

# Be a Noisy Braillewriter!

By Tanni L. Anthony

Editor:

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

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

(303) 866-6681 (voice)

(303) 866-6767 (fax)

E-mail: [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers  
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired  
January—February 2015

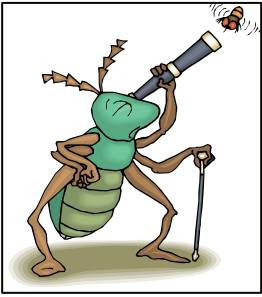
The cheerful dings and pounding resonance of a roomful of braillewriters warmed my heart during our recent Advanced Unified English Braille (UEB) Code training. What a happy sound of dots being embossed in the name of ensuring that our Colorado learners will continue to have TVIs and braillists who can teach and produce high quality braille as we move forward with UEB. Pure music!

Many years ago, my predecessor Jim Nezol was asked what image he wanted to be associated with—it was some kind of silly introduction game at a training. Jim replied that he wanted to be associated with a braillewriter—a noisy machine for children who are blind/visually impaired. What a wonderful answer! We all need to be good advocates for our students and let our voices be heard to support not only the same high quality, research-based educational requirements needed for every learner, but also to protect what is truly unique for students with visual impairments, including blindness or deaf-blindness.

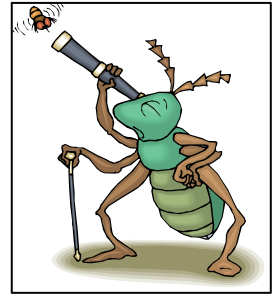
We sometimes need to make a little noise (always a joyful one!) to ensure accommodations are taught, in place, and actualized during the routines of the school day and the child's home/community life. That O&M, as needed, continues to be a focus of instruction. These well-taught entities are needed to prepare our students to be truly College and Career Ready. It is our work to educate not only our students, but school and neighborhood friends, classroom teachers, building and district administrators, and our own professional peers on these needs. As we move forward with our UEB Implementation Plans and also with a strong focus on the use on magnification tools, take the image of that noisy braillewriter with you and make some joyful and long resonating noise on behalf of our students!

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# LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Region	Dates and Location	Paperwork Deadline	Site Coordinator(s)
Metro	<u>Anchor Center—Denver</u> Thursday, February 19, 2015 Friday, February 20, 2015 Saturday, February 21, 2015	Tuesday, February 3, 2015	Rebecca Warnell, TVI <a href="mailto:rewarnell@aps.k12.co.us">rewarnell@aps.k12.co.us</a>

## Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Update—School Year 2014-15



We are down to our last low vision clinic of the school year with just the Metro Clinic left to complete. Thank you to everyone who has already put in such great teamwork and effort to host these clinics. Most recently to Donice Fennimore, our Site Coordinator of the last Southern LVE Clinic of the year. Thanks to the following TVIs who brought students to the southern clinic: Diane Fitzkee, Lori Mattick, Julie Novak, and Morgan Turner.

If you brought a student(s) to a Low Vision Evaluation Clinic this school year, please be responsive to participating in a follow-up survey that Tanni will send in late February. It is critical that we have more than demographic data of our clinics, we also need efficacy data to demonstrate how the purchased devices have been used with the student. The expectation is that (a) these devices are used in the home, school, and community; (b) are used for instructional work and, as needed, for use in state assessments, and (c) they follow the student into the community to restaurants, other shops, sporting events, and traveling within the community. If we do not achieve this result, we have lost a key intended outcome of these free low vision clinic opportunities for our students.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* **Attention all TVIs:** Please work closely with your Regional LVE Clinic Coordinators to ensure \*  
 \* that all paperwork is fully completed and turned into the clinic staff in a timely manner. You \*  
 \* can also find the paperwork on the CDE website at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities.asp) \*  
 \* [Vision Activities.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities.asp) Please be advised that if you are recommending a student to attend the \*  
 \* LVE Clinic, it is your responsibility to prepare the student and parent for the appointment, \*  
 \* attend with them, and ensure that you assist with any needed follow-up training of the \*  
 \* prescribed device(s). Thank you for helping to ensure the success of the clinic for each student. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

# ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

## Video Demo of Seeing Eye GPS iPhone App

Check out a video demo of the fully accessible iPhone GPS app, Seeing Eye GPS. It is about seven minutes and provides a start to finish of setting and following a route. Not all functions are covered but the main easy turn-by-turn prompts and look around information are nicely portrayed.

Go to: <http://goo.gl/HXUw8U>

## International O & M Conference Registration is Open

Join your colleagues in Montréal this July to learn about the latest developments in orientation and mobility research, environmental accessibility, developing technology in orientation and perception, preparing for innovative services for the older population, etc. The 15th International Mobility Conference is a worldwide gathering of O&M scientists, researchers and practitioners expected to convene July 6-9, 2014, at the Palais des congrès de Montréal, in Canada. They have planned 9 interactive and hands-on workshops. They will be announced on the website by February 2, 2015. Register early to secure your seat as workshops have limited capacity!

Learn more and register >><http://creation-samarkand.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d79be39c54c6e6ce82953520f&id=96019b444c&e=6338f36bba>>



## Education for Life

### for Colorado Residents

***Application Deadline: March 1, 2015***

\$42,000 may be awarded to six deserving recipients. In addition, two “full-ride tuition” scholarships may be awarded to visually impaired or blind students through the Kane Family Foundation. Please visit our website for criteria and information.

To apply for an “Education for Life” scholarship and to obtain more information, please go to: [www.seethefuture.org](http://www.seethefuture.org) and click on “Education for Life” then “Application Information”. You may also call Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund at 719.471.3200.



## Educator Effectiveness & Licensing

### Check Out the Office of Professional Services and Educator Licensing Updates

The Office of Professional Services and Educator Licensing has updated our "News Updates" containing pertinent information for our educator preparation and human resource partners. View the updates (released at the beginning of each month) at the link below.

The updates include project status information, FAQs about the licensure process, information about alternative licensure, Praxis program updates and test details and links to useful information, etc. The Office of Professional Services and Educator Licensing is bridging the gap in communications with our designated agencies, institutes of higher education and human resources personnel and making important information more accessible to stakeholders.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/resources>

# Assessment News

## PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual

### Third Edition: PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual (November 2014)

The third edition of the ***PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual*** is a comprehensive policy document that provides guidance to districts and decision-making teams to ensure that the PARCC mid-year, performance-based, and end-of-year assessments provide valid results for all participating students. For more information about the manual and key appendices, go to: <http://parconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual>

Please be sure to work closely with your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) to ensure that any needed accommodations are in place for your student.

## Other Important Accommodation News!

Also for administrative units using the CDE Statewide IEP System (Enrich), please check out the new and approved assessment accommodation section that details allowable accommodations for all of the CMAS general and alternate assessments for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.



# Calendar of Events

2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015

- February 5-7**                    **Parents Encouraging Parents Conference—Fort Collins**  
 Contact: [ramer\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:ramer_d@cde.state.co.us)
- February 11**                    **CAER Board Meeting** - Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton  
 Contact: David Gooldy at [dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org)
- February 12**                    **CSDB Board Meeting** - Colorado Springs  
 Contact: Jacky Skinner at (719) 578-2102 or [jskinner@csdb.org](mailto:jskinner@csdb.org)
- February 12**                    **Metro TVI Meeting** - Douglas County  
 Contact: Jeannie Lei at [jlei@cherryschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherryschools.org)
- February 13**                    **Southern Region TVI/COMS Meeting—UCCS**  
 Contact: Donice Fennimore at [dfennimore@ppbooces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppbooces.org)
- February 20**                    **CSDB Outreach Three Year Strategic Planning Forum** - CSDB  
 Contact: Karin Hensel at [khensel@csdb.org](mailto:khensel@csdb.org)
- February 20 - 21**                **Metro LVE Clinic—Anchor Center for Blind Children—Denver**  
 Contact: Rebecca Warnell—[rewarnell@aps.k12.co.us](mailto:rewarnell@aps.k12.co.us)
- February 27**                    **Blindness 101 Course for Professionals** - CSDB  
 Contact: Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org)
- March 9—April 3**                **Tentative CMAS: PARCC Testing**
- March 12**                        **CSDB Board Meeting** - Colorado Springs  
 Contact: Jacky Skinner at (719) 578-2102 or [jskinner@csdb.org](mailto:jskinner@csdb.org)
- March 13**                        **Southern Region TVI/COMS Meeting** - Pikes Peak BOCES  
 Contact: Donice Fennimore at [dfennimore@ppbooces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppbooces.org)
- March 15**                        **Deadline for Education for Life Scholarship**  
 Contact: Dr. Tom Theune (719) 471-3200

- March 15**                    **DEADLINE** to apply for the NFB scholarship - [www.nfb.org/scholarships](http://www.nfb.org/scholarships)
- March 18**                    **CAER Board Meeting - CO Center for the Blind**  
Contact: David Gooldy at [dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org)
- March 19-22**                **California Transcribers and Educators of the Blind and Visually Impaired (CTEBVI) Conference** Contact: <http://ctevh.org/>
- April 9—11**                **AFB Leadership Conference** - Phoenix, AZ  
Visit <http://www.afb.org/info/about-us/events-and-awards/american-foundation-for-the-blindleadership-conference-2015/123>
- April 10**                    **Southern Region TVI/COMS Meeting—Pikes Peak BOCES**  
Contact: Donice Fennimore at [dfennimore@ppboces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppboces.org)
- April 13—May 1**            **Tentative CMAS and CoAlt Science and Social Studies Testing**
- April 13—May 15**         **Tentative CoAlt and DLM Testing**
- April 15**                    **CAER Board Meeting - CO Center for the Blind**  
Contact: David Gooldy at [dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org)
- April 16**                    **Metro TVI Meeting - Denver location to be determined**  
Contact: Jeannie Lei at [jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)
- April 17**                    **Vision Coalition** - CO Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Contact: Tanni Anthony - [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- April 27—May 22**         **Tentative CMAS PARCC Testing**
- April 30—May 2**            **PEP Conference—location to be determined**  
Contact: David Ramer at [ramer\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:ramer_d@cde.state.co.us)
- April 3- May 2**             **CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar—CO Center for the Blind**  
Contact: Tanni Anthony—[Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- May 1**                      **CAER Board Meeting—CO Center for the Blind**  
Contact: David Gooldy at [dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org)
- May 8**                      **Southern Region TVI/COMS Meetings—Pikes Peak BOCES**  
Contact: Donice Fennimore at [dfennimore@ppboces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppboces.org)
- June 8—9**                 **SWAAAC Summer Symposium - Auraria Higher Ed Center – Denver**  
Contact:  
[www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/programs/atp/Pages/AssistiveTechnologyPartners.aspx](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/programs/atp/Pages/AssistiveTechnologyPartners.aspx)

2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015

- June 11                      **Graduation at the Anchor Center for the Blind**
  
- June 11                      **CSDB Board Meeting - CSDB**  
Contact: Jacky Skinner at (719) 578-2102 or [jskinner@csdb.org](mailto:jskinner@csdb.org)
  
- June 13 -14                **Family Learning Retreat - CSDB**  
Contact: Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org)
  
- June 21-25                **Sports Camp - CSDB**  
Contact: Donna Keale – [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)
  
- June 25—26              **2015 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness—**Location to be determined  
Contact: Tanni Anthony— [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
  
- June 26-27                **The 2015 American Conference on Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment, Omaha, NE**
  
- July 5—10                **National Federation of the Blind Convention – Orlando, FL**  
Contact: [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)
  
- July 6—9                 **15th International Orientation and Mobility Conference—Montreal, Canada**  
Visit: <http://imc15.com/en/>
  
- July 30—August 2        **12th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference, Chicago, IL**  
 For more information visit [chargesyndrome.org/](http://chargesyndrome.org/)
  
- November 18-21         **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference -**  
 Albuquerque, NM - Contact: TBD



2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016

- January 4                      **Full UEB Implementation in the United States!**
  
- July 20-24                **AER International Conference - Jacksonville, FL**  
Contact: [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)

2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017

- July 19-22                **AER International O&M Conference—Pittsburgh, PA**  
Contact <http://swoma.org/>

2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018

- July 25-19                **AER International Conference - Reno, NV**  
Contact: [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)

# Resources and Materials

## National Center on Deaf-Blindness

As a national technical assistance center funded by the federal Department of Education, the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) works to improve the quality of life for children who are deaf-blind and their families by:

1. Creating visibility and direction for identified priorities through a range of practices, activities, supports and partnerships.
2. Identifying and encouraging new innovations in local, state, and national practice and policy.
3. Promoting opportunity for reflection, debate, and constructive dialogue around ideas and developing practice.
4. Maintaining a rich repository of content, history, and knowledge, easily available and shared by all who are part of the community of deaf-blindness.

It has been nearly sixteen months since NCDB launched [nationaldb.org/](http://nationaldb.org/) Over the last year they have made changes and customized features to make sure that the site works in ways that best meet user needs. Thanks to all of you who provided feedback and suggestions. There is an abundance of resources on their website to inform educational identification and support practices for learners who are deaf-blind.

## New APH Overview Video Launched

The American Printing House for the Blind is proud to release their new overview video "No Other Place Like It." This video touches on their mission and major product & service areas. The APH story is partially told in the words of some of our long-time employees. The video showcases product research & development, the manufacturing plant, their product offerings, and much more. It's difficult, if not impossible, to tell the complex story of the American Printing House for the Blind in a 6-minute video, but they hope this overview will give some flavor of the organization that has been providing accessible materials since 1858.



The video can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WENRICNDsxQ>

## AMCHP Resources

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) is pleased to announce the release of the State Public Health Autism Resource Center (SPHARC) environmental scan report on ***State Strategies and Initiatives to Improve Developmental and Autism Screening, and Early Identification Systems***. This report includes initial findings from an environmental scan that AMCHP conducted in the summer of 2014 of 185 source documents in an effort to capture the wide range of developmental screening activities occurring within all U.S. states and territories. Over the coming year, this data will be further analyzed to develop resources to assist states in building and improving developmental screening and early identification systems. These tools and resources will be housed on the SPHARC website and AMCHP will provide updates and seek feedback as the work progresses. AMCHP is also pleased to announce that a companion fact sheet on current ***Title V State Performance Measures Related to Developmental Screening and Early Identification*** is also available.

For more information and to access these publications, visit the SPHARC website at: <http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/CYSHCN/projects/SPHARC!>



# Resources and Materials

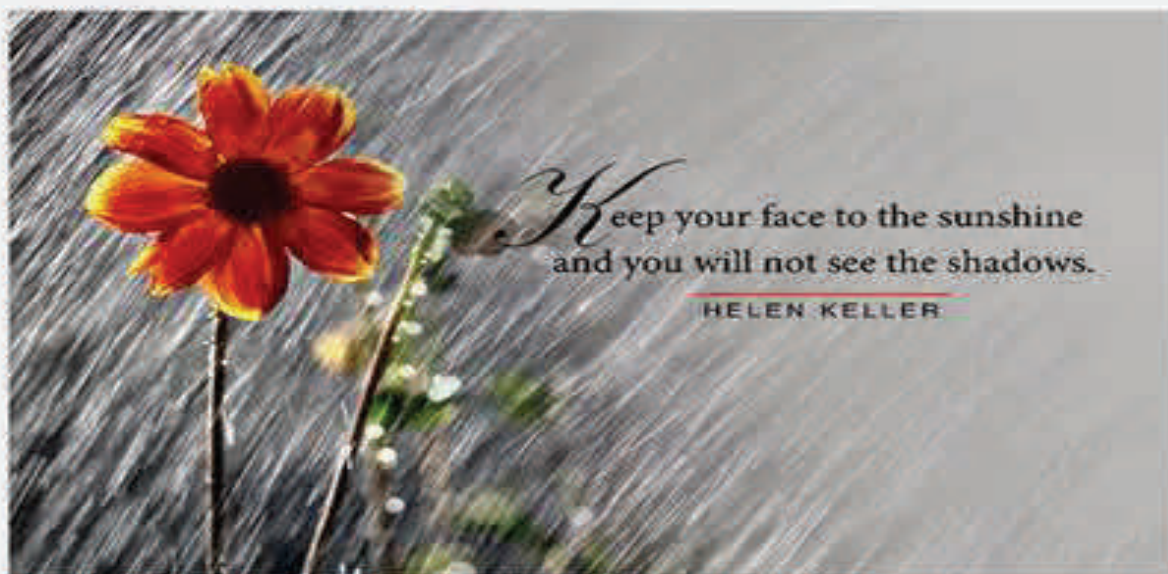
**Best Practices Document:** The CEEDAR Center has developed a series of Innovation Configuration documents that have collected research-based practices. The newest document, available for free download, is "Evidence-Based Practices for Students with Sensory Impairments" by Kay Alicyn Ferrell, Susan Bruce, and John L. Luckner. This resource, which includes best practices for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or deafblind can be found at the following link:

[ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/IC-4\\_FINAL\\_09-09-14.pdf](http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/IC-4_FINAL_09-09-14.pdf)

**The Science of Early Childhood Development Videos:** From the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, this 4-minute video shares basic concepts of early childhood development, established over decades of neuroscience and behavioral research. The video is available in

- English ([http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/multimedia/videos/inbrief\\_series/inbrief\\_science\\_of\\_ecd/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/multimedia/videos/inbrief_series/inbrief_science_of_ecd/))
- Spanish ([http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/multimedia/videos/spanish\\_and\\_portuguese/ciencia/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/multimedia/videos/spanish_and_portuguese/ciencia/)).

**Beyond the Pencil:** The link below leads you to "The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy" and the paper titled [Beyond the Pencil: Expanding the Occupational Therapists' Role in Helping Young Children to Develop Writing Skills.](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/ojot/vol2/iss1/5/) To access the full paper, cut and paste the link below to your browser, then on the right hand side of the Open Journal webpage, you will find the download icon which opens up the full article. For more information, go to: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/ojot/vol2/iss1/5/>



# just for PARENTS

## Role Model Videos: Blind/Visually Impaired Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

The most important thing a parent can do is to let their child figure things out on their own. Give them the same expectations as their peers!" says Matt Simpson, featured in a new role model video produced by the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) Outreach program.



Families, students and professionals can now easily access information from role models who are blind/visually impaired. Almost two dozen role models talk about their life experiences on their journey from youth to becoming successful adults. Several of these videos have been uploaded to the CSDB You-Tube Channel and the CSDB website. Watch each week for additions to the role model video collection.

\*CSDB You-Tube channel [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4V2VlxorHieuy55bmkIwAFUVR07V85d0](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4V2VlxorHieuy55bmkIwAFUVR07V85d0)

\*CSDB website [www.csdb.org/programs-services/outreach-programs-3/outreach-resources/resources-bvi/](http://www.csdb.org/programs-services/outreach-programs-3/outreach-resources/resources-bvi/)

Through the role model videos, children learn self-advocacy, gain a better sense of identity and belonging, and positively relate to an adult who has similar life experiences. Parents and professionals gain insight and ideas for supporting their child/student in becoming a successful adult. insight and ideas for supporting their child/student in becoming a successful adult.

## En-ABLE-ing Better Financial Planning for Families

On December 19th, the President signed into law the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, aimed at reducing financial burdens for people with disabilities and their families by providing them access to tax-saving 529 Education Savings Plans, called 529-ABLE Accounts. While there will be a delay while each state sets up and begins to operate these accounts, the passage of the Act means that soon people with disabilities and their families will be able to set aside funds (up to \$14,000 per year) for disability-related expenses to supplement insurance and other benefits. Importantly, money set aside in these funds, up to \$100,000, will be excluded from the income and assets calculations which are used to determine eligibility for federal benefits such as SSI. Also, Medicaid benefits eligibility will not be impacted by funds saved in an ABLE account. States will have to determine asset/income eligibility with respect to ABLE Accounts for other state benefits which do not include federal funds. Eligible individuals must have a condition that occurred before age 26. It may be prudent for people who are blind/visually impaired and families of children who are blind/visually impaired to consult their tax advisers about the financial planning benefits and implications of the ABLE Act and 529-ABLE Accounts.

For more information, go to the American Foundation for the Blind Policy Center at <http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/public-policy-center/12> or Family Connect at <http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsitetime.aspx>

You can read the text of the ABLE Act at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/647>

## DO YOU WANT FUTURE REFLECTIONS IN PRINT? ACT NOW!!

*Future Reflections*, the magazine of the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, is cleaning up the mailing list. If you want to receive *Future Reflections* in print, you must send a message to the national office right now.

Send an e-mail to [nfbpublications@nfb.org](mailto:nfbpublications@nfb.org) and request *Future Reflections* in print. (Include your mailing address if you have not previously been on the list.)

If you don't want the magazine in the mail, you can read current and archived copies of *Future Reflections* on the NFB website: [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)

# just for PARENTS

## NFB of Colorado Chapter Meetings

Parents and their children who are blind/visually impaired may want to attend National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Colorado chapter meetings. There are NFB chapters in Aurora, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Denver (Littleton and Downtown), North Denver and Pueblo, as well as an at large chapter that meets by phone.

Check the NFBCO website at <http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/calendar/> for information on when and where the meetings are held. It's best to check with the meeting leader to confirm the time and place. Contact information for those individuals is given on the website.

## [Connect Parents with Experts at Understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

Understood.org is an online resource for parents and teachers of children with learning and attention issues. (*Editor's Note: This is not specific to all learners with visual impairments, including blindness.*)

The Understood community is a place for parents to access practical advice with tools to help navigate common parenting challenges. Parents can:

- Seek free expert advice from professionals
- Participate in daily chats and webinars
- Share personal experiences in a secure environment with other parents

If you are a parent in need of support, you may want to check out [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

## 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](http://www.peakparent.org).
- The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People ([www.thelegalcenter.org](http://www.thelegalcenter.org)) and
- The Arc of Colorado ([www.thearcofco.org](http://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](http://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](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175, Denver, CO 80202. Or please leave a voice message at (303) 866-6681. Thank you so much!



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

2014 – 2015

## Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences

Feb 5 – 7, 2015

April 30 – May 2, 2015

*“Thank you so much to the Colorado Department of Education for providing the opportunity to attend this conference. My daughter's future is so much brighter now!”*

– 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

### Register Now!

For more information and to apply online go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>.

Or contact: CDE-ESSU-PEP, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175 Denver, CO 80202

PEP Hotline: (303) 866-6846 Toll-Free: 1(877) 834-0588 (Outside Denver Metro Area) Fax: (303) 866-6767

**WHO:** Families who have a child with a disability (Both parents in a two-parent family are encouraged to attend. Single parents are encouraged to bring a support person who will participate in the conference.) Directors of special education, principals, special education teachers, general education teachers, health care and other professionals interested in the family/school partnership.

**WHAT:** Forty years of research shows that the participation of families in their child's education, through specific coordinating between home and school, results in improved outcomes (Jeynes, 2012). PEP Conferences are designed to promote family and school partnerships that are essential in supporting students with disabilities and their families in schools and the community. PEP brings parents and professionals together by sharing ideas, discussing concerns, celebrating successes and obtaining information related to parenting, educating and partnering to support student learning. PEP Conferences are offered at no cost to attendees.

**WHEN:** This no cost Conference is held from 5:00 PM Thursday through 3:00 PM Saturday. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) pays for lodging & participant meals – excluding Friday night's dinner.

**WHERE:** In order to enable more families and professionals to participate, PEP Conferences are scheduled throughout Colorado. Location information will be available soon.

### Sessions:

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

Colorado Department of Education

1560 Broadway, Ste. 1175, Denver, CO 80202 • 303.866.6876 • [dascher\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:dascher_c@cde.state.co.us)



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**The 2015 American  
 Conference on Pediatric  
 Cortical Visual Impairment**



**Friday-Saturday, June 26-27, 2015**

**Omaha, Nebraska**

**Provided by Children’s Hospital & Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska**

<p><b>PROGRAM GOAL</b></p> <p>The American Conference on Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment brings together occupational therapists, ophthalmologists, optometrists, teachers of the visually impaired, neurologists, pediatric interventionists and physiatrists to increase interdisciplinary understanding of cortical visual impairment in children.</p>	<p><b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b></p> <p>Occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, ophthalmologists, pediatric ophthalmologists, neuro-ophthalmologists, neuro-optometrists, optometrists, teachers of the visually impaired, pediatric neurologists, neonatal and pediatric interventionists and pediatric medical specialists.</p>
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**Save the Date!!**

**2015 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness  
 and Significant Support Needs**

**June 25 and 2, 2015 in Denver**

**Title:** Rethinking Mathematics Instruction for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

**Presenter:** Claire Greer of the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies

**Description:** Discuss and model instructional strategies to support the Dynamic Learning Maps Essential Elements for mathematics implementation. Educators will explore topics such as Early Number Concepts, Algebraic Thinking, Geometric Thinking, and Operations for students with significant cognitive disabilities in the context of typical learning barriers (i.e., communication barriers, physical barriers, sensory barriers). This professional development event is intended to guide participants toward new thinking focused on learning math in a collaborative, student-centered learning environment. For more information, contact Tanni at [anthony@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony@cde.state.co.us).

# DOTS OF INTEREST



## PRINT, BRAILLE OR BOTH?

The Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness offers a free assessment tool for evaluating the visual reading efficiency of youth in kindergarten through 12th grade who are visually impaired. The National Reading Media Assessment (NRMA) is designed to measure the extent to which large print materials are sufficient to complete academic tasks, whether braille should be introduced and whether a student should be given primary instruction in braille. The target population for this tool consists of youth with an identified visual impairment who have enough visual functioning to identify print letters or shapes by sight. The NRMA is typically administered by teachers of the visually impaired and is offered free of charge. For more information, go to: <https://www.nfbrma.org/register.php>

## Hadley to Offer Free UEB Transition Course for Professionals with support from APH

The Hadley School for the Blind is pleased to offer a new “Transitioning to Unified English Braille” course for professionals beginning in January 2015. The course will be available in print and braille (an online version is in development). Thanks to the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), this professional course will be tuition-free through the end of calendar year 2015. “As the use of technology in education increases, braille becomes more and more important for students who are blind,” says APH President Tuck Tinsley. This course, ‘Transitioning to Unified English Braille,’ the first of two courses to be developed by Hadley focusing on the new braille code, will meet a critical need in our field’s transition to UEB. Students, teachers, parents, administrators, university professors, pre-service teachers, transcribers, and others can be well prepared for the January 2016 UEB implementation date.”

The six-lesson course provides a structured approach to learning the difference between EBAE (English Braille American Edition) and Unified English Braille (UEB). Abundant examples and exercises will help students progress easily and transition to the new code. Prerequisites include strong contracted reading and writing skills in EBAE or SEB (Standard English Braille).

“Hadley is proud to be at the forefront of providing training on UEB,” says Hadley President Chuck Young. “Teaching the teachers braille – to support their visually impaired clients and students -- is central to our mission of promoting independent living through lifelong learning for people who are blind or visually impaired.”

“Transitioning to Unified English Braille” also will be offered to students in Hadley’s Adult Continuing Education/High School Program and Family Education Program, free of charge on an ongoing basis.

To pre-enroll in this “Transitioning to Unified English Braille” course due out in January, please contact Student Services at 800-526-9909 or via email at [student\\_services@hadley.edu](mailto:student_services@hadley.edu). You may also visit [www.hadley.edu/UEB](http://www.hadley.edu/UEB)

### There are two print UEB Symbol List Available.

Both are pdf and best if printed on 11" x 17" paper.

The first is from Duxbury and lists the contractions and short forms in alphabetical order:

[http://duxburysystems.com/images/ueb\\_black.pdf](http://duxburysystems.com/images/ueb_black.pdf)

The other is from Aroga Technologies and presents the contractions and symbols by category:

<http://www.aroga.com/unified-english-braille-chart-tabloid-11-x-17-pdf-format/>

# DOTS OF INTEREST



## News from Louis!



You asked and the American Printing House has responded! The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is happy to announce that the teacher editions of **Building on Patterns (BOP)** are now available in PDF format in the APH File Repository.

This means you can log into your APH File Repository account and download the files at any time, and you'll be billed monthly as with other files.

For information on pricing or to download a file, just go to the Louis Database, at <http://louis.aph.org>.

## Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) Outreach Programs and Services

CIMC webpage: [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org); click on "Programs and Services", then "CIMC"

[cimcaphorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcaphorders@csdb.org) (Email for "APH order form" submissions & questions)

[cimcbookorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbookorders@csdb.org) (Email for braille & large print book sourcing inquiries, questions & orders)

[cimcbrailers@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbrailers@csdb.org) (Email for "braille request" & "braille repair" form submissions & questions)

(719) 578-2195, Jim Olson (Coordinator) [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

(719) 578-2196, general CIMC phone line (this will ring all CIMC computer-based phones simultaneously)

(719) 578-2197, Debbie Haberkorn, [dhaborkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaborkorn@csdb.org) (braille transcriber)

(719) 578-2198, Laurie Taylor, [ltaylor@csdb.org](mailto:ltaylor@csdb.org) (shipping & receiving related questions)

(719) 578-2199, Marla Wallace Raynor, [mwallace@csdb.org](mailto:mwallace@csdb.org) (Count 1: CDE Registration & Count 2: APH Federal Quota)

(719) 578-2207, CIMC FAX

Mailing Address: CIMC, 1015 East High Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3559

## Keep Calm and Braille On!

The National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, a division of the National Federation of the Blind, is selling T-shirts in either charcoal gray or teal blue with the words "Keep Calm & Braille On," (a phrase that is a take-off of the popular British poster "Keep calm and carry on" during World War II). The shirts are available for order only until December 1. For ordering information, visit [www.booster.com/nopbcbraille3](http://www.booster.com/nopbcbraille3)

## New from National Federation of the Blind

The National Federation of the Blind has announced the release of a new version of *The McDuffy Reader: A Braille Primer for Adults* by Sharon L. Monthei. This braille instructional manual has been used as a braille teaching tool in many rehabilitation settings and has now been revised for Unified English Braille (UEB). *The Unified English Braille Edition of The McDuffy Reader: A Braille Primer for Adults* is the first UEB instructional guide for beginning adult braille readers to be published in the United States. The book first presents uncontracted braille, then the braille contractions in logical groups. The book contains eighty-nine braille pages in one volume, which is comb-bound with plastic covers. The UEB edition of *The McDuffy Reader* is available for \$20, plus shipping and handling. Contact the NFB Independence Market via email at [independencemarket@nfb.org](mailto:independencemarket@nfb.org) or via phone at (410) 659-9314, extension 2216 for ordering information.

## BOP Writers Return to APH for Winter Meeting

The Building on Patterns (BOP) writing group visited APH recently to continue its work to support braille literacy education. They are working on a new pre-kindergarten edition of BOP. Dr. Kay Ferrell from Colorado was a work group member. The group has received some of the first exciting indications from a pilot field test of how the product will be used by teachers, and Dr. Cay Holbrook presented an overview of some of the pilot field test results. This edition will respond to the increased literacy readiness expectations of kindergarteners and will help young children gather the foundations of early braille literacy.

# DOTS OF INTEREST



## BANA News

### Implementation of Unified English Braille (UEB)

The following statement was approved by the BANA Board on November 9, 2014:

On November 2, 2012, the United States members of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted to adopt Unified English Braille (UEB) to replace English Braille American Edition in the U.S. Based on extensive dialog and planning that involved more than 30 organizations as well as individual consumers, teachers, and transcribers, BANA established January 4, 2016, as the date by which the United States will implement UEB.

BANA is working toward implementation of UEB in four phases:

2013: Information year—BANA developed and disseminated information about UEB and gathered input from constituents.

2014: Infrastructure year—BANA and other organizations planned for procurement and production of braille materials in UEB and developed training materials.

2015: Instructional year—Readers, producers, and educators will become proficient in UEB.

2016: Implementation year—All new transcriptions will be produced in UEB; educators will teach the code. Devices and software will fully and accurately incorporate UEB.

As of the implementation date in 2016, UEB, Nemeth, Music, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will be the official codes for use in the United States. BANA is providing guidance on how to incorporate the Nemeth Code into UEB context with the intent that the Nemeth Code will continue to be integral to braille in the United States. The document Provisional Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts is available as PDF and BRF files on the [BANA website](#).

BANA recognizes that in order to make an effective transition to UEB, states and organizations will need to develop customized implementation plans. To maximize efficiency and impact, BANA encourages widespread collaboration and sharing of expertise, resources, and training.

BANA continues to post and update information and materials about UEB at [www.brailleauthority.org](http://www.brailleauthority.org)

## UEB Resources on the CDE Website

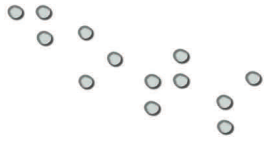
Please be sure to check out the following Unified English Braille (UEB) resources at:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision\\_GuideDocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_GuideDocs)

- ◆ The ABCs of UEB by Constance Risjord
- ◆ The Rules of UEB, edited by Christine Simpson
- ◆ UEB Branded Modules (November 2014) (PDF)
- ◆ Guidelines for Technical Material (August 2014)
- ◆ Technical Update for Colorado
- ◆ CCSO's Webinar on UEB
- ◆ BANA Statement – Implementation of UEB (November 2014)
- ◆ BANA Statement – Provisional Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts (Nov 2014)
- ◆ Duxbury UEB Chart Form
- ◆ UEB "Cheat Sheet"
- ◆ UEB Cheat Sheet 2 (PDF)
- ◆ Transcriber's UEB Online Course (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)
- ◆ RIDBC Renwick Centre online training course in Unified English Braille (UEB), entitled "UEB Online for Sighted Learners"

We are adding new items as we find them—so keep this url in your favorites so you can stay in the know!





# DOTS OF INTEREST



## Is Braille Still Relevant in a High-Tech World?

Dr. Aubrey Webson, former director of Perkins International, introduces a 5-minute video exploring the question of whether or not braille still plays an important role in the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired, given the prevalence of technology. Webson begins by saying, "Technology is everywhere. It dominates our lives. People are posting on Facebook, listening to audio books, typing their notes into smart phones. So, does that mean that the basics of learning to read and write using braille to take notes, to read papers, to write essays is irrelevant?"

The video portrays a number of people who use braille and technology in their daily lives, including both professionals and students. The commentators include:

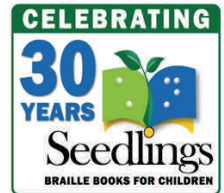
The Assistant to the President of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) a 16-year-old high school student a graduate of Brown University doing research at MIT a middle school student a customer service representative

Check out this video at: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/braille-still-relevant-high-tech-world>

## Seedlings Braille Books for Children's

2015 Book Angel Program

Register to receive **2 free braille books** for a child with visual impairment!



We would like to invite you to register your child and/or students for two free braille books through Seedlings' 2015 Book Angel Program!

If your child/student is visually-impaired, 21 or under, and living in the US or Canada, he/she is eligible to receive two free braille books each calendar year, [so sign up today!](#)

This program has been a huge success, bringing much joy to young braille readers. The children love receiving two free books that they can read and re-read to their heart's content.

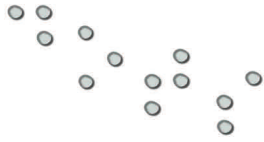
This is also a great way to introduce braille to V-I toddlers and preschoolers who may become braille readers. Just sign them up for some of our Print-and-Braille books, and they will be able to enjoy reading time with their sighted friends and family members while picking up some important pre-reading skills. We have lots of great braille books for older, more independent readers as well!

Check out the details below:

### How to Register for 2 Free Braille Books:



The Book Angel Program is open to children with visual impairment, ages 0-21, who live in the US and Canada. Book Angel orders will be filled as time and materials allow. The books will be shipped "Free Matter for the Blind." This program was made possible by Seedlings' generous donors. To register simply fill out our online form by clicking this link: [Seedlings' Book Angel Program](#). If you would like to print out a registration form to send in later, please click this link: [Book Angel Registration Form](#). You can fax it to: 734-427-8552 or mail it to: Seedlings, PO Box 51924, Livonia, MI 48151-5924.



# DOTS OF INTEREST



Seedlings has over 1,300 titles from which to choose. They range from Print-Braille-and-Picture Books for toddlers and preschoolers to best-selling novels for young adults. Please list 4 books that your child would enjoy, and we will send 2 of them (please note: due to their cost, our 3-volume books are not available through this program).



If you have any questions, please email: [info@seedlings.org](mailto:info@seedlings.org) or call 800-777-8552.

## Seedlings' Books Are Always On Sale!

And while you are at it, order some extra books for your child to read now! To become good readers, children need to be surrounded with good books both at home and at school. Try to set aside time to read every day and have lots of choices available.



Do you like a bargain? Seedlings' books are always on sale! They are sold for a fraction of what it costs to make them (the cost is subsidized by grants and donations). We have not raised our prices for over 30 years, and the average price is only \$10 per book (many cost less than that!) Seedlings' books are a tremendous bargain!

To see our list of braille books & gift items and to place an order, please go to our website: [seedlings.org](http://seedlings.org) or call us toll-free: 800-777-8552. If you would like to receive a copy of our catalog (or if you would like us to send one to a friend or relative), just call and ask, or order one online here. We'll mail them out ASAP!

## Another Free Program from Seedlings: The Rose Project

Does your child or student need to do some research for a report or project ... or are they eager to learn about a certain topic? We can help! Contact Seedlings for a free World Book Encyclopedia article in braille. Simply fill out the online form on our website or call us toll-free 800-777-8552. We will transcribe that article into braille and ship it to you within 5 business days! (This free service is made possible by a grant from the Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Fund.)



## Quick Links

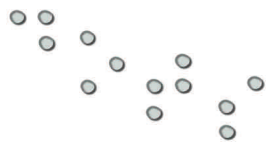
- [Seedlings' Website](#)
- [Seedlings' Braille Books and Gifts](#)
- [Seedlings' Book Angel Program](#)
- [Seedlings' Rose Project](#)
- [Order a Seedlings catalog here](#)
- [Background information about Seedlings](#)

## [How You Can Help](#)

## Contact Information & Mission

phone: 800-777-8552 email: [info@seedlings.org](mailto:info@seedlings.org) web: [seedlings.org](http://seedlings.org)

follow Seedlings on Twitter: @SeedlingsBrlBks  
and 'like' Seedlings Braille Books on Facebook  
mail: Seedlings Braille Books, PO Box 51924, Livonia, MI 48151-5924  
visit: Seedlings @ 14151 Farmington Road, Livonia, MI 48154



# DOTS OF INTEREST



## Accessible Online Nemeth Tutorial Now Available!

The Nemeth Code of Mathematics makes reading and writing complex math expressions in braille feasible. Unfortunately, learning to read and write the Nemeth Code requires extra effort beyond the effort to learn to read and write the standard literary braille codes.

Drs. Gaylen Kapperman and Jodi Sticken of Research and Development Institute (RDI) addressed the challenge of learning the Nemeth Code when they and colleagues created the original computer-based tutorial in 1997. The tutorial provided the rules in a logical order and gave the student plenty of examples and exercises.

Now, APH and RDI, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), have created a universally accessible version of the tutorial that runs on any device connected to the Internet. The Nemeth code tutorial is currently available at no cost at the following address:

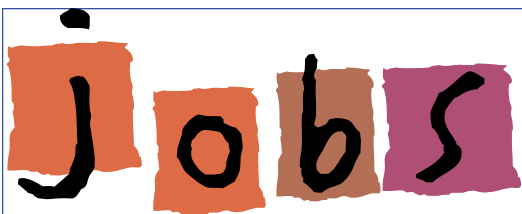
<http://tech.aph.org/nemeth>

The tutorial looks great for sighted users and shows the braille in a font that does not require additional downloads—it just works! The tutorial supports six-key entry mode, so you may interact with the exercises with a typical QWERTY keyboard, simulating a braille keyboard layout.

For users who are blind, screen reader support with the latest ARIA-enriched content notifications provide interactive feedback for the exercises and a refreshable braille display correctly shows the Nemeth portions, no matter how the screen reader's translation tables are configured. This means that as a blind user, you can let the screen reader translate the explanatory portions in the kind of braille you prefer and still get accurate Nemeth representations.



This project was supported by funds from Federal Grant No. H133G110122. No comments, judgments, or opinions found within any product of this federally funded project are those of the U.S. Department of Education or any other unit of the federal government; they are solely those of the individuals involved in the project.



## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for this school year or the one starting in fall 2014. 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

- ✓ For details about what positions may be open at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, please contact Chelle Lutz at [clutz@csdb.org](mailto:clutz@csdb.org) or (719) 578-2114.

### 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](mailto:psublett@sjboces.org)

### Metro Region — Jobs

- ✓ **TVI** (.5 FTE) Anchor Center for Blind Children. Please contact Andrea Peralta at 303-377-9732 ext. 156 or [aperalta@anchorcenter.org](mailto:aperalta@anchorcenter.org)
- ✓ **O&M/VRT** (1 FTE) in Metro Denver with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. For more information, go to: [agency.governmentjobs.com/colorado](http://agency.governmentjobs.com/colorado)

### North Central Region – Jobs

- ✓ **TVI and COMS** (5 FTE) Weld 6 School District for this school year, including a need for personnel for the upcoming Extended School year. The contact person is Kathrynne (Kate) Ballard, ESS Coordinator. She can be reached at (970) 348-6298.

**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!



## **TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!**

### **Perkins Training & Educational Resources Program Presents Transitioning from High School to College**

with Mary Alexander and Betsy Brint

Mary and Betsy presents information that can help prepare students with visual impairments and their parents for college experience. They talk about the necessity of teaching self-advocacy skills, social skills and the expanded core curriculum in order to ensure success in college.

Check it out at this link: <http://www.perkinselearning.org/webcast/>

### **College and Career Readiness and Success Center Map**

CCRS Interactive State Map The CCRS Interactive State Map presents the broad landscape of college and career readiness throughout the nation.

The map provides a simple-to-navigate snapshot of key college and career readiness initiatives taking place throughout the states, including: (a) the Advanced Placement (AP) Incentive program; (b) Career and technical education (CTE) and CTE programs of study; (c) Dual enrollment and early college high schools; (d) State longitudinal data systems (SLDS); and (e) the national policy landscape and secondary and postsecondary alignment.

Links to additional information and resources for each state related to college and career readiness are also included.

Check out Colorado and other states at: <http://www.ccrscenter.org/ccrs-landscape/state-profile>



## **TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!**

### **Summer Experience Camp Application Time**

Summer at Leader Dog means one great, loud, wonderfully exciting week of Summer Experience Camp with a large group of teenagers! In late June they will be hosting over 20 kids who will have a variety of great experiences—kayaking, tandem biking, rock wall climbing, hanging with peers and learning more about what life might be like traveling with a Leader Dog. They also receive a free Humanware Trekker Breeze GPS and learn how to use it to expand their travel areas.

Many of these students hear about our Summer Experience program from the professionals that work with them throughout the year. So if you know a 16 or 17 year old who is visually impaired that might like to attend camp, have them check out their website at

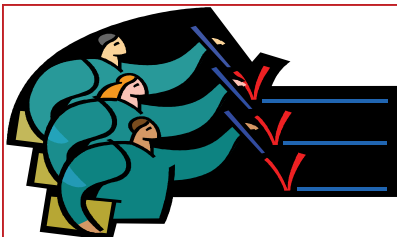
<http://www.leaderdog.org/clients/programs/summer-experience-camp>.

### **NFB NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIME**

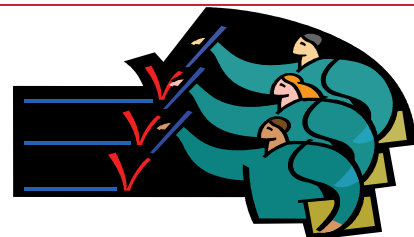
Attention High School Seniors and College Students: It's time to think about applying for a scholarship from the NFB!

This annual program offers 30 scholarships worth from \$3,000 to \$12,000. Eligible applicants range from high school seniors beginning their freshman year in the fall semester of 2015, up through grad students working on their PhD degrees. These merit scholarships are based on academic excellence, community service, and leadership. In addition to the money, each winner will receive assistance to attend the July 2015 NFB annual convention in Orlando, Florida. Applications are accepted any time before March 31, 2015.

Go to [www.nfb.org/scholarships](http://www.nfb.org/scholarships) for complete rules and requirements.



# CHECK IT OUT!



## Typhlo & Tactus Tactile Book Contest 2015

**Entries due August 26. Typhlo & Tactus Tactile Book Contest 2015 entries due August 26.**

Once again the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is the U.S. national contact for the international biennial competition created to encourage improvement of the quality and quantity of tactile books for young children with visual impairments. Don't miss your chance to submit your tactile book, designed for children with visual impairments from birth to 12 years of age.

The biennial tactile book competition is conducted by Typhlo & Tactus (T&T), an organization comprised of western and eastern European nations that exists to improve the quality and quantity of tactile books available to young children with visual impairments in member countries. As a part of T&T's efforts, the organization has conducted a biennial tactile book competition each year, beginning in 2000. At first, the competition was open only to European T&T members, but in 2011, it was opened to a worldwide audience. APH will be the contact organization for U.S. entries.



A panel of U.S. judges will review each entry and select the top 5 books to send overseas for final adjudication by an international panel of children and adults with visual impairments, as well as professionals in the field. A single winning entry will be chosen, along with ten shortlisted books. Selected books may be featured at the T&T website, and appear in posters and promotional materials used by T&T.

U.S. entrants should send their completed tactile book, designed for a child with visual impairment from birth to 12 years of age, to the American Printing House for the Blind by **Wednesday, August 26, 2015**.

Details for submission of the U. S. entries to APH will be posted on our website by the end of December 2014. For general information about the competition, and a list of last year's international entries, visit, [www.tactus.org](http://www.tactus.org)

To see the winners in the 2013 international competition visit [www.tactus.org/Results2013.pdf](http://www.tactus.org/Results2013.pdf)

Helpful resource: *A Guide to Designing Tactile Illustrations for Children's Books* can be found at [www.aph.org/edresearch/illustration.htm](http://www.aph.org/edresearch/illustration.htm).

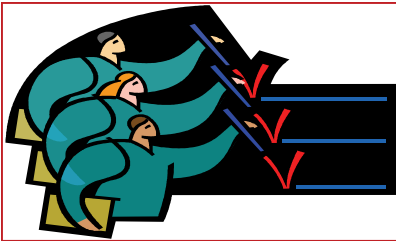
## 2015 Hall of Fame Nominations Now Being Accepted

Who should be the next inductees into the American Printing House for the Blind's Hall of Fame for the Blindness Field?

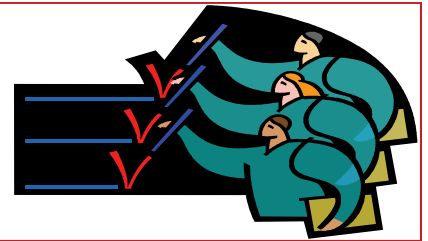
If you are interested in learning more about the easy (electronic) process for submitting a nominee to join the 52 inductees, please visit: [www.aph.org/hall/nominate.html](http://www.aph.org/hall/nominate.html).

The nomination process will close **Friday, March 27, 2015**.





# CHECK IT OUT!



## The 2015 InSights Art Competition Opens!



***The deadlines for the Twenty-fourth Annual Juried Art Competition and Exhibition for Artists Who Are Visually Impaired or Blind have been established.***

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) invites artists who are visually impaired and blind of all ages to submit artwork to APH InSights 2015! This art competition and exhibition is exclusively for blind and visually impaired artists and draws entries from across the U.S. and around the world. Last year we received 315 entries from across the U.S.

Again this year, there are two deadlines: Student Preschool through High School must submit a completed entry form along with the original artwork (no digital images) by **March 24, 2015**; Adults must submit their complete entry package by **April 1, 2015**. Each artist may submit only one entry.

The competition is open to any person who meets the following definition of blindness: corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye (as measured on a Snellen Chart), or a visual field limited to 20 degrees or less. This includes those who function at the definition of blindness (FDB), listed above, due to brain injury or dysfunction. There is no limit on the subject or the type of materials that can be used, but the artwork must be original in concept and execution and be completed by the artist, with minimal assistance from others.

Updated entry forms and rules will be posted on the website in February.

Contact Roberta Williams by email with questions: [rwlliams@aph.org](mailto:rwlliams@aph.org)

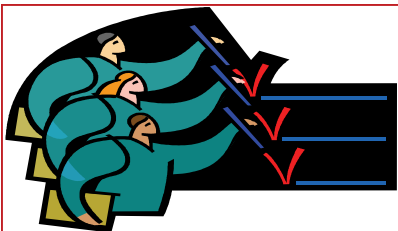
### **Bully Prevention and Intervention for Students with Disabilities**

A training will take place in Denver. This event will improve educator's skills in preventing and responding to bullying behaviors, as well as supporting students with disabilities who may be targets of bullying behaviors.

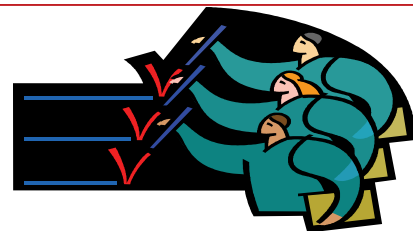
Special Guest Speaker: Dr. Scott Ross [Training Details and Registration Information](#) -

See more at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/pbis/eventscalendar#sthash.8NZ7XcYI.dpuf>





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## Students with Visual Impairment who are English-language Learners

According to 2013 data from the American Community Survey, an estimated 668,000 American children and youth ages 5 to 21 are blind or have trouble seeing. Of those, over 159,000 (almost 24%) speak a language other than English at home. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees that if these children have a visual impairment or other disability which impacts their access to education, then they are eligible for special education services, including individualized evaluation and educational supports and instruction. At the same time, both IDEA and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act require special provisions for English-language learners. IDEA requires that testing and evaluation materials should be “administered in the child’s native language or mode of communication unless it is technically not feasible to do so” (IDEA, 2004, § 612).

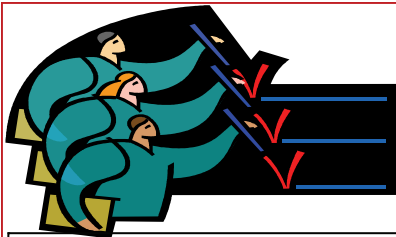
To shed light on issues surrounding psychoeducational assessment of students with visual impairment who are bilingual/English-language learners, the AFB Public Policy Center arranged to interview Dr. Olaya Landa-Vialard, assistant professor at Illinois State University and Coordinator of the Special Education in Low Vision and Blindness program. Dr. Landa-Vialard is also an Educational Diagnostician and a certified teacher of students with visual impairments. She has previously served as the Lead Bilingual Educational Diagnostician for the Program for Students with Visual Impairments for Houston Independent School District in Texas, and her dissertation research investigated the assessment practices and procedures used by educational diagnosticians when assessing students who are bilingual with visual impairments. We pleased to share this interview (as well as additional resources from Dr. Landa-Vialard) in both English and Spanish:

- Read a blog post about the interview. (<http://www.afb.org/blog/afb-blog/how-do-schools-meet-the-needs-of-students-with-visual-impairment-who-are-english-language-learners/12>)
- Follow this link to read the interview in English. <http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/public-policy-center/education-policy/qanda-with-an-expert-special-education-and-testing-for-english-language-learners/1235>
- Follow this link to read the interview in Spanish. <http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/public-policy-center/education-policy/preguntas-y-respuestas-con-una-experta-educaciand243n-especial-y-de-ensayo-para-aprendices-del-idioma-ingland233s/1235>

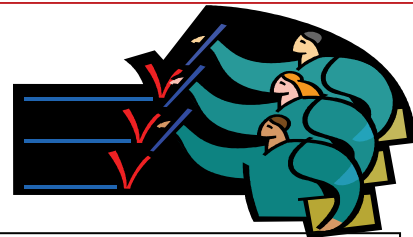
We welcome your feedback and comments on the blog post, or directly to Rebecca Sheffield (Senior Policy Researcher at AFB). [Follow this link to email Rebecca Sheffield.](#)

## CDE Webpage on Visual Impairment, Including Blindness

Tanni maintains a webpage specific to visual impairment, including blindness on the CDE website. All TVIs are recommended to have this webpage in their list of favorites! It has a host of information including the state eligibility criteria for visual impairment, including blindness; the forms for the regional low vision clinics; the braille competency testing procedures; local/state/national resources ... and a good bunch of other stuff. Please be sure to put this url in your browser: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>



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## AFB News

The American Foundation for the Blind  
eLearning Center announces a new series of webinars called:

### [CVI Focus: Assessment, Intervention, and Literacy for Individuals with Cortical Visual Impairment.](#)

This series of five webinars by Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy presents in detail a thoughtful, structured, and sequenced approach to work with individuals who have been diagnosed with cortical visual impairment (CVI). The series covers the following topics:

1. Beginning with the Basics
2. Using the CVI Range for Functional Visual Assessment
3. Designing Interventions and Opportunities
4. Facilitating Literacy
5. Building Language and Learning Skills

Each webinar can be purchased separately for \$49; the entire series is only \$179. ACVREP credits are available and those who purchase the webinar series will receive a 10% discount on Dr. Roman-Lantzy's award-winning book

[Cortical Visual Impairment: An Approach to Assessment and Intervention.](#)

For more information, visit the [AFB eLearning Center](#)

## The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)

**eLearning Center is pleased to announce the fifth webinar based on the book**

### ***Learning to Listen/Listening to Learn***

The session titled [Listening and Understanding: Focus on Semantics and Language Comprehension](#) is presented by Dr. Laura Denton, co-author of the chapter *Listening and Understanding: Language and Learning Disabilities*. The presentation will be of special interest to educators and family members of students who are blind or visually impaired and experience language-based learning disabilities. Like all AFB eLearning offerings, this webinar is available 24/7 at the learner's convenience.

Difficulty with language comprehension strongly affects a student's ability to listen. This webinar covers the characteristics of receptive language difficulties as they affect listening and how to identify students who need further assessment. Strategies to promote improved learning through listening are presented, addressing the needs of both primary and middle school students and beyond.

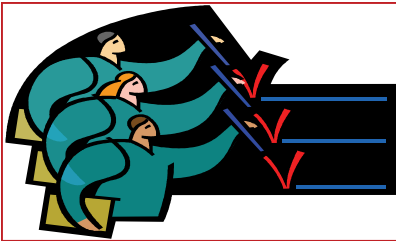
The webinar has been approved for 1 hour of continuing education credit by ACVREP.

**Cost:** \$29 for the single webinar or \$99 for the series of 5 webinars.

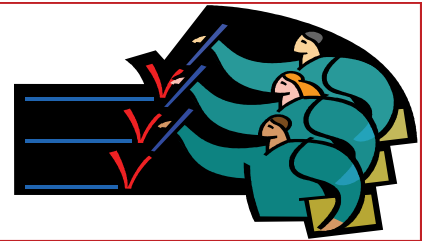
Participants in the Learning to Listen webinars will receive a 15% off coupon to purchase the book, [Learning to Listen/Listening to Learn: Teaching Listening Skills to Students with Visual Impairments](#) from the AFB Bookstore. The coupon code will be sent by e-mail once the purchase of the webinar has been completed.

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.afb.org/store/Pages/ShoppingCart/ProductDetails.aspx?ProductId=ELISTWEBSERIES&ruling=Yes>



# CHECK IT OUT!



## GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE CLASSROOM

In November, the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice released guidance on effective communication for public elementary and secondary students with communication-related disabilities, including blindness. Understanding students' legal rights and the guidance surrounding them is critical to effectively advocating for auxiliary aids, accommodations, and instruction in the classroom. The Departments' guidance defines effective communication under Title II of the ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A letter to educators, frequently asked questions, and a fact sheet for parents are linked here.

Dear Colleague Letter (November 12, 2014) - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-effective-communication-201411.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-faqs-effective-communication-201411.pdf>

Fact Sheet for Parents - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-parent-201411.pdf>

Please take the time to download and review these important documents.

**CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST** The annual youth and adult writing contests sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Writers' Division will open January 1st and close April 1st. In honor of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the National Federation of the Blind, the contest will have a theme of "75". The entries of poetry, fiction or non-fiction must incorporate the number 75 in some way. The youth contest is divided into three groups determined by grade level--elementary, middle and high school. Prizes of up to \$30 will be awarded at the Writer's Division business meeting held during the NFB national convention in July. All winners from both, the adult and youth contests will be considered for publication in the Writer's Division magazine, *Slate & Style*.

For additional contest details and submission guidelines, go to their website, <http://writers.nfb.org>

## STATE LAUNCHES NEW CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT HOTLINE: 1-844-CO-4-KIDS

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) will launch a new statewide child abuse and neglect hotline – 1-844-CO-4-KIDS on Jan. 1. Governor Hickenlooper's Child Welfare Plan "Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy" called for the creation of the hotline to promote greater safety for Colorado's children.

Designed to provide one, easy-to-remember phone number for individuals to use statewide to report suspected child abuse and neglect, the hotline serves as a direct, immediate and efficient route to Colorado's 64 counties and two tribal nations, which are responsible for accepting and responding to child abuse and neglect inquiries and reports. All callers will be able to speak with a call-taker 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The new hotline system will capture critical information and ensure that calls across the state are handled quickly and appropriately with the ultimate goal of ensuring that no child is harmed.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-Main/CBON/1251575083520>



## Scholarships for Doctoral Students

Have you been considering going back to school to get a doctoral degree? Recently, it was announced that the National Leadership Consortium in Sensory Disabilities (NLCSD) has been refunded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The consortium will consist of universities with doctoral programs that have an emphasis in one or more of the three sensory impairment areas: deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, and deafblindness. The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) is one of the consortium universities.

NLCSD's primary purpose is to increase the number of highly skilled doctoral scholars who will become leaders in administration, higher education, policy and education in order to significantly improve the interventions, services, and outcomes for children with sensory disabilities (deafness/hard of hearing, deafblindness, blindness/visual impairment), ages birth to 21.

Applications for the first of two cohorts of NLCSD will be accepted in early 2015 for scholars to begin their studies in Fall 2015. The consortium consists of multiple universities with doctoral programs that have an emphasis in one or more sensory impairment areas: deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, and deafblindness.

Benefits of being an NLCSD Scholar:

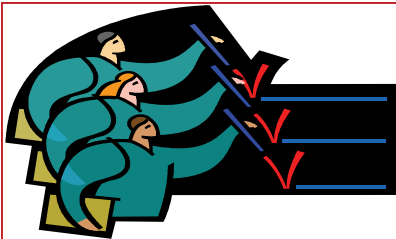
- Full support (tuition and fees) at Consortium universities, for up to 4 years
- Annual stipend award \$24,000 while matriculated
- Participation in an Enrichment Program that includes a course that runs through the academic year and is delivered via distance technology and face-to-face meetings
- Mentorship by Consortium faculty from universities across the country and across disability areas
- Travel to and attendance at 1 – 2 required NLCSD meetings per year.

NLCSD Scholars will be required to:

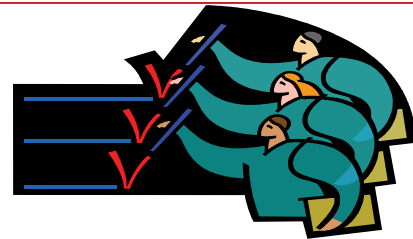
- Be admitted to a Consortium university as well as NLCSD
- Be first time doctoral students
- Be enrolled as a full time student at their home university
- Maintain an on-campus presence
- Work no more than 20 hours/week in a position that is directly related to individual programs of study
- Upon program completion, fulfill the service obligation requirement as outlined by OSEP.

More information about NLCSD can be found at [www.nlcsdproject.org](http://www.nlcsdproject.org)

More information about the doctoral program at UNC can be found at <http://www.unco.edu/cebs/sped/prospective/doctoral/index.html>



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## TWEETS FOR THE SWEET!

Here are some helpful Twitter hashtags to use to stay connected to the blindness community.

[#visuallyimpaired](#) - Tweets specifically about visual impairments and blindness

[#blindness](#) - You will probably find this hashtag more useful than #blind, because a lot of people use #blind as a catch-all for phrases such as "blind as a bat," "blind to the truth," and, especially right now, TV's "The Voice" blind auditions.

[#braille](#) - Tweets from organizations, parents, students, and adults about braille literacy, DIY braille projects, braille resources, and current news.

[#UEB](#) - Stay up to date on the latest news involving Unified English Braille.

[#a11y](#) - The most comprehensive hashtag for anyone looking for accessibility resources, news, events, and more. There are 11 letters between the a and y in "accessibility," hence the abbreviated hashtag. Some people prefer to spell it out, so searching [#accessibility](#) could also be helpful.

## Science Standards Now on APH Website!

**New!** [APH Science product alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS) is now available on the APH Website. From the home page, click Research on the left and then scroll down to Research Resources on the APH Research & Development page.

For more information, please go to:

[http://www.aph.org/files/research/NGSS APH%20Prod %20Alignment 9 2014.pdf](http://www.aph.org/files/research/NGSS%20Prod%20Alignment%209%202014.pdf)

## The First-Ever Online National Deaf-Blind Conference

hosted by DB-TIP

"The DeafBlind Community: Communication, Trends & Techniques"

January 24-25, 2015

**Nationally recognized expert presenters from the DeafBlind Community!**

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION NOW OPEN! Hurry and save before 12/15/14!**

<https://nationaldb.org/events/detail/0/451>

## NPR Featuring Daniel Kish

Thanks to Wendy Stoltman who sent it the following tip. Wendy shared, "What a fabulous surprise I had this morning when I listened to Saturday's episode of This American Life. It is about Daniel Kish and Society's view of blindness. Enjoy! "

Check it out at: <http://m.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/544/batman>

# Tribute to Dr. Natalie Carter Barraga



***Editor's Note:** The following is a tribute to Dr. Natalie Barraga written by her family. All of us know her as someone who changed our field with her research and teaching. We owe her a debt of gratitude for our regional low vision clinics and all the work we do on a daily basis to increase visual efficiency of our students with low vision. What a legacy she will leave for us to follow – challenging us to find new paths for the students we represent.*

Dr. Natalie Carter Barraga, Professor Emerita of Special Education at The University of Texas at Austin, died on Monday, December 29, 2014. She was 99 years old. Dr. Barraga is survived by her daughter Karen; her nephews Dalton Carter of Austin and Robert Lee Carter of California; niece Don Annie Smith of Houston; two great nieces, Charleen Carter Adair and husband Michael, Kayla and Shawn of Austin; Catherine Carter Rodrique and husband Patrick, Emma and Jack of Austin; two great nephews Nathan Carter and wife Shannon and their four children and Chris Carter and family of Virginia. She is also survived by her special friends and extended family, Marcia and Mike Moore and their children David and Natalie of Oklahoma City and Marilyn and Spark Gregory of Austin.

Born in Troy, Texas on October 10, 1915 to Grovie and Bascom Carter' she was the fourth of five children. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Home Economics and Child Development from the University of North Texas (North Texas State Teacher's College) in 1938; a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology-Special Education from The University of Texas at Austin in 1957, and a Doctor of Education from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in 1963, where she was honored as a Distinguished Alumna in 1988.

She joined the faculty at The University of Texas in 1963 where she advanced to Professor of Special Education in 1971, and retired as Professor Emerita in 1984. In addition to numerous Who's Who in America and the World, she received national and international awards from all professional organizations of which she was an active member: International Association for Education of the Visually Impaired (ICEVI); Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER); American Foundation for the Blind; American Printing House for the Blind; National Association of Parent of the Visually Impaired; Council for Exceptional Children; Delta Kappa Gamma Society International; American Academy of Optometry; and the American Optometric Association. Dr. Barraga was a member of the honor societies of Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi, and Pi Lambda Theta.

During her teaching career, she conducted pioneer research in educating learners with visual impairment and developed low vision assessment instruments and instructional materials for students with low vision. She taught courses and held seminars and workshops for teachers in 22 different countries around the world. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to spend a semester doing research and lecturing at The University of Zagreb in Croatia in 1986. She was active in several international organizations and her writings and materials are used all over the world. Her publications included books, monographs, book chapters, and numerous articles in professional journals. Her autobiography, entitled *IF ANYONE CAN, YOU CAN* was published by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in 2007.

Memorials may be made to the Scholarship Fund at University Christian Church in Austin; to Learning Ally; or to The College of Education – Special Education at The University of Texas at Austin.

# Vision Coalition Notes

## Vision Coalition Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2015

**Persons in Attendance:** Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, LaVerne Dell, Lorraine Chevarria, Barb Galgano, Karin Hensel, Judy Mumford, and Jim Olson

**Persons Absent:** Chris Cockrill, Elaine Karns, Everett Romero, and Angela Sims

### 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 of the 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 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR

- ✓ Anchor Center for Blind Children – Sarah Bickford 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 – Chris Cockrill
- ✓ Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Karin Hensel
- ✓ Colorado Parents of Blind Children – Everett Romero
- ✓ Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
- ✓ Northern TVI / COMS – Elaine Karns
- ✓ Southern TVI / COMS – Judy Mumford
- ✓ Western TVI / COMS – Angela Sims
- ✓ University of Northern Colorado – Paula Conroy

# Vision Coalition Notes

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our meeting date in November covered the SPOT Vision Test Demonstration by Kathy Jones, Product Specialist. Welch Allyn PediaVision (new testing method being purchased by some school districts). School nurses were invited to attend. We were able to interact with test and learn the testing procedures. Nancy Cozart led an open discussion about the UEB code and got feedback from people who have initiated its implementation with specific students. She also shared a document from Jim Olson at the CIMC regarding the roll out of UEB as it relates to braille texts/materials. This year there is a Denver area location for the Braille Challenge. It will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) on February 5<sup>th</sup>. Students are also able to participate in the challenge in their home school if necessary. Diane Covington at CSDB is the contact person for the Braille Challenge.

The Denver Metro Area Low Vision Clinic is set for February 19-21, 2015. It is sure to benefit many students and their families.

Carol Pulchaski at the Anchor Center needs to fill a TVI spot for February 17<sup>th</sup> and if possible for a DPS teacher to come talk with parents. If available please contact Carol at: [cpuchalski@anchorcenter.org](mailto:cpuchalski@anchorcenter.org)

### Please Save the Dates for the Last 2 Metro Meetings of the 2014-15 School Year:

- Thursday, Feb 12 at 3:30 pm (Douglas County)  
Learning Support Services North  
8250 East Park Meadows Drive #110  
Lone Tree, CO 80124 (*Carpooling is recommended, if possible, as parking may be tight.*)
- Thursday April 16 at 3:30 (Denver: Location to be decided).  
Dr. King (Children's Eye Physicians) will be presenting along with another doctor in his practice. The first meeting will be about vision therapy and the second meeting topic will be determined at a later date. Dr. King's office will be sending more descriptions about the meeting at a later date. Spread the word. Metro Nurses are also invited. This will be an informative meeting!

### *Discussion:*

*TVIs are encountering online progress monitoring tools. Sometimes there are picture issues and sometimes there are language issues for learners who are impacted further by second language issues. One person's experience is that she really benefited from being there to help explain some of the language that is both tied to incidental and grade-level vocabulary that might impact a second language learner. These tools most often use timed trials for data collection. It will be important for TVIs to work closely with school personnel to determine accessible needs and actual barriers. If there are barriers, it will be important to identify alternate strategies to collect comparable student information.*

### Southern Region (Judy Mumford)

Winter break was full of good times, relaxation and travel! Teachers traveled to PA, MD, AZ... some stayed home and enjoyed their families and friends. Many had company in for the holidays too. Some parents and students sent us pictures and videos of our students! These were greatly appreciated!

### Southern Region TVI/COMS meetings:

- \*February 13—Tentatively at UCCS from 1:00-3:00
- \*March 13—Pikes Peak BOCES 1:00-3:00
- \*April 10—Pikes Peak BOCES 1:00-3:00
- \*May 08 - Pikes Peak BOCES 1:00-3:00



## Vision Coalition Notes

*Discussion: One district has reported that when they received a transfer student from another Colorado district, there was missing documentation to support the noted primary and secondary learning modalities and recommended goals and accommodations based on the identified sensory channels. There were no data to support the selection of these modes and, when this information is requested of the "sending district," it was discovered that no evaluation and assessment was completed to identify and support the choices. When an IEP states all reading material need to be provided in the auditory mode without supporting documentation, it is very concerning and problematic. TVIs have specific skill sets which we should be using and documenting. It is hard to tell a parent we cannot accept an IEP based on lack of documentation and inappropriate goals relative to the identified vision disability.*

*It is imperative that TVIs have supporting documentation tied to the Functional Vision / Learning Media Assessment and O & M Evaluations. Different districts have different processes of where this information is stored. Some are in a cumulative folder and some are uploaded as part of the IEP and/or embedded into the IEP itself. TVIs should have evidence of a hard copy of their assessment findings and should work with their special education director on how best to include this information in the IEP. As a student moves to a new administrative unit within Colorado, we are hopeful that the receiving TVIs have this important information to best serve the student.*

### **CO AER Chapter (Barb Galgano)**

CAER is on the move! Here are a few items that are currently taking place or taking part in for CAER members:

- Co-Sponsor, along with Colorado Center for the Blind, of the reinstated Snowshoe Weekend! Friday February 27<sup>th</sup> –March 1<sup>st</sup>. YMCA Estes Park. Cost \$42 per student. Contact Kaitlyn Lombardi at [kaitlinlombardi@gmail.com](mailto:kaitlinlombardi@gmail.com) for further information. Fundraising is in full swing to assist with the cost of the Snowshoe weekend. Please check out our efforts to make this weekend fun, enjoyable and memorable for all participants! Connect to link: [http://www.razoo.com/story/Winter-Outdoor-Adventure-For-Students-With-Visual-Impairments?referral\\_code=share](http://www.razoo.com/story/Winter-Outdoor-Adventure-For-Students-With-Visual-Impairments?referral_code=share) Please feel free to share this link with friends, family, organizations you feel might be interested in contributing. Anyone can contribute! Thank you!
- CDE and CAER will co-sponsor the annual O&M Seminar taking place this year at Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, on Thursday April 30<sup>th</sup>-Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This year is shaping up to be a wonderful event with some local talent on Thursday and special presenter Dr. Sandra Rosen from San Francisco State University on Friday and Saturday.
- CAER will host its annual banquet, awards ceremony and general meeting on Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>. Time and location to be determined. Members and non-members are invited to attend. Please consider recognizing one of your fellow co-workers or individuals that have made a difference or contribution to the field of visual impairment. We look forward to having you present.
- CO White Cane Day t-shirt sales sold 79 shirts! With a profit of \$503.50 all proceeds going to the CAER Mini Grants fund! Thank you for your support.
- This year White Cane Day t-shirt design winner was Carol Potashnick, Cherry Creek Schools Brailist! Thank you Carol!
- Designs for next year's t-shirt contest can be sent ANYTIME to Barb Galgano at [bgagano@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:bgagano@cherrycreekschools.org) or call 303-349-7661.
- Please be sure to visit our website for the most up to date information, mini grant applications and more!

Contact Information: CAER Homepage: <http://co.aerbvi.org>

CAER email: [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com)

## Vision Coalition Notes

If there are topic suggestions for or questions about the Southern TVI/COMs meeting, please contact Donice Fennimore at [dfennimore@ppboces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppboces.org)

A number of the southern region TVIs are prepping for and looking forward (some with some anxiety) to attending the Advanced UEB January 21-24. Thanks to Tanni and CDE for providing both the fall and winter trainings.

Diane Fitzkee is now employed by Falcon District 49 School District.

The update on the southern LVE Clinic can be found in the CDE section of the Vision Coalition notes.

The new Library 21C at 1175 Chapel Hills Drive has two "Makerspaces." They are available to anyone to use for free with small materials fees. They have a vinyl cutter, sewing machines, crafting tools a laser cutter/engraver, a 3D scanner and 3D printer. You can make up to 3 appointments per quarter for the 3 D printer if you have a library card in good standing. 3D printing is charged at a rate of \$0.05 per gram of finished product. Before using any of the machines, you must register and take a Makerspace Safety 101 class.

*Discussion: Is there any information or research being done or have vision professionals been involved in the general instruction of and ACCESS testing for students with low vision/blindness? Is there a braille Access test or who would be responsible for creating it? Tanni will check on the field guidance specific to how TVIs are involved with the testing of both braille readers and low vision students with ACCESS.*

### **Western Region (Angela Sims)**

Things are going well on the western slope. Several of us are working hard to master the UEB braille code. Sarah and Angela are looking forward to the Advanced UEB training and being able to share the information with others. Mesa Valley School District has one student who will be taking part in the Braille Challenge this year and she is very excited.

Brooke Miller reports changes happening in Eagle County. They became their own AU last year and have decided to stop contracting with Mountain BOCES for vision, hearing, and audiology services as of next year. This could possibly mean a TVI opening for Eagle County.

Megan Crosby reports things are going great in Montrose! They are getting ready for ski season in Telluride and this year they are delighted to share that they have a first time skier joining in on the fun.

### **Northern Region (Elaine Karns)**

Things are going well in the northern part of the state. All are trying to assimilate UEB and put into practice...a challenge for some. We lost Sally Burch in December and are happy to have Julie Hutchinson on board in Longmont with Carol Love, who has been recovering from a back injury in the fall. Our Low Vision Clinic was a success with seven students over a day and a half, November 20-21. How lucky we are to have such a great team available to our families!

The Winter Outdoor Adventure has been scheduled for February 27- March 1, 2015 at the Estes Park Center, YMCA Center of the Rockies! We will celebrate UNBIRTHDAYS!! The Colorado Center for the Blind is helping to sponsor this event and we are happy to have them partner with us. Kaitlin Lombardi is our contact person for this event.

Boulder School District had Wendy Stoltman come out two times to observe and offer her expertise with two students with dual sensory loss---one in elementary school and one in high school. She was excellent and really honored these students and their team members, and provided realistic and usable suggestions for next steps. Others are encouraged to take advantage of this resource through the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. Wendy is one of two part-time Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Specialists.

Thank you to the CIMC for offering free of charge colored braille paper that is not being used! Thank you to the CIMC for offering, free of charge, colored braille paper! *A Comment from the CIMC: The CIMC has a small inventory of 8.5" x 11" tractor-feed braille paper in four pastel colors. We are trying to distribute it equitably to Colorado AUs who can use it either with their braille embosser or by tearing off one page at a time for use in a Perkins brailier or with a slate and stylus. Contact Laurie Taylor for more information at [ltaylor@csdb.org](mailto:ltaylor@csdb.org) or (719) 578-2198*

## Vision Coalition Notes

### Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (LaVerne Dell)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has welcomed new staff members. Steve Anton is the acting Director. There is a new teacher in the Pueblo office, John Kilpatrick. We have five new Rehabilitation Counselors for the blind, who come to DVR with a variety of experience in vocational rehabilitation. They are as follows: Samantha Widdowson is in the Pueblo office; Kate Treat is in the Canyon City office; Lisa Harrison-Hall is in the Colorado Springs office; Christina Clausen is in the Sterling office; and Stephanie Kavon is in the Limon office.

LaVerne provided the following list of contacts for us!

Office	Name	Phone Number	Email
Alamosa	Phyllis Mondragon	719-589-5158	phyllis.mondragon@state.co.us
Aurora	Michael Bolarinwa	303-755-1839	Michael.Bolarinwa@state.co.us
Boulder	John Halphen	303-776-7987	john.halphen@state.co.us
Canon City	Kate Treat	719-269-2076	kate.treat@state.co.us
Colorado Springs	Lisa Harrison-Hall	719-482-7982	Lisa.Harrison-Hall@state.co.us
Denver Metro	Lin Rutland	303-866-3366	lin.rutland@state.co.us
Denver Metro	Kristy Penk	303-866-2209	kristy.penk@state.co.us
Denver Metro	Richele Pennock	303-866-3168	richelle.pennock@state.co.us
Denver Metro / P.A. T.	Tracy Rushing	303-866-3153	tracy.rushing@state.co.us
Fort Collins	Shannon Brannon	970-225-0126	shannon.brannon@state.co.us
Fort Morgan	David Herbstman	970.542.9376	David.Herbstman@state.co.us
Golden	Laverne Dell	303-866-4210	laverne.dell@state.co.us
Grand Junction	Vacant		
Greeley	Kelly Dieter	970-352-0084	Kelly.Dieter@state.co.us
Limon	Stephanie Kavon	719-775-8819	Stephanie.Kavon@state.co.us
Longmont	John Halphen	303-776-7987	john.halphen@state.co.us
Northglenn	Joseph Fiorini	303-866-2177	joseph.fiorini@state.co.us
Pueblo	Samantha Widdowson	719-253-5868	samantha.widdowson@state.co.us
Salida	Vacant		
Sterling	Christina Clausen	970-522-3737 x13	Christina.Clausen@state.co.us

## Vision Coalition Notes

### **Anchor Center for Blind Children (Lorraine Chevarria)**

Anchor Center for Blind Children has been honored to welcome Andrea Peralta as our new program director. She comes to us with a lot of early intervention experience and is supporting us in better meeting the needs of all children birth to 5 who are blind/visually impaired. We continue to do our best to collaborate and work side-by-side with Colorado Community Center Boards (CCBs) and school districts as children transition from Part C to Part B services.

We are proud to say we are seeing more children in outlying regions in the Western and Northern part of our state. We recently made a trip to Grand Junction where we served about 10 families with children who are blind/visually impaired and plan to make another trip there next month. We now have three full time TVIs (Lorraine Chevarria, Jen Klyczek, and Stefanie Kirkwood) and three part time TVIs (Lisa Roll Moore, Paula Landry, and Sarah Vallese). Lisa is back from maternity leave and Sarah will be returning shortly. We are gearing up for the metro low vision clinic and are looking forward to about 15 preschool students graduating from Anchor Center for the Blind this spring. There is an opening for a part-time TVI opening.

### **CSDB – School for the Blind (Chris Cockrill)**

The School for Blind is currently in the process of implementing an exciting project that will enhance the physical environments within our classrooms. Florescent lighting has been replaced with LED lighting throughout our building. The intent is to control the intensity, color, and color 'temperature' of the light fixtures. This project will greatly improve the learning environment and characteristics of light sources for our students and staff with low vision. Staff will have the capability to control lighting on a daily basis or preset for specified blocks of time within the school day. Preliminary feedback has been very positive, not only from staff members, but from students, as well.

Prior to our Winter Break, students from the School for the Blind had a unique opportunity to experience a shark dissection at the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, CO. This experience provided students with a 'hands-on' activity, which complimented classroom content knowledge in the areas of anatomy and physiology. Facilitating the activity was a Biology faculty member from Arapahoe Community College, also in Littleton. This opportunity is the result of a continuing partnership between CSDB and the Colorado Center for the Blind.

Also prior to our Winter Break, students participated at a STEM conference, hosted by the University of Colorado—Colorado Springs. The event was designed for middle school female students, which promoted careers and experiences in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Two of our students participated in the CASB state conference held at the Broadmoor on December 5 and 6. Students had the opportunity to attend leadership workshops, as well as interact with students statewide.

On December 9, students performed our winter program, 'Sounds of the Season.' The performance was held in the Gottlieb building in front of many family members and friends. The program included students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. The program can be viewed on the CSDB website under the 'parent' tab,' followed by the Webcast link.

Also in December, our chorus visited assisted living facilities in Colorado Springs to perform holiday songs. This was a great opportunity for our students to experience and provide outreach to others in our community.

CSDB now has a Twitter Account! Check it out at Twitter! The Twitter account is @CSDBBulldogs

### **CSDB Outreach Services (Karin Hensel)**

The goal of CSDB Outreach's Strategic Plan is to respond to the needs of students across the state that are visually impaired/blind or deaf/hard of hearing, their family members, professionals and community members within the mission of CSDB.

A big thank you to the TVIs and COMS that attended the CSDB Outreach Fall events. They were well attended by students and families from all over, and provided an opportunity for students and families to interact and meet each other. These people are listed in the Colorado Connections section of the January-February edition of the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter.

## Vision Coalition Notes

### Upcoming CSDB Outreach Events:

- *January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015:* Braille Challenge at CSDB. For more information, contact Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org)
- *February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015:* Denver Braille Challenge by CSDB. The location will be Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton. For more information, contact Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org)
- *February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015:* CSDB Outreach Three Year Strategic Planning Forum. Teachers are welcome to attend to provide input on CSDB's action plan for 2015. Teachers are also welcome to conference in by phone for the meeting. It will be from 1:00– 2:30 on the CSDB campus. For more information, contact Karin Hensel at [khensel@csdb.org](mailto:khensel@csdb.org)
- *February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015:* CSDB Outreach is offering a Blindness 101 course for professionals at any level of a school organization to attend who want to learn more about working with a student who is blind/visually impaired. An agenda will be posted on the CSDB website. The event will be for one day on the CSDB campus in Colorado Springs. For more information, contact Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org) or Karin Hensel at [khensel@csdb.org](mailto:khensel@csdb.org)
- *June 13 and 14, 2015:* An event for families of children who are blind/visually impaired (yet to be titled) will be held on the CSDB campus. It will be customized to each family who will be assigned to a TVI. There will be stations that the family can experience based on the age of the students. There will be a bus trip and an opportunity to make meals together. For more information contact, Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org) or Karin Hensel at [khensel@csdb.org](mailto:khensel@csdb.org)
- *June 21-25, 2015:* Sports Camp will occur on the campus of the CSDB campus. The contact is Donna Keale – [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)

### **Colorado Instructional Materials Center (Jim Olson)**

*Statewide VIIB Count:* Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 was the statewide "Count 2" day for students with "Visual Impairment, Including Blindness." Printed copies of each AU's registration have been mailed from the Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC) to district designated CIMC contacts for each Administrative Unit.

Two counts are performed on behalf of the Colorado Department of Education: (1) A statewide CDE count of every student receiving VI services. (2) The Federal Quota Census of legally blind students (related to the 1879 Act to Promote the Education of the Blind) which generates funds used to maintain the CIMC repository of instructional products manufactured by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) which can be accessed by TVIs for use by eligible legally blind students. Count 2 must be signed by Directors of Special Education, or their designees, and returned to the CIMC by January 30, 2015.

*A Plea from the CIMC:* Remember that Count 2 reflects school district enrollment on Monday, January 5, 2014 ONLY. They will guide you through the process step-by-step. Please register EVERY student receiving VI services in your district. Recently we have received multiple registrations dated this school year for students who reportedly have been in programs for one two or even three years. That means our previous statewide data were inaccurate.

*CIMC Customer Satisfaction Survey:* Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. As a result of your feedback, a new "Professional Lending Library" page has been added to the CIMC website. The contents of the CIMC Professional Lending Library have been posted to our website as an Excel document. Laurie Taylor (shipping and receiving) is now sending email confirmations when a textbook is received during the school year. Emails will NOT be sent during our peak book return period during May/June. At the start of a new school year, an inventory list of non-returned items will be sent to each district.

*CIMC Textbook Returns:* If you are finished using a first semester book – return it NOW, please do not wait until the end of the school year.

## Vision Coalition Notes

*Students No Longer in Your AU:* Also, if a student has withdrawn from your administrative unit, please return their books as soon as possible. Call Laurie Taylor in the CIMC with your questions at (719) 578-2198 or email her at [ltaylor@csdb.org](mailto:ltaylor@csdb.org).

*CIMC braille book orders for 2015-16:* The deadline for submitting book orders for next school year is **May 1, 2015**. That is less than 3.5 months away! Please remember to talk with your curriculum departments and remind them that if they are planning on purchasing any new print curriculum, to embed language into their contracts requesting the publishing company submit a NIMAS file set to the NIMAC repository.

### **Discussion:**

*CIMC Clarification:* A second issue involved the statement on the recent CIMC directions for final count directions that vision must be a "PRIMARY" disability to qualify under ECEA rules is incorrect. Jim shared that the form has been corrected with a simple word change on the directions. The IEP does, however, need to specify that the student has a visual impairment. The APH Quota program is reserved for children who are legally blind. The CIMC is requiring a copy of the eye report that is on file with the school district that indicates the learner is legally blind. If there is no eye report, please work with the CIMC on these very special circumstances. This is only for learners who are legally blind and are eligible for the APH Quota Count. Please be sure to send a copy of the eye report and not the original. The original should be retained for the district's file.

*CIMC Count 2 Clarification:* The statement on the recent "Count 2" directions that vision must be a "PRIMARY" disability to qualify under ECEA rules is incorrect. Jim shared that the form has been corrected with a simple word change on the directions. The IEP does, however, needs to specify that the student has a visual impairment. The APH Federal Quota Census program is reserved for children who are legally blind. The CIMC is requiring a copy of the eye report that is on file with the school district that indicates the learner is legally blind. If there is no eye report, please work with the CIMC on these very special circumstances. This is only for learners who are legally blind and are eligible for the APH Quota Count. Please be sure to send a copy of the eye report and not the original. The original should be retained for the district's file.

*Bottom line – ALL learners with visual impairment, including blindness should be registered with the CIMC. This includes learners on a 504 Plan. New students can be registered all year long with the CIMC. If a student leaves an AU to move out of state or to another in-state AU, this information should be sent to the CIMC. All TVIs need to contribute to have a current count of our students and where they are receiving VI services in the state. The two CIMC Counts are single points in time data collection/confirmation, but a child can be registered throughout the year.*

### **University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)**

Kay Ferrell has formally retired from UNC but will still be working on projects. The big project right now is the visit from the Higher Learning Commission in March. This begins the process of reaccreditation for the School and the College of Education. We congratulate our six graduates from the MA program in December including our Colorado teachers Kari McIntyre and Gena Francouer-Anderson.

Students in the UNC VI and O&M programs need practicum and field observation placement sites. Offering to mentor a teacher in training is a great way to secure a new TVI or COMS (if your district is in need) and is also a great way for you to give back to your profession. District administrators have been very willing to do what is necessary to approve these placements. If you are willing, please contact Paula Conroy at [paula.conroy@unco.edu](mailto:paula.conroy@unco.edu). We have great teachers in Colorado! Please share your expertise.

### **Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)**

***Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project:*** We are in the second year of our five-year cycle. The grant is funded from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2018. The project's mission is free technical assistance to parents and services providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21 and who are deafblind or who have both a vision and a hearing loss. The project has a lending library and a website with a multitude of electronic resources that are available to families and educational personnel.

## Vision Coalition Notes

**Project Staff:** Tanni Anthony and Gina Quintana coordinate the grant project. Kathryn Daniels and Wendy Stoltman are the Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists. Shannon Cannizzaro is our Family Specialist. A new full-time position will soon be advertised for the majority of grant responsibilities. It is anticipated that this position will be filled by July 1, 2015 or even sooner! To request technical assistance, please contact Gina Quintana at (303) 866-6681 or [quintanta\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:quintanta_g@cde.state.co.us)

**Census:** The December 1, 2015 Census is currently being tallied. Thank you to all the wonderful people who have assisted with updating, completing, and returning the AU or agency-specific census forms.

**Project Webpage:** The webpage url is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>

**Summer Institute:** The 2014 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness will be held in the Denver area on June 25-26, 2015. The focus will be mathematics instruction for learners with significant support needs, including deaf-blindness. There has also been an expressed interest in an update training on Cortical Visual Impairment. It was suggested by the VC that the CVI training could be opened up to teams that must include a TVI.

**Western Region Early Intervention Conference:** The next WREIC will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in September 16-18, 2015. Both Tanni and Gina are on the planning committee and the CO DB Project will sponsor at Suzanne Wright from the American Printing House for the Blind to speak on the topic of emergent literacy for young children who are blind/visually impaired.

**DLM Module Professional Development:** The CO DB Project has teamed up with the North Carolina Deaf-Blind Project to sponsor a series of webinar forums with national experts from the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

**Advanced UEB Training:** Part 2 of our statewide Unified English Braille training will be offered to over 25 TVIs and school braillists on January 21-24, 2015 with featured UEB experts Darleen Bogart and Phyllis Landon. This train-the-training module will include the following people: Angela Sims and Sarah Sonnier (Western Region); Lisa Brocard, Michelle Chacon, Mary Chambers, Peg Collins, Elsa D'Andrea, Ann Marie Jansen, Kaitlin Lombardi, Paula LaBossiere, Jeannie Lei, Anitha Muthukumaran; Debbie Mendoza, Carol Potashnick, Marci Reid, Trina Boyd Pratt, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein, (Metro Region), Andrea Johnson Navarro (Northern Region), and Deb Andrews, Kyle Berns, Lucia Hasty, Christine Maynard, Judy Mumford, and Chloann Woolley (Southern Region).

**Braille Competency Test:** We are in a time of transition with the CDE Braille Competency Testing materials. New students in the UNC VI Program are learning UEB in their braille course. The spring braille course addresses the former code as far as changes and how Nemeth works with UEB. It is suggested that this group of new professionals to the field take the CDE Braille Competency Testing in UEB exclusively. Tanni will be working with the CDE Braille Competency Committee and outside UEB experts to update the current test and renewal modules to UEB. The modules will be used to ensure statewide competency on UEB of TVIs who have already passed the state braille test.

**Annual O&M Seminar:** The seminar will be held April 30 –May 1, 2015 at the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton. The featured speaker for the Friday and Saturday full-day sessions will be Dr. Sandra Rosen from San Francisco State University.

**Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** The next Low Vision Evaluation Clinic for the Southern Colorado region is scheduled for Friday January 23<sup>rd</sup>. The clinic is full with six appointments from CSDB (Julie Novak), CSDB Employability Center (Lori Mattick), Colorado Springs School District 11, and El Paso County District 49 (Falcon). The clinic will be held at the offices of Low Vision Services of Southern Colorado, 5614 N Union Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Their office phone number is (719) 471-3200. Donice Fennimore is the regional clinic coordinator. Please contact her with questions at [dfennimore@ppboces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppboces.org),> cell: (719) 290-6441. This will be the third and final clinic date for the Southern Colorado region. The final clinic of the year will be held at the Anchor Center for Blind Children on February 19-21. The contact person is Rebecca Warnell at [rewwarnell@aps.k12.co.us](mailto:rewwarnell@aps.k12.co.us)>.

Your school district and the families of clinic attendees have the option to purchase prescribed devices *at cost* (we do not mark them up) from the clinic inventory. To purchase low vision devices, contact Debbie Haberkorn at (719) 578-2197, [dhhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhhaberkorn@csdb.org)>.

## Vision Coalition Notes

**Recruitment and Retention:** We are sad to say goodbye to Sally Burch in St. Vrain, who recently moved out of state. Julie Hutchinson has filled this position. Tamara Bingham has filled the NW BOCES and Moffat School District positions. Michael Wright is working for Adams 12. Robin Tueting is moving to Germany and is leaving her full-time COMS position at CSDB. Weld 6 has a .5 FTE position open for a TVI / COMS. Anchor Center for Blind Children has an opening for a part-time TVI position.

**Listserves:** The CDE ESSU maintains three separate listservs specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMs. The second one is specific to Colorado braillists. The third is specific to Colorado TVIs and braillists. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.

**Parent Database:** We currently have about 280 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,000 families across the state. The database is used only to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate addresses AND families of children with visual impairment, including blindness that are currently enrolled in Anchor Center for Blind Children or Colorado public school programs. As children graduate or families move out of state, we need to ensure that we remove those families. As new families come into the system, please help Tanni be proactive with getting families registered on the database. This is a voluntary process – so families need to complete and sign their registration forms.

**Specialized Service Professionals (SSPs):** The current draft is posted on the CDE website for feedback. The website is: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/specializedserviceprofessionals>

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Fiscal Year 2015-16 School Year Proposed Budgets

- Cortical Visual Impairment – Topic for Fall State Conference
- *Keeping in Touch* Newsletter
- Low Vision Training –Suggestion for New Training
- Orientation and Mobility Seminar
- READ Act webinars
- Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- Unified English Braille Code Refresher Course
- Unified English Braille Competency Testing and Mentor Support
- Vision Coalition

### CSDB – Blindness

- Low Vision Evaluation Clinics (CSDB staff)
- CIMC

## READ Act for Students with Disabilities

The Colorado READ Act (HB12-1238) requires teachers to assess the literacy development of students in kindergarten through 3rd grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, including oral skills, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade personnel must use CDE State Board of Education approved interim assessments to measure each child's reading competency. If the child is found to have a significant reading deficiency (SRD), diagnostic tools are used for further analysis of the child's reading needs.



## Vision Coalition Notes

There are seven approved CDE English interim assessments: (1) Aimsweb; (2) Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next); (3) Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST); (4) iReady; (5) ISIP ER, Istation; (6) Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS); and (7) STAR Early Learning. DRA2 will not be approved for this next year and, as such, is not on the list of seven.

To determine a SRD, each child must be screened using a CDE-approved interim instrument. The challenge is that not every child CAN BE screened for a SRD with the existing tools. The approved tools are not normed for learners with a disability and there are issues of sensory and cognitive accessibility, as well as issues specific to communication and physical response abilities.

A subgroup of the Vision Coalition met on December 15 to discuss needed steps to include all learners with visual impairment and blindness with the READ Act requirements. Baseline data from the Spring 2014 reporting period include the following:

Eligibility Category	NA	CoAlt	ELL	PA	All Exempt	No SRD	Yes SRD	Total (82)	Missing Dec Count
VI IB	4	3	0	2	9	58	24	91	13

### Key Findings:

- 04 learners exempted due to disability status
- 03 learners anticipated /are “alternate assessment” status
- 09 / 91 or 10% exempted
- 58 / 82 or 71% tested and found NOT to have a SRD
- 24 / 82 or 28% tested and found to have a SRD
- 13 learners all together missing from the READ Act Count

Currently DIBELS is the most popular English interim tool. DRA2 was the second most popular tool in the 2013-14 administration. This tool will no longer be approved in the 2015-16 school year. As such, the popularity of other tools may increase next school year.

The subgroup spent time going through the DIBELS assessment, which involves a paper copy test. There are different components to each grade level. All items on the DIBELS involved a timed trial of data collection. Items that were discussed include: (a) putting DIBELS in braille (there is already an existing braille version) with customization of contractions across the K-3 grades as needed; (b) adding information to the scoring measures such as the frequency of reversals; and (c) adding an option of extended time. It was concluded that it is essential that a TVI be involved in the READ Act screening process to determine if a child with visual impairment, including blindness does or does not have a significant reading deficiency (SRD). The TVI can assist in the accessibility, administration scoring, and interpretation of the screening protocol results. If a child is found to have a SRD, the TVI should be involved further in the diagnostic process.

### **Discussion for Braille Students:**

- 1) Require a TVI’s involvement in accessibility, co-administration, and co-interpretation
- 2) For Braille Readers – DiBELS in braille (with ability to customize contractions in UEB) This increases reliability to track performance and interpretation challenges.
- 3) State purchases DIBELS in braille (in UEB)
- 4) With our braille students – do we want to purchase other tools to assist with further diagnostics? An example of this might be the Johns Inventory. We still need to have much more discussion.

## Vision Coalition Notes

- 5) As for as extended time – the dominant thought is to keep the timing expectation the same as the test norms. This may highlight fluency needs as opposed to “excusing them due to braille taking more time.” This may focus more attention on how to increase the learner’s fluency.

Discussion for Students with Low Vision: There continues to be more exploration of how best to administer any of the tools with students with low vision. Current thoughts include:

- 1) Can use the iPad for the DIBELS and increase font
- 2) Can use any paper copy of a tool– scan and customize format for enlargement
- 3) Can use the CCTV to change contrast and font size of the hard copy tool
- 4) ? about needs specific to online tools – this is an area to explore

All proposed pathways will need to be vetted within CDE . We are still in a fact finding mode. The subcommittee involves comments from the field experience with the READ Act process for students with visual impairments, including blindness.

### Child Find / Eligibility

When students come from our Part C program into the school district, they may or may not qualify for Part B eligibility as a learner with visual impairment, including blindness. Part C has criteria specific to the “visual condition” and the development status of the child that has some parallels to our school age eligibility, but there are important differences. Eligibility for a school-age child with visual impairment, including blindness requires medical documentation of a visual impairment (per our established ECEA criteria). It is important for parents in Part C services to understand that they will need to have an eye report for school district eligibility.

### State Assessments

The statewide IEP system (Enrich) has recently been updated to include assessment accessibility features and allowable accommodations by the category of assessment. All state assessments are under the broad umbrella of the Colorado Measures of Academic Success. There is the CMAS ELA and Math (what we think of PARCC), CMAS Science and Social Studies, CMAS ELA and Math (what we think of as Dynamic Learning Maps), and CMAS CoAlt in Science and Social Studies. Each assessment has both common and unique accessibility features and accommodations.

### KNFB Reader

Jim showed the most recent revision of the Kurzweil NFB Reader App. It came this fall. It is a \$100 app. There is a camera on the left and the eyeball is on the right. Sirri is available to tell the person how to position the camera over a document. Once the document is in view, you take the picture of the item to be read. It will then read the document.

**Next Meeting Date: April 17, 2014 at the CO DVR Office at 2211 West Evans in Denver**





# colorado connections

🔊 We are so happy to share that **Julie Hutchison** has started work as a TVI in St. Vrain School District. Julie shared the following bio: "My name is Julie Hutchinson and I am a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments working for Saint Vrain Valley Schools. I have a master's degree in Visual Disabilities from The Florida State University - Go Noles! I was born and raised in Daytona Beach, Florida but have never really considered myself a "Florida Girl;" I am in love with the mountains - and always knew that I wanted to live somewhere where I'd get to experience all four seasons. I completed my TVI internship with Saint Vrain Valley Schools and knew, from the first week of teaching, that I wanted to return to work with them again; I am so lucky to have been given that opportunity. In my spare time, I absolutely love to do any outdoor activities (hiking, camping, kayaking, etc.) and am looking forward to all the challenges that winter sports will have to offer!"

🔊 Hats off to **Elsa D'Angelo** for earning her CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency! Also a hats off to **Jasmine Gomez, Brooke Miller, Erin Kerr, Val Smith, and Jamie Lugo** for completing braille renewal modules. Thanks for proctors **Julie Wetzstein, Brenda Shepard, and Lucia Hasty.**

🔊 **Karin Hensel** sent the following "shout out and thanks" information to the TVIs who have attended the Fall 2014 CSDB Outreach Field Trips: UNION STATION TOUR: **Leslie Kelly; Deborah Andrews; Donna Keale; Elsa D'Angel; Jasmine Gomez, Cheryl Leidich, Suzan Barlow, Amber Rundle Kahn, Kaitlin Lombardi, and Michelle Chacon** (representing Jefferson County, Denver, Elizabeth, Mapleton, Englewood, Academy 20, and Adams 50 school districts) and COORS FIELD: **Trina Boyd Pratt, Barb Galgano, and Mimi Schaper** (representing Aurora and Cherry Creek School Districts). Many thanks to Karin and CSDB Outreach for this wonderful field events for our students!

🔊 We wish **Robin (Theryoung) Tueting** and her husband **Nate Tueting** all the best in their upcoming move to Germany. Robin has been a full time COMS at CSDB.

🔊 Congratulations to **Silvia Correa Torres** and **Josh Zaffos** on the birth of their daughter. Baby Izabella Correa Zaffos was born on 12-20-2014. We send our best wishes to the happy family.



🔊 An resounding thank you to our most wonderful Advanced UEB presenters **Darleen Bogart** and **Phyllis Landon** who led 25 TVIs and school brailist to a deeper understanding of the Unified English Braille Guidelines for Technical Material during a hands-on four-day workshop on January 21-25, 2015. Wow, wow, and wow. Did I say "wow"?! And thank you to the 25 participants named in the Vision Coalition note section of this newsletter. We are moving full-steam ahead on our Colorado implementation of UEB!

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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1560 Broadway, Suite 1175  
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