille instruction and work with low vision devices for each child in the program. Mindy Doyle-McCall, our program coordinator continues to facilitate a relationship with Denver Public Schools. Anchor Center for Blind Children now has an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with DPS to provide pre-school services to children that are “located” at Anchor Center for Blind Children. We are also writing the IEP collaboratively for children in DPS. As always, we try to be part of all IEP meetings regardless of school district or placement. Anchor Center staff is greatly looking forward to meeting with the Metro TVI group when the agenda will include discussion on improving transitions for Anchor Center preschoolers into their district programs.

Discussion: It was suggested that Anchor Center staff be trained on the School Readiness Act. Also it might be a good experience for Anchor Center staff to have the opportunity to shadow public school TVIs in kindergarten programs.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

New Quick Response Code (QR Code):

Scanning this new QR code with your smartphone app will take you to the CIMC webpage:



New “CIMC VIIB Database:” The CIMC has improved our statewide data collection process. The color-coded Excel spreadsheets are a thing of the past. The CIMC has a new database and your reports have had a facelift. Reports will now print two students to a page (8 ½” x 11”) allowing more room for you to hand write your edits. We have added fields to collect additional data such as whether or not a student is---- The CIMC updates a working copy of this statewide count on a daily basis so remember to submit new “VI Registration” and “Exit” forms for students any day of the year.

New Forms: The CIMC has new documents and order forms posted to our website:

- *New Form *Optometrist / Ophthalmologist MDB FDB Form*
Developed with input from Vision Coalition, this form can be used when eye exam information does not provide sufficient acuity or information to determine eligibility for the Federal Quota count. It is to be filled out and signed by your student’s eye doctor and filed in your school district files. Forward a copy to the CIMC for students you would like to register with the Federal Quota program.
- *Revised *VI Registration Form for Students Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired*
This revised Registration form follows the format of the new CIMC database and allows for additional data collection.
- *Revised *VI Exit form for Students Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired*
- *Revised *Order Form: Braille*
TVIs have the option of ordering one (1) braille for their student’s school use from a selection of three types of brailers. Directors of Special Education must sign request forms. The CIMC revised policy no longer allows a second braille to be checked out for home use.
- *New Form *Order Form: APH Braille Paper*
Districts may order one (1) box per academic school year of white or manilla APH braille paper (non-tractor feed) available with Federal Quota funds for eligible students.
- *New Form *Order Form: Tractor-Feed Braille Transcribing Paper*
The CIMC uses 11 ½” x 11”, 19-hole punch, fanfold tractor-feed braille transcribing paper for its book production. The CIMC is able to provide districts this same product for embossing purposes tracked specifically to the student it benefits.

NBA Conference: CIMC staff has been communicating with the National Braille Association in preparation for their Fall 2013 Conference to be held in Colorado Springs October 24-26, 2013. Clock hour certificates will be available but participants must contact Chris Clemens in the NBA office prior to the conference to receive a clock hour certificate.

Book Returns: All books should be returned to the CIMC at the end of the first semester or the end of the current school year. Please do not wait until the start of the new school year to return books used the previous year.

Technology and APH Returns: All technology checked out from the CIMC needs to be returned to the CIMC at the end of this 2013-2014 school year. This includes everything with a serial number, a battery, or an electrical cord, such as the APH Refreshabrilite 18™, Book Port Plus, Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator, etc. Please clearly mark the technology devices and their components (cords, chargers, etc.) with the name of the student using the device so that the exact same device can be checked back out to the same student for next school year (2013-2014). Shipments must be insured by the school district shipping the units to the CIMC.

CIMC Informational Meetings: The CIMC is continuing its effort to meet with vision departments and supervisors of individual school districts/BOCES specific to their school district to review procedures and services available from the CIMC. Contact Jim Olson (719) 578-2195, jolson@csdb.org to set up a meeting.

Information for Your Special Education Directors: An "Introduction to the CIMC" document will be shared with Directors of Special Education at the CDE hosted State Directors meeting scheduled for October 17-18, 2013.

CIMC Critical Timelines: The CIMC manages 2 counts of students who have been identified as "Visually Impaired, Including Blindness" (VIIB):

Count 1: "Statewide B/VI Count" This is an active database of all students between the ages of birth through 21 who have been identified as "Visually Impaired, Including Blindness" (VIIB). The database identifies both the district of residence for a student as well as the district of attendance.

Count 2: "Federal Quota Count" Each year on the first Monday in January, the CIMC registers students meeting the eligibility criteria for legal blindness into a national database managed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). Federal funds, which are used to purchase educational materials manufactured by APH, are allocated for each registered student and can be checked out by TVIs in Colorado for their eligible students. Educational materials are housed in the CIMC repository. These materials cannot be checked out for students who are not eligible for the Federal Quota count.

How to contact the CIMC:

Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) - Outreach Programs and Services
CIMC, 1015 East High Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3559

Web: www.csdb.org; click on "Programs and Services", "Outreach", then "CIMC"
cimcaphorders@csdb.org (Email for "APH order form" submissions and questions)
cimcbookorders@csdb.org (Email for braille and large print book sourcing inquiries, ?s and orders)
cimcbrailers@csdb.org (Email for "braille request" and "braille repair" form submissions and ?s)

(719) 578-2195, Jim Olson (Coordinator) jolson@csdb.org
(719) 578-2196, general CIMC phone line (this will ring all CIMC computer-based phones simultaneously)
(719) 578-2197, Debbie Haberkorn, dhaberkorn@csdb.org (book sourcing and braille transcription)
(719) 578-2198, Laurie Taylor, ltaylor@csdb.org (shipping and receiving related questions)
(719) 578-2199, Marla Wallace, mwallace@csdb.org (CDE VI Registration/Exit forms, APH Fed Quota)
(719) 578-2207, CIMC FAX

Discussion: Online courses for students – what is the CIMC's responsibility for brailleing the textbooks for an online courses? These course's textbooks are posted online. It may be advisable for the student to access the book through a screen reader program. Often the course may involve new books that are not available in print, do not have an

do not have a NIMAS file set, and have never been brailled before, so there are considerable costs to transcribe the text and produce the graphics. There also are issues with whether the books involved remain the same from the spring description of the course to the actual fall. The CIMC is responsible for providing braille texts for K-12 curriculum. As such, the textbooks associated with an online course would be the responsibility of the CIMC, based on its annual allocation of funds. If all CDE / district assessment fee funds are fully tapped, there may be a need for districts to fund the production costs of books ordered after that time. It continues to be important that districts build in the expectation that all new textbooks have a NIMAS file in the NIMAC. The CIMC will be gathering input from districts this school year specific to online curriculums being used or considered by their curriculum departments.

CSDB – BVI Outreach (Jim Olson)

New Quick Response Code (QR Code) for CSDB: Scanning this new QR code with your smartphone app will take you to the homepage of the CSDB website:



New Quick Response Code (QR Code) for CSDB Outreach Programs and Services: Scanning this new QR code with your smartphone app will take directly to the Outreach portion of the CSDB website:

September 1, 2013	Due date for AUs to submit payment of their CIMC invoices (issued July 1, 2013) to the CSDB accounting office.
October 4, 2013	“Statewide B/VI Count” (Round 1) mailed from CIMC to AUs for updating.
November 22, 2013	“Statewide B/VI Count” (Round 1) due back to CIMC. New this year: Director of Special Education signature required!
January 3, 2014	“Statewide B/VI Count” (Round 2) mailed from CIMC to AUs in preparation for final submission.
January 6, 2014	CDE statewide B/VI Count Day (Count 1), and Federal Quota Count Day (Count 2) **Information for both counts should match with district student enrollment data on Monday, January 6, 2014.
January 31, 2014	“Statewide B/VI Count” (Round 2) due back to the CIMC. New this year: Director of Special Education signature required!
February 14, 2014	CIMC will mail Directors of Special Education: - State Count data as reported by TVIs, and - An estimate of the student assessment fees for the 2014-15 fiscal year.
May 1, 2014	Textbook orders due for the 2014-2015 school year.
June 6, 2014	All brailers, technology equipment and textbooks must be returned to the CIMC. *Districts will be billed for items not returned.
July 2014	During the month of July, the CIMC begins the process for invoicing AUs for equipment and books that were not returned in complete, usable, condition. This includes books that were returned with missing/damaged volumes.
July 1, 2014	CIMC mails invoices to Directors of Special Education for the student assessment fees.
September 1, 2014	AU payment deadline for student assessment invoices.

Upcoming events can be located by clicking the “Events/Trainings” tab at the bottom of the CSDB homepage (www.CSDB.org).

- October 8 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- October 9 Noon Bytes B/LV: Sports with Individuals who are B/LV, Matt Simpson (USABA)
- October 15 White Cane Day
- October 15 Families Together
- October 15 Employability workshop broadcast – Outreach Parents?
- October 24-26 National Braille Association Fall Conference (Colorado Springs, Antlers Hilton)
- October 25 Denver O&M Outreach - visit Audio Information Network.
- November 8-9 Northern Region CDE/CSDB Low Vision Evaluation Clinic
- November 12 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- November 13 Noon Bytes B/LV: Working with Young Children, Dr. Kay Ferrell
- November 22 Southern Region CDE/CSDB Low Vision Evaluation Clinic (Alamosa)
- December 10 Southern Region TVI meeting(12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- December 11 Noon Bytes B/LV: Behavior Supports
- December 12 School for the Blind Winter Concert

2014

- January 6 Federal Quota Count Day (CIMC)
- January 6 Statewide B/VI Count Day (CIMC)
- January 14 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00-2:30 p.m., Lions)
- January 30 Colorado Braille Challenge
- February 11 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- February 27 Denver Blind Outreach
- Feb 27, 28, March 1: Metro Denver region CDE/CSDB Low Vision Evaluation Clinic
- March *Snowshoe Weekend (Date to be determined)*
- March 11 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- April 5 Sensory Safari
- April 7-11 Career Week (see website for details)
- April 8 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- April 11 Southern Region CDE/CSDB Low Vision Evaluation Clinic
- April 17 Beeping Egg Hunt
- May 4-9 Close-Up, Washington D.C., (1 CSDB student & 1 public school student)
- May 10 Denver Blind Outreach Activity (to be announced)
- May 13 Southern Region TVI meeting (12:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lions)
- June 5 CSDB Graduation Day
- June 8-13 Colorado Sports Education Camp
- June 13-15 Family Learning Retreat
- June 15-20 Summer Enrichment (Blind and Deaf)
- June 20 Low Vision Expo, co-sponsored by CSDB & DVR (on the CSDB campus)
- June 19-22 CSDB Alumni 140th Celebration!



CSDB – School for the Blind (Jennifer Langley)

We welcome five new teachers to our school. Dian Megarry returns as our braille instructor, Sarah Griego took Jamie Lugo's upper elementary class as Jamie moved to our DLS instructor and LMA/FLV provider. Tiffany Sandlin joined our team, as the part-time tech teacher/part time Special needs teacher. Laurie Brumley is our 6-12 Social Studies/English teacher and Lisa VanDam our new O&M instructor.

As a school we are focused on integrating Literacy and Numeracy into all our classes as well as project based instruction. Not only are all teachers supporting each other, the students have begun a mentor program. As a school-wide project focusing on the history of Colorado, our older students work with the elementary class to create tactile maps, research information and complete their written work.

Our MS/HS special needs classroom is focused on community based instruction where they spend their mornings improving their book skills and the afternoons putting it to use. They are volunteering, completing vocational experiences and learning how to independently access a variety of technology.

Other news: as White Cane Day approaches we are preparing a video presentation along with the Colorado Springs Police Department for them to use in future trainings on how to assist visually impaired individuals.

University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)

The UNC TVI and O&M Programs have over 100 people enrolled. Many of these individuals live in Colorado. There are also large numbers of students from New York and Washington. There are people at varying levels of the program, but these numbers are very hopeful for the field. This is a great time for school districts to work with student teachers to try to fill vacancies left by those who retire. Silvia Correa-Torres is currently on sabbatical. Paula Conroy will be on sabbatical next semester. Currently, experienced doctoral students are assisting with some course instruction. Paula is currently working on the School of Special Education's re-accreditation process.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: The project is completing its last year of a five-year grant cycle. A new grant proposal was submitted to the US Department of Education on August 15th. Many thanks to all the CO TVIs who submitted a letter of support. Editor's Note: *The grant was awarded to CDE on September 27.*

- ◆ ***Summer Institute:*** The 2013 Summer Institute on Deafblindness and Significant Support Needs was held in the Denver area on June 10-14th. It 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. Summer 2014 will involve an Advanced Literacy course.
- ◆ ***Western Region Early Intervention Conference:*** The project was involved in this June 2013 regional conference, which was held in Jackson Hole, WY. The focus was on children ages birth through five who have sensory loss. The CO DB Project sponsored Millie Smith to speak on Symbols and Meaning and Dr. Jan Van Dijk, who spoke on child assessment. The WREIC was well attended by participants in the region and across the country. The next WREIC will be in New Mexico in fall of 2015.
- ◆ ***Assessment of Children with Deaf-Blindness/ Significant Support Needs:*** The project sponsored a very successful two-day training with Dr. Jan Van Dijk in late June.

Specialized Service Professionals (SSPs): Members of the O and M Specialist committee continued to update the O and M rubric throughout the 2012-13 school year and over this past summer. The current draft is posted on the CDE website for feedback. The website is:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/specializedserviceprofessionals>

Goals during the 2013-14 School Year include:

- ⇒ All SSPs evaluated using current system employed in district/BOCES
- ⇒ Pilot draft professional practice rubrics for Specialized Service Professionals
- ⇒ Collect feedback on professional practice rubrics and student outcome measures
- ⇒ Refine rubrics and student outcome measures based on feedback collected
- ⇒ Train evaluators on SSP system
- ⇒ Determine inter-rater agreement for the system

Annual O&M Conference: A topic is yet to be determined for Spring 2014. As this training is organized, more information will be shared in future editions of the *Keeping In Touch* newsletter. Ideas for topics are encouraged and should be sent to Tanni.

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: Five clinics have been funded this school year. The first clinic of the year, which was to be held in Grand Junction, was cancelled due to lack of participants.

iPad Training: Tanni is currently working with Tara Mason on a date/ specific content to an iPad Training for January 2014. It was recommended that the training focus on the use of the iPad specific to Expanded Core Curriculum / building lesson plans.

Mentoring: CDE is offered stipends to mentors of new TVIs in the field. Persons who are interested in having a mentor, should be in touch with Tanni.

State Braille-Format TCAP Assessments: Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, and Sarah Sonnier will return to the National Braille Press in early December to preview the 2014 braille-format TCAP assessments in the area of reading, writing, math, and science. This will be the last of such trips specific to TCAP as the new assessments begin to be piloted in Colorado and the TCAP tests are phased out of the assessment framework.

Recruitment and Retention: We have several new TVIs in the state! Jefferson County has hired Jessica Hanks, Ashley Ivy, and Charlotte Javier. Adams 12 has hired Maggie Tutt, Erin Keller, and Christina Martin. Abby Beaton is new in Centennial BOCES. Aurora has hired Rebecca Warnell and Genevieve Franoeur Anderson. There are several new faces at CSDB: Dian Megarry, Sarah Griego, Tiffany Sandlin, Laurie Brumley, and Lisa VanDam.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools: Virginia has published guidelines for their state. The product will be sent to VC members to determine whether this type of guidance document would be helpful in Colorado. Tanni will email it to the VC members for their opinion.

Teacher / SPP Effectiveness Rubrics: Members reviewed the current draft of the O and M Rubric and also the TVI Rubric drafted by Douglas Country School District. Denver Public Schools has also drafted a rubric specific to TVI. Both the Douglas County and Denver Public School District rubrics are very unique to their districts. As a next step, it was recommended that CDE draft a rubric that merges the existing teacher rubric and the current O and M rubric together in one document. This will be reviewed at the next Vision Coalition meeting and then the group can address how best to possibly tweak the teacher component to reflect the unique job skills of a TVI. It will be a work in progress!

Next Meeting Dates: January 22, 2014 (DVR Office)
April 16, 2014



Special Format TCAP Tests

The window for District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) to order braille TCAP forms is October 28 – November 15. The tests come in either contracted or un-contracted braille. This is not a nonstandard accommodation.

The nonstandard accommodation form can be obtained from your District Assessment Coordinator. The due date for nonstandard accommodations is December 13, this year. Please remember that while you can fill them out, the request must be signed by your DAC, and the Special Education Coordinator.

Welcome!

More New Faces in Colorado



Abby Beaton is currently attending the UNC Program to be a TVI and COMS. She is new to the field of teaching. Abby has a stepson who is blind and he is the reason that she is now training and working in the special education profession. Abby will be working for Centennial BOCES. She likes to spend time with her family and go to the mountains. In her spare time Abby loves to read, which is usually only in the summer or during winter break! Abby shares that she is excited to start working and putting everything that she has learned to use!

Joelle Brouner has been appointed as the Director of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Brouner's career includes 13 years of professional experience developing and leading human services programs, eight of which have been directly related to vocational rehabilitation. She most recently served as Executive Director of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

Beth Myers is the new TVI in Delta School District. Beth worked for Kevin O'Brien as a paraprofessional for four years in Delta County, which is where she developed her interest in the field of visual impairments. When the student that she was working with as a para graduated from high school, Beth went back to school at UNC to obtain her masters for TVI and O&M. While completing these programs, she accepted a position in Hotchkiss, CO where she has worked the last two years as a part-time, middle school resource teacher. Beth completed her schooling at UNC this summer and accepted the position of TVI for Delta County upon Kevin O'Brien's retirement. She now works as a part-time, middle school resource teacher and part-time itinerant TVI/O&M. Filling Kevin's shoes is a big job, but Beth notes that she is very excited to have been given this opportunity.

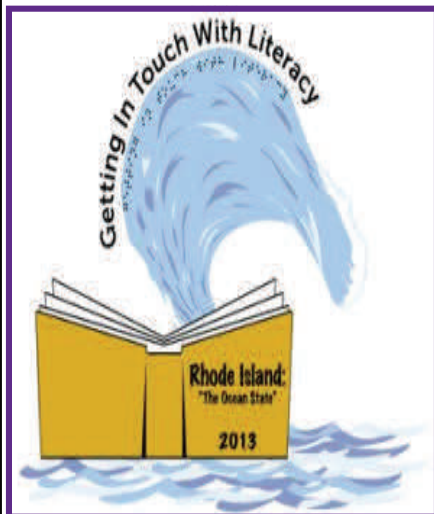




colorado connections

- ◆ Congratulations to **Deb** and **Chris Andrews!** We are happy to announce the birth of Parker Allen Andrews who was born at 7:43 am on September 12th. Stats include: 8 lbs. 10 oz. 21 inches. Chris and Deb are thrilled and report that Parker's older sister is coming to terms with the fact that they didn't bring him home just for her!
- ◆ Congratulations to **Mike Plansker** and wife **Rachel** on the birth of their daughter Sydney Rae. She was born on September 8th and was 20 inches long and 7 pounds and 14 ounces. Such happy news!
- ◆ Thanks to all the folks who gathered to make the recent CDE Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment a successful training. To our Thursday night State-of-the-State presenters: **Tanni Anthony, Brent Ba-tron, Julie Deden, David Gooldy, JC Greeley, Lucia Hasty, Teresa Kalber, Mindy Doyle McCall, Jim Olson, Matt Simpson,** and **Randy Witte.** Another really big thank you to **Suzanne Rougier, Daphne Pereles, Ellen Hunter,** and **Mira Monroe** who provide state initiative updates during our Friday session. Thank you to **Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea** for her update on BANA/ Unified English Braille Code on Friday afternoon and then spending the day with us on Saturday to address reading research and strategies specific to children who are blind/visually impaired. And, last but never least, thank you to all the **CO TVIs** and **braillists** who took time to come to the training. It is always exciting to gather together in the name of improving outcomes for our students. YOU are the very best!
- ◆ A huge thank you to the great CIMC staff (**Jim, Debbie, Laurie, and Marla**) for putting together the impressive binders for each administrative unit CIMC contact person. Job well done!
- ◆ Hats off to **Rebecca Warnell** of Aurora School District for earning her CDE Certificate of Braille Competency.

Catch the Wave at GITWL 2013



The Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference will be celebrating its 20th anniversary at the 2013 Getting In Touch With Literacy conference on December 4—7, 2013 in Providence, Rhode Island.

This event, the premier literacy conference for individuals who are blind and visually impaired, will feature presentations, exhibits, poster sessions, pre-conference workshops and more, all designed to promote literacy skills for children and adults.

The conference has a tradition of outstanding presentations by practitioners in the field. More information about this important conference can be found on the Getting In Touch with Literacy website, at www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org

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