

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

Colorado Department of Education
 Exceptional Student Services
 1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
 Denver, CO 80202

(303) 866-6681 (voice)

(303) 866-6918 (fax)

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

A to ZZZZZZ: The Importance of Getting Good Sleep


By Tanni Anthony

Current research suggests that we are a sleep-deprived nation. Not getting enough sleep is hazardous to our physical, cognitive, and emotional health. Sleep is “just as important as good nutrition, physical activity, and wearing your seat belt” (Judith Owens, Director of the Center for Pediatric Sleep Disorders at Boston’s Children’s Hospital). Sleep plays a role in “brain maintenance (Huffington, 2016) and is considered food for the brain across our lifetimes. For adults, our attentiveness and reaction time when driving, the ability to attend to, think about, or remember information clearly, and general executive functioning and health stamina can be effected by continual sleep deprivation. Ironically, the ongoing quest to be productive at the cost of lost sleep may actually catch up with us. We actually accomplish less when we are tired.

For children, sleep disruption can be very serious. Both quantity and quality of sleep fuels neurodevelopment of very young children. Sleep continues to play an important role for learning throughout the early childhood to late adolescence years. Shorter episodes of sleep can result in compromised academic performance and an increase of behavioral issues. Preschoolers need between 11-13 hours of sleep per night. Children aged six through 13 years need 9-11 hours of sleep and teens typically need 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night. To best help children get a better night of sleep, the following is recommended: (a) restrict caffeine and sugar intake; (b) reduce audio and screen time of television, video games, phones, computers, tablets, etc. ahead of bedtime; (c) get outside / move / exercise each day; (d) understand and capitalize on your child’s sleep cues; (e) enforce bedtimes with established getting-ready-to-sleep routine; (f) making the bedroom a low-light, cool, and quiet place; and (f) seek medical guidance if there appears to be a biological challenge for a child to have regular good sleep experience.

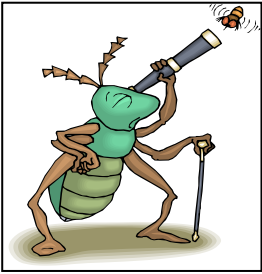
With all this said, I bid you all a Good Night with Sweet Dreams!

Table of Contents

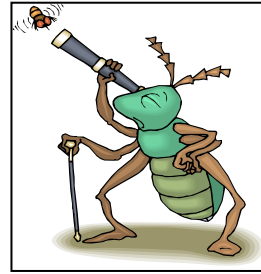
A to ZZZZZZ: the Importance of Getting Good Sleep	1	Check it Out	31
Low Vision News	2	Just for Parents	38
Vision Coalition Notes	3	Colorado Connections	39
Resources and Materials	14		
CDE Happenings	18		
Calendar of Events	19		
Connecting the DOTS	22		
Job Openings	25		
Transition Information	26		
Technology News	28		

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
 of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
 October—December 2016



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Rubric for Students

Please consider the use of the following type of rubric for your students attending Low Vision Evaluation Clinics yet this school year. The rubric provides the student with an opportunity to be more involved preparation for the clinic and its outcome. This is an important aspect of self-determination as an individual with an eye condition resulting in low vision.

	4	3	2	1
Prepare for Low Vision Clinic	Writes at least 5 questions for Dr. Theune, which discuss pros and cons of current devices, new devices to try, and questions about visual impairment and independently asks questions at the exam.	Writes at least 4-5 questions for Dr. Theune, which discuss pros and cons of current devices, new devices to try, and questions about visual impairment, but does not ask questions at exam.	Writes 0-3 questions for Dr. Theune, which discuss pros and cons of current devices, new devices to try, and questions about visual impairment.	Does not prepare for Low Vision Exam.

Western Region LVE Clinic Report

The Western Slope Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held September 23-24, 2016 at the Hawthorne Building in Grand Junction. Seven students from five Administrative Units (Colorado Digital Academy, Mesa County District 51, Montrose County District RE-1J, San Juan BOCES, and Summit County) received evaluations. Seven parents and five TVIs (**Meghan Crosby, Diane Everhart, Julie King, Brandon Mapes, and Angela Sims**) attended the evaluation with their students. The Clinic team would like to thank Regional Coordinator **Angela Sims** for taking time out of her busy schedule to organize the clinic. Thank you to all of the TVIs who brought their students. Thanks to the LVE Team of **Dr. Tom Theune, Jim Olson, Wendy Stoltman, and Debbie Haberkorn** for their preparation, onsite, and follow-up work with the clinic!



Attention all TVIs:

- * Please work closely with your Regional LVE Clinic Coordinators to ensure that all of the required 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-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.

Your Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Team



VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

September 29, 2016

Persons in Attendance: Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Dan Burke, Lorraine Chevarria, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Jamie Lugo, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, Trina Boyd Pratt, and Angela Sims

Call in: LaVerne Dell

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
- CCB = Colorado Center for the Blind
- 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 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Lorraine Chevarria
- Colorado AER Chapter – Trina Boyd Pratt
- 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 – Jamie Lugo
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Sara Noel
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Dan Burke
- Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
- Northern TVI / COMS – Paula Conroy
- Southern TVI / COMS – Deb Andrews
- University of Northern Colorado VI Program – Paula Conroy
- Western TVI / COMS – Angela Sims

Announcements

We are happy to welcome Dan Burke to the Vision Coalition! Dan will be representing the Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program. We also want to congratulate Dan on his recent marriage to CCB Executive Director Julie Deden!

The VC membership discussed the importance of having a parent representative. A current member of the Colorado Parents of Blind Children has been recommended. Tanni will follow up with this individual.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Metro TVIs' first meeting of the year will be held in Cherry Creek on Thursday, October 20th at 4:00 pm. The agenda will include:

- Determine coordinator of regional meetings
- Determine future meeting dates, times and locations (goal is four meetings a year)
- Determine topics for other quarterly meetings
- Focus- Follow up discussion from CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairments on FVAs/LMAs and bring samples for review

Discussion Items:

- *What activities/assessments/instruction/practice are happening when Low Vision Evaluation Clinic recommends devices? (Reference past handouts, inclusion in IEPs, etc.). Discussion: Not every prescribed device is purchased. Devices may be purchased by districts, by families, and by other sources such as Tools for Life or CAER mini-grants. It might be helpful to ensure that families have information about the possibility of buying a device when they bring their children to the clinic. Right now there is not an easy way to use credit cards. This could be something that Jim can investigate whether this is something that CSDB can offer as a payment option – knowing that there are extra costs involved with using credit cards. It was suggested that we update our LVE clinics. As to whether an IEP goal is written that includes magnification tools, it may vary depending on the timing of the IEP. May want to probe whether there was training on the device on the follow-up efficacy surveys. A question came up as to whether the LVE Clinics can include preschoolers. Jim shared that preschoolers have been involved in the metro clinics held at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. The style was more of a conversation with Dr. Theune for parents to learn about low vision practices and devices. It was also discussed whether low vision is a good topic for the Fall 2017 CDE State Conference on B/VI.*

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

The Southern Region had a great turn out for our first meeting on September 14, 2016! We had representatives from most of the districts and DVR. We will have monthly TVI meetings from 12:30 -3:00 followed by an O&M meeting from 3:00-4:00. All meetings will be held at CSDB. TVIs and COMSs please check in at the front office of the administration building and bring a photo ID. Meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, with the exception of December when we will meet on December 7th.

Meeting dates: October 12, 2016; November 9, 2016; December 7, 2016; January 11, 2017; February 8, 2017; March 8, 2017; April 12, 2017; and May 10, 2017.

Low Vision Evaluation Clinic planning is in the works. Wendy Unwin Watson is the Regional Coordinator for this year. Her contact information is wwatson@ppboces.org or (719) 332-7409. The clinic is scheduled to take place on November 4, 2016. If there is enough interest, that may be opened an additional day.

Events coming up in the region are: (a) Diane Fitzkee is organizing social groups again this year—one for middle/high school students and one for elementary students. The first event is on October 4th for middle/high school students. They are meeting in the parking lot of Red Rocks Open Space at 5:00 and hiking for an hour. Then the group will head to Savelli's Pizza for dinner. Cost is about \$7 per person. (b) October 13, 2016 Fall Festival at CSDB 4:30-6:30. This is open to all districts and is for children birth through 8; and (c) Marshall/Mashburn Tactile Gallery 35th Anniversary Celebration (Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center) takes place on October 25, 2016 (start time is tentatively 4 p.m.

Discussion:

- *What do districts do for students who meet the definition of blindness or who only have light perception, but they cannot get an updated eye report from the family? How do they get them registered for quota funds? The underlying question might be, who can fill out the form checking off MDB/FDB? Does it have to be an ophthalmologist, can it be a pediatrician?*

Discussion: Eligibility for children with visual impairment, including blindness requires an eye examination that verifies the status and prognosis of the visual impairment. Eye exams on an annual basis are recommended by the optometric / ophthalmological community. It is important that a child has proper eye care for both primary and possible secondary visual conditions. Adult services require current medical information. Jim shared that other states' IMCs require a current eye exam in order for students to access braille or large print book orders. If this paperwork is not provided, the student cannot receive these materials. For families of children with multiple disabilities, it is understood that a regular eye examination may be a challenge. The CIMC can accept a letter from a neurologist who is working with an eye care specialist. Assignment: Jim will send out a form to the VC that the CIMC has developed – once reviewed, he will post it on the listserv. We will also pursue more video / article information on the rationale and importance of regular eye care.

- *Would it be helpful that there be a DVR teacher on the group to share valuable information pertaining to their clients and share that with the other DVR teachers? Assignment: Tanni will follow up with LaVerne on this recommendation.*

Western Region (Angela Sims)

The Western Slope just finished hosting the Low Vision Clinic. The team did an amazing job of answering student's and family's questions, making the students feel relaxed, and getting everyone excited about high and low tech tools available. Families showed support and commitment of their children by traveling from Durango, Montrose, Breckenridge, and Grand Junction to attend. Families appreciated the individualized attention their children received and learning about different options available that will help their children access their environments. A HUGE thank you to the Low Vision Team and to the TVIs for all their hard work!

Mesa Valley School District wants to congratulate Hayden Roswell. She took first place in the Regional Braille Challenge and was invited to attend the National Braille Challenge in Los Angeles, California in June. She participated and had an amazing experience. This was one of the first times Hayden felt like she was truly around her peers. She was able to meet other blind kids from across the country who are academic students and understood how she felt about many things. She is already starting to prepare for the next braille challenge in hopes of going back and reconnecting with her new friends. Congratulations Hayden, we're all rooting for you!

Discussion Items:

- *What are districts using for the Cogat assessment? This is the assessment for gifted and talented. In one district, every child must participate in screener. Discussion: The screener and the full battery tests are not fully adapted or adaptable for a braille reader because of the high level of pictures.*

This has been an issue in a number of districts in the past and the decision was made to use a body of evidence to determine GT status with the collaborative input from the GT staff and the TVI. Assignment: Tanni will work with the CDE GT staff to ensure that we are sharing state recommendations for how best to determine a child's GT status.

- *More and more districts are using computer programs to progress monitor. Are there any computer programs that work with JAWS/Window Eyes for progress monitoring (Dreambox Math, IReady, STARs, etc. don't work with talking software)? Discussion: This has been an area of a challenge across districts and across a variety of tools. There are concerns about Nemeth or UEB. Some of the braille tests are dated with yesteryear's standards or content. Online education is becoming more prevalent in school classrooms. There are concerns across several online instruction vehicles that they are not accessibility. Our goal is to find solutions.*

Northern Region (Paula Conroy)

The Northern Region is working on setting up their regional meetings for this school year. It is a busy time. There are new TVIs in the northern region and it would be great to have a vehicle to get everyone together. Jim offered to host something via Zoom for the northern region.

Discussion:

- *Who are our DVR representatives for this year in the different northern area? Assignment The list will be disseminated in late October once LaVerne has finalized this information.*
- *This is a no exemption year for the READ Plan. The only assessment suggested by our DAC was the DiBELS Next in braille. What happens if the district does not have anyone trained with this particular assessment? Are there any resources out there, CDE or otherwise? Discussion: The PALS and the DiBels can be brailled for students. The DiBELS comes in commercially available braille formats (contracted or uncontracted UEB), which are available through the CIMC. Assignment: It was suggested that CDE work with Jamie Lugo to video tape one of her TVIs giving the DiBELS as a training tool. Tanni will also talk to Ellen Hunter about how we can provide video training guidance to school personnel not familiar with the administration of DiBELS.*
- *Since we were unable to find a part-time TVI for our district to support our current caseload, we are thinking of using a "vision paraprofessional" to reinforce instruction that has been designed and previously taught by a TVI. Is this the norm for most districts? Discussion: This was just a recent discussion on the CDE listserv. A paraeducator cannot provide new instruction, but implementation or reinforcement of that instruction.*
- *Are TVIs driving families to eye doctor appointments? Discussion: Some districts will not allow staff to take a student in a personal car. Each person should work with their district to understand their policy expectation. It is also recommended that a school employee understands the parameters of their personal car insurance.*

Colorado AER (Trina Boyd Pratt)

CAER is looking at seminar and workshops to give people more training and credit opportunities. Membership has dropped and this will be a focus of the group. Want to try to find ways to give incentives that will boost membership. There are national incentives for membership with discounts at the national conferences and online trainings. This may be an area to replicate in the state.

There is a plan for training on Android with speech, braille cleaning, and a tactile art with Ann Cunningham are three training topics. There will be an Android training associated with the CO NFB Conference. It was suggested to use Zoom or to be thoughtful about planning the training events across the state. CAER is working on creating a database of its membership that can be used for communications. They had successful fund raiser with Spiro Winery. There are plans for another fund raiser of this kind. There are currently four positions open on the CAER Board.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (LaVerne Dell)

It has been a busy and emotional year for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. We have hired a Director, Steve Anton. We welcome Steve as our Director. DVR has moved to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, where we have received a warm welcome.

We have said goodbye to a good friend and long-time colleague, Ken Neve, who was killed in a tragic accident in June. Ken is missed by all of us!

As of January 2016, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation instated the Blind and Low Vision Services region. This region encompasses the counseling unit, the Statewide Teaching unit, the Business Enterprise Program and the grant for Older Individuals who are Blind. Julia Zanon is the manager of the region. There are five counselors within the counseling unit. They are located in Colorado Springs, the Denver Metro Office, Northglenn and the Longmont office. There are counselors across the State who will serve individuals who are blind/visually impaired and who will consult with the BLVS counseling unit. We have high hopes and expectations for this new region. LaVerne will send Tanni a list of DVR Counselors for the Blind in late October for statewide dissemination.

Discussion:

- *Some districts are still hearing that SWAP is not for students with visual impairments. Discussion: This is an area that continues to need clarification. It is important that each student be reviewed for transition needs that may be addressed by School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) or DVR. There should not be duplication of services, but a clear plan for services. TVIs should bring information about the student's short and longer term needs to their SWAP Coordinator and the DVR Counselor so that a careful plan can be developed. Once LaVerne finalizes the list of DVR Counselors, this information will be disseminated across the state through the newsletter and the listserv. It may also be helpful to use these vehicles to help equalize information about services.*

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Lorraine Chevarria)

Anchor Center for Blind Children has started off the year with a whole new teaching team and a record number of children. We have referrals coming in on a daily basis and up to 12 Functional Vision Assessment a month. Most of the little ones coming through the doors are qualifying and we have 30-40 babies and toddlers that come in for program each week. We have 26 preschool students attending program twice a week as well. It continues to be a fast paced and exciting place to be! There are two openings for TVIs.

Discussion:

- *Anchor Center is getting an increase in three year old referrals. They would like clarification of where to refer. Discussion: Anchor Center should always refer to the Child Find Team school district of residence. A family may or may not decide to follow-up with pursuing preschool services from their local district. If there are challenges, parents can be directed to CDE. Assignment: Tanni will send Lorraine a list of the Child Find contacts in the state.*

Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Dan Burke)

The Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Services had a series of successful programs in the summer of 2016. Our long-running Confidence Camp for ages 5-12 had 10 students and involved two former campers as "Junior Counselors" to serve as role models. Confidence Camp is a three—week day program that focuses on skill-building, including independent cane travel, home skills such as preparing meals, and a whole lot of fun. Campers went swimming, canoeing, rock climbing, and on various field trips using RTD buses and light rail.

Our high school residential programs, Earn & Learn and College Prep had 24 students living at our apartments for eight weeks with summer counselors. These programs include canoeing, rock climbing and white water rafting with daily classes in the four core training areas – Braille, Home Management, Technology and Cane Travel. Earn & Learn students complete paid 40-hour internships at locations around the Metro area. Jobs include child care, a riding stable, web and document accessibility retail and food service. Students traveled daily to their job sites on foot or on RTD at locations as close as Arapahoe Community College and the Auraria Campus, and as distant as the Federal Center and even to Boulder.

College prep students did classwork and activities designed to bring both awareness of and skills that prepared them for the jolt of the transition from the K-12 environment into that of higher education. As part of this, students visited Arapahoe Community College and Metro State Access Centers to learn how these colleges approach accessibility for blind students. All these students attended the National Federation of the Blind's annual convention in Orlando in early July which, for many, was an exciting educational and social opportunity.

Also, in July we held our Summer Science Seminar at the Center. We were truly fortunate to have two blind scientists on hand to provide sessions in Chemistry and physics. The third session was on horticulture and took place in our Legacy Garden, which offers opportunities to discover and identify a number of flowers, herbs and vegetables by means of smell, touch and taste. A professor of Chemistry from the University of Notre Dame of Maryland led students in concepts of fermentation and to do various PH tests of water in the Center using the Talking Lab Quest. Most exciting was probably the water rocket session in which students built water rockets from 2-liter soda bottles and launched them behind the Center. The temperature was 95 that day, so the launches added the benefit of getting a little wet to the fun. A short video of the projects can be viewed at:

<https://youtu.be/PWBmfWFPas>

We are especially excited that this summer we had five Colorado students in our program with Colorado DVR funding, as opposed to only one or none in the previous years. We attribute this to the establishment of the Blind Low Vision Services unit within DVR, as well as to its embrace of the new WIOA regulations regarding transition services. These regulations require DVR to take applications at age 16, and to provide other services as early as age 14 to students with disabilities. We look forward to serving more Colorado kids in the years to come as our partnership with BLVS grows.

Last spring, our monthly FAST program included activities such as visiting the Denver Art Museum and its tactile tables, followed by some art-making. A number of students and parents attended. We of course went on the annual snow shoe trip to Estes Park, held a paleontology day at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science with a John Hopkins PhD candidate, and much more.

We hosted the Metro area Braille Challenge in January 2016 for the second year, continued with mentoring at CSDB and look forward to starting up again next month. We are excited about meetings we've had with the Anchor Center for Blind Children and look forward to coordinating efforts in the future, such as meeting with Anchor Center parents and staff.

Coming up, we are planning FAST Saturday programs in Civics and Accessible Voting in October, attending Super Science Saturday and the opening of a tactile art display there in November, and have been awarded one of 1000 Raspberry Pi Foundation weather stations distributed to schools around the world. FAST Saturday activities will help get the weather station up and running.

A final note – the NFB of Colorado's convention in Denver October 27-30 will feature sessions for parents of blind children. CCB will contribute, as we contributed to the NFBCO's two BELL camps this summer in Colorado Springs and Westminster.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

School Updates: Students have returned full of energy. They have jumped back into school and are enjoying being back in the school routine. We have many new students in the School for the Blind this year. The elementary and secondary students have been wonderful in taking these students under their wings by showing them around and making them feel welcome. The elementary and supported secondary class finished up their Olympic unit with a visit to the Olympic Training Center. Secondary students participated in an anti-bullying workshop and signed contracts pledging to participate in acts of kindness and report bullying to staff when observed. Secondary students completed a common sense media training class before receiving their 1: World devices.

New Teaching Staff: We also have two new teachers in the School for the Blind. Karissa Johnson and Tesia Nasehi are both fitting in well and gaining instant rapport with the students and School for the Blind staff.

Key Activities: Students completed the fall MAP testing from September 19th-30th. Homecoming is this weekend, October 1st! The spirit week and pep rally were well attended and a great success! The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and The California School for the Blind will be visiting campus to participate in a goalball tournament and to attend our annual homecoming dance on Saturday night. Juniors attended Colorado Construction Day on September 15th. Our Inaugural Cane Quest for CSDB took place on September 27th. 3rd-6th grade students competed in orientation and mobility tasks across campus. We have hopes of expanding the competition to include more age groups next year.

The Colorado Center for the Blind has continued their partnership and mentor program with the School for the Blind. They are working with the family consumer science class, Bridges to Life Program, and also conducting after school daily living skill activities in the dormitories.

The elementary department have been weighing pumpkins, estimating the seeds in each pumpkin, learning how vegetable grow, and making fall recipes in their academic classes. They will be attending the Wishing Star Pumpkin Patch to conclude this project based learning project. Friday workshop time continues to be popular and full of exciting activities for the students. Some of the workshops covered so far this year include: yoga, karaoke, drum circles, and off topic and on topic speed chatting sessions.

Upcoming Events:

- White Cane Day, October 14th, Acacia Park Celebration
- VI Social Night, October 4th, hiking at Red Rock Open Space and dinner at Savellis
- Bulldog Health Staff Challenge - October through the holidays
- Parent Teacher Conference and Educational Workshops on October 20th and 21st
- Tactile Gallery Opening on October 25th

Discussion: Jamie asked if there might be an interest in family classes in braille. This might be something to explore! Please be in touch with Jamie if you have an interest in building this opportunity.

CSDB Outreach Services (Sara Noel)

The goal of the CSDB Outreach Strategic Plan is to respond to the needs of consumers within the mission of CSDB by collaborating and implementing an action plan to meet the identified needs.

<http://www.csdb.org/programs-services/outreach-programs-3/>

On the Outreach Programs page, find the new “Keep Me Posted” button. Click on this button to find out what’s new and ongoing in the CSDB Outreach Program.

To help provide information to community members, CSDB is broadcasting 30-minute segments on Comcast TV Channel 20, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. CSDB video segments tell the stories of people who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually, and provide American Sign Language lessons to community members. The individual clips are all currently on the CSDB YouTube channel as well. The weekly 30-minute segments will also be available on a Broadcast playlist at

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4V2VlXorHid5hmB_X1wY7NP10gJcItAX

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach Department offers Student Activity Mini-grants to support educational staff in offering activities that allow students who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired to come together to engage in educationally related activities. The purpose of these grants is to support activities that allow students to learn from each other and interact with peers who have similar experiences. For the 2016-17 school year, the maximum funding for a regional activity will be \$300. An application must be submitted at least 30 days before the activity. These funds may be used for sign language interpreters, presenter/role model honorariums, venue costs and disability specific materials. The funds may not be used for staff time, transportation costs, lodging or promotional materials including t-shirts, hats or awards. To request an application please contact: Kristy Murdock, Director of Outreach Programs, CSDB, 719-578-2110, kmurdock@csdb.org

Upcoming Events:

October 13, 2016 - Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind’s (CSDB) Outreach Department will host a Fall Festival for children who are blind/vision impaired and their families, ages birth-8. This event will be an opportunity for CSDB’s Outreach Department to support families, children engage with each other and an opportunity for families or guardians to build relationships. The event will take place on the CSDB Campus October 13, 2016 from 4:30-6:30. For a copy of the event flyer please contact Sara Noel at snoel@csdb.org or 719-822-4112.

November 4, 2016 - The CDE Southern Low Vision Clinic will take place at CSDB. Contact Wendy Unwin Watson for registration wwatson@ppboces.org

January 19, 2017 – Colorado Braille Challenge-Southern Region will be held at CSDB. For more information contact Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org

January 26, 2017 - Colorado Braille Challenge-Denver Metro will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind. For more information, contact Diane Covington at dcovington@csdb.org

We want to know: CSDB’s outreach services would like your feedback and ideas for ways to support students, their families and you! Submit your suggestions to Kristy Murdock at kmurdock@csdb.org.

Colorado Instructional Materials Center (Jim Olson)

CDE Statewide Registration of Students with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness: October 1 starts the annual review of the CDE statewide registration database reports. Please submit your edits to the CIMC before Thanksgiving break.

As a reminder, our second count, the Federal Quota Census of legally blind students occurs the first Monday in January annually. The CIMC will input your edits to the CDE count during the month of December and send updated printouts to your administrative unit for Federal Quota Census purposes at the beginning of January. Edits will be due back to the CIMC by the end of January 2017.

It Is A New School Year - What We Have Learned So Far...

- Please email the CIMC when you have received your APH order or a book order. The CIMC sends out an email when items ship out of the CIMC. Directions to verify receipt of your shipment are included in this email. Very few districts comply with this request and it is one way we verify that our CIMC services are efficient. Please comply and send us an email.
- If you submit a book order, you WILL receive a confirmation email from the CIMC. If you do not receive the confirmation email, the CIMC did NOT receive your order and we ask that you call or email us immediately.
- Please do not ship ink print copies of textbooks inside boxes of returned books. Ink print copies of textbooks should be mailed postage paid, NOT "Free Matter." All book orders should be submitted electronically to "cimcbookorders@cldb.org".
- Please remember to register EVERY student you serve, including students receiving only consultative services.
- Please remember to cancel your book orders if a student withdraws from your district; especially if it is a new transcription of a book, this can save thousands of dollars.
- If you are not using a book, or if a student has withdrawn from your district, please return your books now, not at the end of the year.
- As always, if you have questions, please call the CIMC at (719) 578-2196.

New APH products:

- JAWS and MAGic, Student Edition D-110Nearby Explorer App for iOS Devices D-30022-APL
- Draw2Measure Protractor App for iOS Devices D-30023-AP
- Tactile Compass for Math and Art 1-08894-00
- Color-by-Texture Marking Mats 1-03332-00
- Raised Line Coloring Pages Set 61-114-012
- All Aboard! The Sight Word Activity Express 1-033558-00
- Light In-Sight: Reflection and Refraction kit 1-08286-00
- Gross Motor Development Curriculum 7-08400-00
- Swirly Mats II, CVI: 1-08158-00 Swirly Mats II, FVA: 1-08159-0000-ED
- Video Mag HD 1-03914-00 Geometro GS10 Cylinder and Cone 1-03030-00

Discussion: Jim is available to meet with AUs or regions to review CIMC policies and procedures. He just had this opportunity in Western Region and it was very successful.

When completing the registration forms for students with visual impairments, it is essential to put only the primary diagnosis in the section on diagnosis. This section of the form does not need to have all of the diagnoses on the eye report (refractive error, exotropia, and amblyopia). We would want as clean as data as possible – so only put the primary cause such as ONH, ROP, albinism, etc. This will help us understand our statewide etiologies in an efficient and accurate manner.

University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)

UNC is off to another busy start of the semester. We have a healthy number of new students this year as well as several finishing up their programs. There are a total of five NLCSF Fellows studying at UNC now. One is from the first cohort and four just started this year in the second cohort. We are so proud of our Colorado TVIs Amber Rundle Kahn and Gena Francoeur Anderson for being awarded this great opportunity. Amber is studying in the area of Blindness and VI and Gena is studying in the area of deafblindness. Our other fellows are Brittney Dorn (deafness), Kaitlin Millen (deafness) and Tara Brown-Ogilvie (deafblindness). We hope you get to speak with them about their projects!



There is a new Director of the School of Special Education at UNC. Dr. Harvey Rude has now retired and Dr. Corey Pierce has accepted the position. Dr. Pierce is a full professor at UNC in the Generalist program area with a specialty in assessment. Dr. Rude will continue on by coordinating the special education administrative license and a few other responsibilities until a new person is hired for that role (probably August of 2017).

Discussion: UNC is helping with the creation of the new CEC VI standards. We need your input as this is an almost 2 year process so cannot be done very often. There is currently not a state VI licensure exam. The PLACE VI Test is currently suspended. It will be important to monitor and provide feedback on our next steps forward with a state-level exam, as well as follow the ESSA changes with high-qualified personnel.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are in the fourth 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.

- ◆ **Project Staff:** Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera coordinate the grant project. Kathryn Daniels and Wendy Stoltman are the current Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists and we are working to expand to a third TA Specialist! Shannon Cannizzaro is our Family Specialist.
- ◆ To request free technical assistance during the school year and across the summer months, please contact Gina Herrera at (303) 866-6681 or Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us
- ◆ **Annual Deaf-Blind Census:** The December 1, 2016 Census forms will be sent out to AU / agency contacts in early to mid November with the request that all forms are updated no later than January 15, 2017. Thank you in advance for helping to keep our census data up-to-date. All learners identified as having combined vision and hearing loss are eligible for free technical assistance.
- ◆ **Project Webpage:** The webpage url is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>
- ◆ **Summer Institute:** The 2017 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness is being planned for June. More details on the dates, topic, and speaker will be forthcoming at a later date.

Annual O&M Seminar: The 2017 O&M Seminar will occur on May 5 and 6 with Diane Brauner and Ed Summers who will address Hi-Tech O&M. Also Diane Brauner will complete her presentation from last year on Thursday, May 4, 2017. Tanni is currently working on one more part of the program. More details to be coming at a later date.

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: The Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have been scheduled for this school year. We are grateful for our returning LVE Clinic returning team of Dr. Tom Theune, Jim Olson, Wendy Stoltman, and Debbie Haberkorn. The Western Region LVE Clinic was held in September. We are looking forward to future clinics in the Southern, Northern, and Metro Regions.

Recruitment and Retention: Most TVI/C OMS positions are currently filled in the state. If people are aware of any upcoming vacancies in their administrative units, they are strongly encouraged to be in touch with Tanni for proactive advertising and recruitment efforts. We are excited to have new teachers in Adams 50 (William Reynolds), Aurora (Adrienne Estep and Lisa Hebbert), Brighton School District (Stephanie Smithgall), and CSDB (Karissa Johnson and Tess Nasehi). We are happy that Sally Burch is back with us and now in Boulder. Jeff Hadala is now with Jefferson County School District. Julie King is working with Eagle County School District and K12 online schools. Brandon Mapes continues to work for Mountain BOCES and now Summit School District. We continue to have openings in Mesa Valley School District, Pikes Peak BOCES, Thompson School District and Greeley-Evans School District.

The Anchor Center for Blind Children has hired three new TVIs to their program: Jessica Hank, Karen Jamison, and Tamara Miller. Paula Landry, Sarah Bickford Vallese, and Lisa Roll are no longer with Anchor Center for the Blind and we thank them for their years of high-quality service at the Anchor Center for Blind Children.

Listservs: 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. It is important to remind all users of these listservs that personally identifiable information (PII) on students and parents should never be posted in any listserv messages. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.

Parent Database: We currently have about 208 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,100 families across the state. The database is used to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate addresses of 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 to be proactive with getting families registered on the database. This is a voluntary process – so families need to complete and sign their registration forms.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CDE Funded Projects for School Year 2016-17

CDE ESSU

- | | |
|---|---|
| • State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment | Low Vision Evaluation Clinics |
| • CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar | Braille Competency Testing and Mentor Support |
| • <i>Keeping in Touch</i> Newsletter | Vision Coalition |

CSDB – Blindness

- CIMC (full book funding without the need for AU fiscal support through assessment fees)
- Regional Low Vision Clinics (costs specific to CIMC staff on the LVE Team)

Ideas for proposed funded project for the next school year should be shared with Tanni no later than the end of January 2017.

Braille Competency in UEB

All CDE braille testing materials have been converted to the Unified English Braille (UEB) Code. There are no longer any braille competency materials in English Braille American Edition (EBAE). This includes the Colorado Braille Competency test and the renewal modules. All modules are now in UEB. We have made significant movement in re-establishing braille competency with our veteran TVI and braillist staff and moving forward to ensure braille competency to new personnel in the field. The evidence of good work of the TVIs goes beyond the number of personnel who have earned their CDE UEB Competency Certificates, but with the number of students who are being taught UEB. We have made the shift!

UEB Math / Nemeth

BANA continues to endorse two math codes – the math code inherent in the Unified English Braille Code and Nemeth. States continue to have differing plans on whether to teach students UEB or Nemeth. This remains an area of continued national discussion. This topic will be discussed at the CDE State Conference on Blindness / Visual Impairment.

CEC Competency Guidelines

The CEC Standards are in the process of being updated specific to visual impairment. These standards are what new beginning teachers need to know; they should be considered minimum competencies. There are both knowledge (what to know) and skill (how to do it) items. This review process typically takes two years to ensure there is time for external review, internal review, and a validation study. Once the validation study starts, the standards cannot have any further edits. There are 7 broad standards: Standard 1 (Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences); Standard 2 (Learner Environments); Standard 3 (Curricular Content Knowledge); Standard 4 (Assessment); Standard 5 (Instructional Strategies); Standard 6 (Professional Learning and Ethical Practice); and Standard 7 (Collaboration).

This information will be shared with CO TVIs with the request for feedback. Feedback can be sent to Dr. Debora Hatton at deborah.hatton@vanderbilt.edu before November 1, 2016. It would be helpful to give information about suggested wording or how to break items up to have less “congestion of too many items in one section.” It was suggested that this be a work group topic in the upcoming southern and metro TVI meetings. Also if the whole document is too overwhelming, individuals are encouraged to submit feedback on the section(s) of highest interest.

Caseload Formula

Texas Tech has a new caseload formula for TVIs and is working on a separate tool for COMS. The first tool is called *Visual Impairment Scale of Service Intensity of Texas (VISSIT)*. The VISSIT is designed to guide teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) in determining the type and amount of itinerant TVI services to recommend for students on their caseload. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) committee will typically rely upon the TVI for this recommendation. This scale supports the TVI in quantifying information for the IEP committee. It is hoped that the VISSIT will provide guidance so that all students with visual impairments get the benefit of an appropriate amount and type of service. The tool can be found at: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/vissit>

The *Guidelines for a Caseload Formula for Teachers Certified in the Area of Visual Impairments* have not been updated since 2003. Is it time to do an update or to examine the Texas tool?

Assignment: Several VC members offered to do a caseload analysis using both tools to bring back a pulse of preference or recommendation for updating the Colorado form.

Next Meeting Dates:



January 18th, 2017

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 2211 West Evans, Denver

April 13, 2017

Anchor Center for Blind Children, 2550 Roslyn Street, Denver

Key Topics:

- ✓ Budgets for School Year 2017-18
- ✓ Caseload Formula
- ✓ UEB / Nemeth

A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment

Dear Colleagues and Families,

We would like to announce the establishment of a new Colorado nonprofit, A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment; recently founded by two local teachers of students with visual impairments. Stefanie Kirkwood and Paula Landry created this organization in hopes of addressing service gaps for infants and toddlers with visual impairments across the Colorado Front Range. A Shared Vision focuses on the provision of home-based, developmental interventions with each child's natural environment. Please stay tuned as we continue to develop our organization resources. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us for more detailed information. We look forward to connecting with you all in the near future. Sincerely, Stefanie and Paula

Stefanie: (303) 578-9673 Paula: (303) 335-6554

Resources and Materials

New Book by Students with Visual impairments



By Darcy Thompson, Director, Louisville Story Program

During the 2015-16 school year, the Louisville Story Program worked closely with seven students from the Kentucky School for the Blind in daily afterschool writing workshops to help them write about their experiences and lives. The students also developed oral histories based on interviews they conducted with others in their lives. Their hard work culminated in *We Can Hear You Just Fine: Clarifications from the Kentucky School for the Blind*, the nation's first professionally published nonfiction anthology written by teens who are blind and visually impaired.

The essays in *We Can Hear You Just Fine* offer vivid, incisive and illuminating portraits of these students' lives. They cover a range of topics including the travails and triumphs of visual impairment and the difficulties of marginalization.

Their book highlights the particularities of their lives, but also serves as a poignant reminder that the desire for acceptance and dignity and the drive to succeed and make meaning in the world are common to all of us.

We Can Hear You Just Fine will be published in November. Braille and large print editions will be available from APH, and regular print editions will be available from the Louisville Story Program at <http://louisvillestoryprogram.org/store>

Resources and Materials

New Downloadable Manuals Available



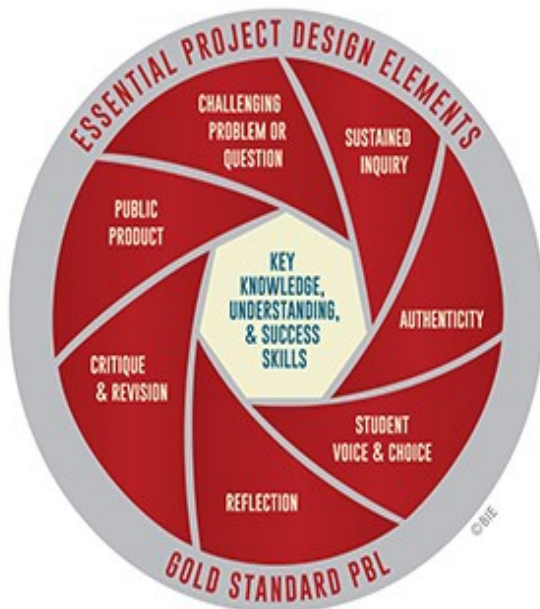
Get the manual you need instantly! The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) offers a selected list of product manuals available for free download (www.aph.org/manuals/). You may print or emboss these as needed. In most cases, they will continue to package hard copies of these manuals with their products and sell hard copy replacements.

Newly added manuals include:

- Gross Motor Development Curriculum for Children With Visual Impairments
- Teaching Street Crossings
- Push Button Padlock

Buck Institute for Education (BIE)

This resource was shared by Rachel Schles at our recent CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment



The highest priority of the **Buck Institute for Education (BIE)** is to help teachers prepare students for successful lives. They do this by showing teachers how to use Project Based Learning in all grade levels and subject areas. As a mission-driven nonprofit organization, BIE creates, gathers, and shares high-quality PBL instructional practices and products and provides highly effective services to teachers, schools, and districts.

For teachers, BIE offers professional development on how to design, assess, and manage projects that engage and motivate students. For schools, BIE helps bring coherence to PBL practices across grade levels and subject areas, and supports the creation of school-wide processes and structures to support PBL. For districts, BIE offers unrivaled service and expertise in creating and sustaining district-wide PBL initiatives.

Check it out at: <http://www.bie.org/about>

Resources and Materials

Essential Assessments for Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired

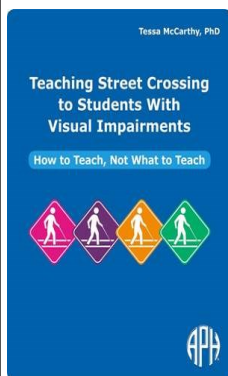
EARubric.com is the home of the Essential Assessments Rubric, a resource for teachers of children with visual impairments. The EA Rubric is an online version of the ground-breaking software application. All educational programming and instruction begins with quality assessments. There are three essential assessments for all children and youth who are blind or visually impaired. These are the functional vision assessment (FVA), learning media assessment (LMA), and assessments in the chosen priority areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). Teachers of students who are blind or visually impaired (TVIs) use the essential assessment framework to secure data that drives eligibility/entitlement, educational programming and instruction.

The content rubric was initiated through a collaborative effort of education experts and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB). Further refinement of content was provided by participants attending the 2008 Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) International Conference. Final edits were initiated by the content experts to support teachers and families in receiving tools and methods that will strengthen the development of children's educational programs. In addition, the quality rubrics (N=4) were created by Karen Blankenship modeled after the Peabody College rubric for assessment and edited by content experts to support teachers, families, and administrators to set standards of practice and to apply a qualitative measure (1-4) to the essential assessments.

The Essential Assessment Rubric Project provides a tool to guide TVIs and certified orientation & mobility specialists (COMS) in preparing and conducting assessments. Parents will be able to use the online resource to prepare for the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Administrators are currently using both content and quality rubrics to evaluate both program and service accountability.

The link for this resource is: <http://earubric.com/index.html>

Teaching Street Crossing to Students With Visual Impairments



This book is available from the American Printing House for the Blind. It is intended for use by O&M professionals, as this book summarizes promising pedagogical methods for teaching street crossings to persons who are blind and visually impaired. *Teaching Street Crossing to Students With Visual Impairments: How to Teach, Not What to Teach* provides information about teaching various components of street-crossing skills at appropriate ages/developmental levels; sequencing skills and environments; and using appropriate pedagogical strategies to enhance effectiveness of street-crossing instruction. The goal of this manual is to provide information about different strategies—skills-based, behavioral, and Piagetian—that are derived from different theories of learning. Tanni will order a copy also to be housed in the CO Deaf-Blind Project Lending Library at CDE.



Tactile Art Products and Materials

APH Project Leader Karen Poppe has assembled a list of APH and other products useful for creating educational and fun tactile graphics. Here is a list of APH products and other materials helpful for creating tactile graphics – go to: <http://www.aph.org/products/tactile-art-products-and-materials/>

Resources and Materials



COLORADO
Department of Human Services

CCDHH
Colorado Commission for
the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

CCDHH – Vision

We envision a barrier-free Colorado

The Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH), a unit within the Department of Human Services, exists to promote effective communication access for all Coloradans. In order to ensure everyone's right to communicate, the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) is charged with supplying qualified deaf, hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind citizens with telecommunications equipment and accessories.

WHAT WE OFFER

Amplified Telephones; Amplified telephones give people the ability to adjust the volume and tone to help them hear better. The phones may amplify the incoming voice between 25 to 60 decibels (dB).

Captioned Telephones; Captioned telephones display text captions of every word the caller says through the conversation.

Amplified Telephones for Cell Phone Sharing: For households without any home phone line, Bluetooth-enabled amplified phones are home-based phones that link to a person's cell phone.

Ring Signalers: Each applicant may also choose a signaler to notify individuals of a call by a flashing light, loud ringer or wrist shaker.

Amplified Accessories: Each applicant may also choose to receive an amplified accessory, such as a headphone or neckloop, that works with an amplified, captioned or wireless phone.

Wireless Devices: Wireless devices enable deaf, hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind mobile access without requiring home phone service.

Deaf-Blind Technology: As part of the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), CCDHH provides a wide array of assistive technology, including specialized hardware, software and applications. Sample equipment includes tablets and smartphones with built-in accessibility features, Braille displays, and computer screen readers.

WHO QUALIFIES

Colorado residents, who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind, may qualify to receive FREE telecommunications equipment, if certain criteria are met. For an application, call (720)949-7457 (VP) or (303)866-2097 (Voice).

For more information contact: JoAnne Hirsch at joanne.hirsch@state.co.us or visit the web site: www.ccdhh.com



Licensure Requirements for TVI and COMS

Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

For information about Colorado licensing requirements in the area of Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment and/or School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, please refer to the information contained within Educator Licensing's Endorsement Requirements page at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

All candidates for initial educator licenses in Colorado have historically been required to take and pass one or more of the PLACE Content Assessments. Candidates for the special education endorsement in Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment were mandated previously to pass the *PLACE Educator Content Assessment for Special Education Specialist: Severe Needs – Visually Impaired*. This test had a short section to assess braille competency in English Braille American Edition. This particular content assessment is suspended currently as a licensure requirement. Whether this specific test will be revised to include a section specific to Unified English Braille or is fully replaced with another test as a licensure requirement is yet to be determined.

At this time, it is important to note there is not a Professional Services and Educator Licensing Unit content test that requires a candidate for the Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment to demonstrate braille competency as a requirement of licensure. It is further important to note that if such a content test is reinstated, it does not replace the Colorado Braille Competency Test administered through the Exceptional Student Services Unit. This latter test is not tied to licensure.

CDE Licensure Requirement for O&M Specialists

If you are working in a Colorado administrative unit as a School Orientation and Mobility Specialists, please know that you **MUST** have a current CDE license as a special services provider: School O&M Specialist.

If you do not have this license, your scope of O and M services should be severely restricted to those skills that could already be taught by a TVI. Without this license, you are placing yourself and your AU at risk for O&M-related liability. There is no temporary or emergency licenses for School O&M Specialists.

Questions or need some assistance? Contact Tanni separately at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Deaf-Blind Census Paperwork Coming Your Way!

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project, along with other state deafblind projects, will be sending out its annual census materials within the next week. If you are the contact person for your AU or agency, please be proactive with this paperwork so that we can report a timely and accurate count of our state's children with combined vision and hearing loss to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. If you have any questions, please be in touch with Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6681.




Calendar of Events

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

- December 7** **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org

- November 18-19** **Northern Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic— Fort Collins**
Contact: Christina Martin at christinam@psdschools.org

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

- January 11** **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org

- January 19** **Metro Region VI Meeting— CCB in Littleton (cooking)**
Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

- January 19** **National Braille Challenge - on campus of CSDB**
Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org

- January 26** **National Braille Challenge - at the Colorado Center for the Blind**
Contact: Diane Covington at dcovington@csdb.org

- January 27** **Northern TVI Meeting**
Contact: Teresa O'Brien at teresa.obrien@thompsonschoools.org

- February 8** **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org

- February 9-10** **PEAK Parents Center's - Inclusive Education Conference, Colorado Springs, CO**
Contact: Pam Christy pchristy@peakparent.org

- February 22-24** **Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**
Contact: Nancy Knight at nknight@lps.k12.co.us

- March 2-4** **American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference, Washington, DC**
Contact: <http://www.afb.org/info/about-us/events-and-awards/american-foundation>

- March 9** **Metro Region VI Meeting - Kennedy High School (resources)**
Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

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

- March 9** **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 12** **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 19-22** **Council for Exceptional Children Convention & Expo, Boston, MA**
Contact: <http://www.ceconvention.org/>
- May 4** **Metro Region VI Meeting** - in Aurora (accessibility apps)
Contact: Nancy Cozart - ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
- May 4** **Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton**
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- May 5-6** **CDE O&M Seminar—Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton**
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- May 10** **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- June 14-16** **Western Region Early Intervention Conference – Scottsdale, AZ**
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- June 26-30** **16th international Mobility Conference**
 For more information please visit: <http://imc16.com/>
- 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

- February 8-9** **PEAK Parents Center’s - Inclusive Education Conference—Colorado Springs, CO**
Contact: Pam Christy pchristy@peakparent.org
- July 25-29** **AER International Conference 2018—Peppermill Resort, Reno NV**
Contact: www.aerbvi.org



Virgil Zickel Award: APH’s Virgil Zickel Award recognizes those creative and caring individuals whose ideas result in the development of innovative products designed to improve the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired. We were proud to bestow the Zickel Award on Ann Boehm and **Dr. Kay Ferrell** for their work on the Boehm-3 Preschool: Test of Basic Concepts, Third Ed. and on Patricia Maffei and The Hatlen Center for their work on the Quick & Easy Expanded Core Curriculum. From left to right: Dorinda Rife (APH), Patricia Maffei (CA), Don Ouimet (CA), Ann Boehm (NY), Kay Ferrell (CO).



SAVE THE DATE!

Western Regional Early Intervention Conference – Summer Summit “Engagement through Healthy Partnerships”



June 14-16, 2017

FireSky Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona



The Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC) is designed to support professionals working with, and families of, children birth to five years old who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, or deafblind.

WREIC has been in place for over 30 years, making it one of the longest running, ongoing early intervention conferences in the country.



June 14, 2017 – PRE-CONFERENCE FULL-DAY PROGRAMS

- Cerebral Visual Impairment: Guide to Optimum Assessment, Intervention, and Daily Living for Children and Families
Presenters: Drs. Amanda Lueck and James Dutton
- Deaf Plus - The Mystery and the Magic: Perspectives of a Developmental Pediatrician and a Parent
Presenters: Dr. Susan Wiley and Djenne Amal Morris



June 15 & 16, 2017 – CONFERENCE SESSIONS will include but are not limited to:

- Assessment of Cerebral Visual Impairment
- Expanded Core Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers with Visual Impairment
- Orientation and Mobility Assessment for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairment
- Mealtime Routines for Infants and Toddlers Who are Visually Impaired
- Babies Count: First Year Results
- Self-Determination for Children Who Are Deafblind
- Embracing the Whole Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child
- Early ASL Development for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Infants and Toddlers
- Early Listening and Spoken Language Development in Deaf/HH Infants and Toddlers
- National Early Intervention Research and Outcomes on Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Serve and Return Strategies for Developing Spoken Language with the Itty Bittys
- The Latest Research Findings Related to the Zika Virus



Extend your stay to make it a family vacation!

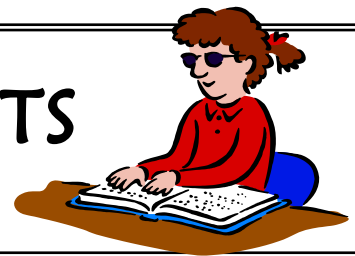


Enjoy some of the beautiful things to see and do in the gorgeous state of Arizona, from golf in the Scottsdale/Phoenix area, to the Grand Canyon or Sedona further north, to the Biosphere or Saguaro National Park near Tucson, to Colossal Cave or Tombstone in southern Arizona.

The hotel is offering the conference room rate for three days before and/or after the conference. Be watching for more information in the KIT specific to the conference website and registration.



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy if you are in the process of earning your initial CO Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. THE CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education for their role in: (a) developing, refining, and reviewing braille competency testing and support materials, (b) proctoring test sessions for initial braille competency and renewal modules; (c) providing approved mentoring to test candidates, and (d) other duties as needed to support our UEB competency processes across the state.

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

Tanni Anthony	(303) 866-6681	anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
Nancy Cozart	(303) 905-4074	ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	christine.maynard@asd20.org
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	brendashep@comcast.net
Sarah Sonnier	(970) 245-5228	sonnier.sarah5@gmail.com
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	jwetzste@jeffco.k12.co.us

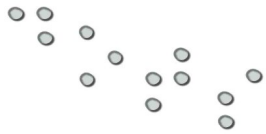
As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the metro and northern area.

Tanni will send out December updates to all TVIs and braillists who are in process with renewal modules to confirm everyone's renewal status. For those persons in this renewal window, you are welcome to contact Nancy, Christine, Brenda, Sarah, and Julie to schedule a proctored session. TVIs and braillists who are in the process of demonstrating initial braille competency, should contact Tanni for scheduling arrangements to come into CDE or use an approved regional proctor.

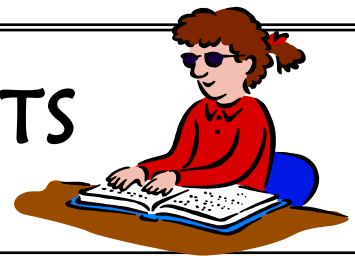
Braillewriter Repair

Mark Carpenter is available for braillewriter repair. His contact information is:

Phone: 719-634-8720 and Email: carpdiane@yahoo.com



CONNECTING THE DOTS



From APH: Test BrailleBlaster Beta!



As the Year of Braille advances braille technology, the first public beta of BrailleBlaster™, the desktop publishing tool for braille textbooks, adds to the momentum. BrailleBlaster's ambition is getting every student's textbook on the first day of class. It accomplishes this goal by providing a tool box to simplify formatting high quality braille textbooks. When combined with an experienced transcriber and structured source material like NIMAS or EPUB, it can speed up translation by 60%.

The tools BrailleBlaster offers include:

- Table of contents generator and editor
- Automatic table generator with adjustments
- Special symbols generator
- Automatic index and guide words generator
- Automatic poetry and pros numbering
- Volume splitter and joiner
- Automatic T page and P page generator
- Graphics labeler
- Braille icon creator



This public beta's purpose is to get your thoughts, ideas, and experience on making electronic braille high quality and easy, and to make embossing that material flawless.

Even if you have never tested other software, consider this opportunity to increase the ease and speed of providing high quality braille to a student or child you know.

There are four steps to testing, and you may participate in each of them to whatever level you desire.

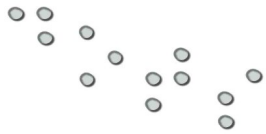
1. Download and install the software
2. Read the documentation
3. Use the program
4. Provide feedback

To download the software, go to BrailleBlaster.org and follow the instructions.

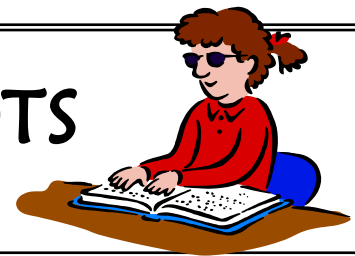
To read the documentation, select Help from the BrailleBlaster menu.

To use the software, create some braille.

To report feedback, either click on the feedback link on the brailleblaster.org page or join the email list by sending a blank email to brailleblaster-beta-subscribe@tech.aph.org if you want more in depth conversations with the owners, developers, and other users.



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Typhlo & Tactus Tactile Book Contest 2017



First Place winner of the previous contest

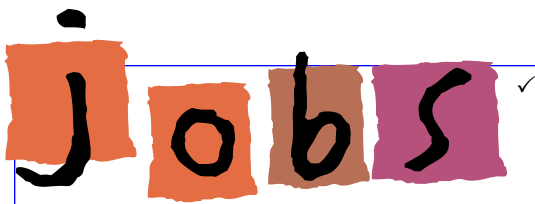
Entries Due August 10, 2017! Once again APH is the U.S. national contact for The International Tactile-Illustrated Book Prize, a biennial competition created to encourage improvement of the quality and quantity of tactile books for young children with visual impairments. Don't miss your chance to submit your tactile book, designed for children with visual impairments from 3 to 12 years of age.

The 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.

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

U.S. entrants should send their completed tactile book to the American Printing House for the Blind by **August 10, 2017**. Questions? Contact Rob Guillen, rguillen@aph.org

Visit this link for rules and entry forms and to see last year's winners www.aph.org/tactus-international-tactile-books-competition/



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for this school year or the one starting in fall 2015. 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 O&M 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 and COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist.

Northern Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (.5FTE) for Thompson School District. For more information about this position, contact Charlie Carter at (970)-613-5092 or charlie.carter@thompsonschoools.org
- ✓ **.5 TVI** in Greeley-Evans School District 6. The contact person is Tom Gribble and he can be reached at tgribble@greeleyschools.org or (719) 348-6103

Southern Region – Jobs

- ✓ Teacher of the Visually Impaired/O&M Specialist (.6FTE, 190 days per year) for Pikes Peak BOCES for more information, please contact Charla Durham at (719)-622-2096 or cdurham@ppbooces.org
- ✓ CSDB - Please be in touch with Chelle Lutz for CSDB Openings. She can be reached at (719)578-2100.

Western Region — Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE) for Mesa Valley School District in Grand Junction. For more information, please contact Cindy Starr at (970) 254-5136 or cindy.starr@d51schools.org

Metro Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (1 FTE) on a temporary basis in Cherry Creek School district from January through the beginning of April. For more information, go to the Cherry Creek School District webpage and fill in all information as if applying for a teacher position/substitute list

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 substitute work.

Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement!



TRANSITION INFORMATION

APH Needs Your Help with Transition and O&M

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) knows you need products to help with transition, orientation and mobility, and adult life issues – and they want to develop the products that you need. To do this, they need to know what you need and your expertise. If you have a product idea or a problem that a product might solve, APH is asking for your input.

If you work with transition students, adults, or provide orientation and mobility services, please contact APH with unmet product needs or ideas for products that would help you and your students. Terrie can help you submit your product needs or ideas to APH to be considered for development. If you are not sure whether your issue will lead to a product, please contact Terrie to discuss it. Product ideas often emerge when discussing such concerns. You can reach APH by phone at (502) 551-6382. Please provide your email address and your phone number so that Terrie can reach you to talk with you about your ideas.

AFB Career Connect

INTRODUCES:

The Job Seekers' Toolkit Lasting learning with career education

Visit www.afb.org/careerconnect

The Job Seeker's Toolkit is an accessible, self paced course that provides the right tools for conducting a successful job search. Presented on the ever popular CareerConnect Website, this toolkit:

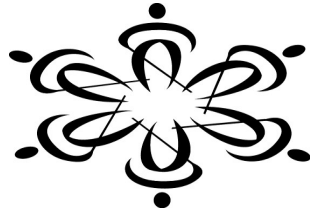
- ◆ Helps job seekers with vision loss develop or hone job-seeking skills.
- ◆ Provides practical examples, and a variety of lessons and assignments.
- ◆ Allows students to share their assignments with teachers, rehabilitation counselors, or parents.
- ◆ Builds confidence and self-awareness.

Bonus: Includes links to short articles about maintaining employment once a job has been landed.

CareerConnect is a free employment resources created by AFB to expand employment possibilities for people with vision loss. Learn more about career exploration and the tools necessary for finding job opportunities by visiting www.afb.org/careerconnect



TRANSITION INFORMATION



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

Live the life you want.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

2017 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

for blind high school seniors through grad school students

Program Begins: November 1, 2016

Deadline: Midnight, EST, March 31, 2017

\$12,000 Scholarship

“The Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship”

and

1 scholarship for \$10,000

2 scholarships for \$8,000 each

4 scholarships for \$5,000 each

22 scholarships for \$3,000 each

PLUS other gifts to our thirty scholarship finalists!

ARE YOU A LEGALLY BLIND HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR OR COLLEGE STUDENT?

Go to: www.nfb.org/scholarships

To apply: During the five-month open period, read the rules and the Submission Checklist, complete the official 2017 Scholarship Application Form (online or in print), supply all required documents, and request and complete one interview by an NFB affiliate president. Read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page for more information.

Questions? Contact the NFB Scholarship Program; Chairperson Patti Chang, Esq.

E-mail: Scholarships@nfb.org

Office: (410) 659 -9314, ext. 2415, (8 a.m. - 5 p.m. EST)

Technology News

AFB American Foundation[®] for the Blind

Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss



The American Foundation for the Blind is pleased to announce **Learn Tech**, a technology access initiative that features free online tutorials to help people who are blind or visually impaired learn how to improve their computer and technology skills. The tutorials can be accessed at www.afb.org/learntech.

The newest tutorial offering for Learn Tech is a 10-part series on **Using Google Docs and Google Drive with NVDA**. Google Docs is a free, web-based application in which documents can be created, edited, and stored online. Google Drive is a file storage and synchronization service that allows users to store files in the cloud, and share files with people who are working on the same project. NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access) is a free screen reader for people who are blind or visually impaired.

When these tools are used together, computer users who are blind or visually impaired are able to use the computer for work or school without any additional, expensive software. These tools also allow for easy project collaboration with others at school or in the workplace, leveling the playing field.

Also available from Learn Tech are the previously released Learn NVDA free video tutorials that describe how to use the NVDA free and fully featured screen reader.

Additional tutorials will be added to Learn Tech over time. To learn more, or to share information with people who may be interested in using the tutorials, go to www.afb.org/learntech. Users are encouraged to provide feedback on the tutorials and other training topics of interest in the feedback links.

Learn Tech tutorials were made possible with support from the Lions Club International Foundation, the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund, and the Consumer Technology Association Foundation. AFB is pleased to partner with these organizations to support technology literacy. Together, we are working to create a more accessible, inclusive world for people with vision loss.

Technology News

Differentiated Pathways: Including ALL Students with Disabilities in the Colorado READ Act

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) was passed by the Colorado Legislature during the 2012 legislative session. The READ Act repealed the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) as of July 1, 2013, keeping many of the elements of CBLA such as a focus on K-3 literacy, assessment, and individual plans for students reading below grade level. The READ Act differs from CBLA by focusing on students identified as having a significant reading deficiency (SRD), delineating requirements for parent communication, and providing funding to support intervention. Other components of the Colorado READ Act include a competitive Early Literacy Grant and a resource bank of assessments, instructional programming, and professional development.

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school, students previously exempted or excluded from participation requirements of the READ ACT, including those with disabilities, must now be assessed for a significant reading deficiency (SRD) and reported in the Spring READ Act data collection. In order to meet the legal mandate that ALL students in grades K-3 be screened for an SRD.

There are three pathways for participation of students with disabilities with the READ Act.

Pathway #1: Differentiated Pathway #1 is simply using your choice of the State-approved READ Act interim assessments to screen students in grades kindergarten through the third grade for a Significant Reading Deficiency. Districts have a choice of using any one of the seven approved interim assessments. Please note that the assessment should be reviewed for allowable accommodations that may be needed for the student to participate fully with that tool. For example, some tools will allow for extended time and some will not. Some tools have screen enlargement capacity and some can be used with low vision devices. It will be important to be aware of the allowable accommodations of your selected tool.

Pathway #2: In Pathway #2 is for students who cannot be assessed with the interim assessment typically used in Pathway #1 as a result of an accessibility issue. In this scenario, the student may be assessed using one of the other six State-approved interim assessments that will yield a valid score. For example, a student who has oral fluency challenges may not be able to be screened with a tool that requires a task such as rapid naming of letters. In this instance, the student may be able to be screened successfully using another state-approved tool.

Pathway #3: In Pathway #3, students are unable to access the approved interim assessments based on the nature of their disability. Assessment options have been established for these students who may have been previously exempted from the Read Act.

Braille Option: If you have any questions regarding this option, email Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

- The administrative unit's teacher of students with visual impairments should be consulted for all students requiring a braille format assessment.
- If the district is using a paper-based approved interim assessment, it can be transcribed into braille for the student by appropriate school personnel (the TVI and/or a brailist). If the district uses DIBELS or would like to use DIBELS for their braille students, this tool is available in commercial braille. Copies of DIBELS in the Unified English Braille (UEB) format can be requested at no cost by the TVI through the Colorado Instructional Resource Center.
- A teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) should be present for test administration and the analysis of the results.

Technology News

Differentiated Pathways: Including ALL Students with Disabilities in the Colorado READ Act *(continued)*

Research-based Procedure for Hearing Impairment including Deafness: If you have any questions regarding this option, email Ruth Mathers at mathers_r@cde.state.co.us

A differentiated pathway was created for a small percentage of students with Hearing Impairment including Deafness who are unable to access the approved interim assessments. Three brief webinars are archived on this site to inform education teams about this pathway.

They can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/literacy_disabilities

Colorado Emergent Literacy Scales (CELS): If you have any questions regarding this option, email Gina Herrera at herrera_g@cde.state.co.us

The Colorado Emergent Literacy Scales (CELS) is designed for students with a significant cognitive disability. It is a framework is designed to collect information through a structured portfolio process to determine if a student has a significant reading deficiency (SRD). It is also designed to inform instruction for students who receive their instruction based on the alternate achievement standards or Extended Evidence Outcome.

Details about the CELS can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/literacy_disabilities

Webpage on Eccentric Viewing

Dona Sauerburger has posted a page explaining how she train individuals who have macular degeneration how use eccentric viewing to look for environmental things like vehicles and traffic signals.

It can be viewed at <http://www.sauerburger.org/dona/eccentric>

a u d i o j a c k

APH Is Looking for Your Input on Audiojack!

Audiojack is an audio based movie that uses only sound design to tell a story. Similar to a radio show, you listen to the content and use your imagination to tell the story you heard. The thing that makes Audiojack unique is that there are no words or music. Hundreds of sound effects are layered together to tell a story. The free Audiojack mobile app is currently used all over the world and in the United States by programs like Perkins School for the Blind and the California School for the Blind. The content is divided into five categories that each offers a unique experience. The content in the Life and Sports sections has been used in Orientation and Mobility instruction, and other sections have been used to entertain and also to educate. APH would like to both introduce you to the app and gather your thoughts about using it with children who are visually impaired. The app and some of its content are available for free.

Please download the app and try it out with the free content. Then complete the survey to help Audiojack and APH better provide content and give us ideas on how to make Audiojack a tool for everyone to use.

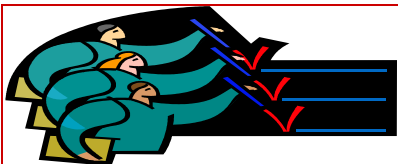
Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Audiojack>

App Links:

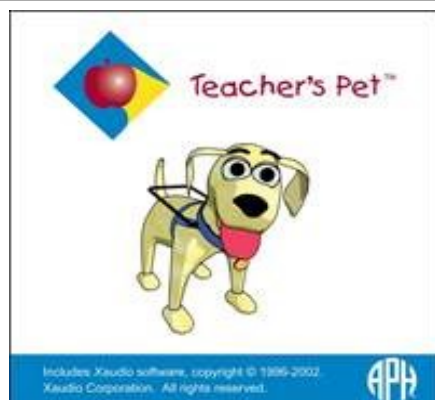
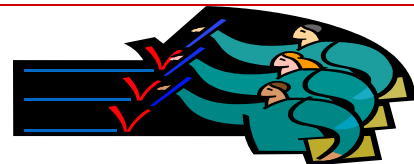
Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.audiojack.free>

Apple: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/audiojack/id857173185>

Website: www.Audiojack.com



CHECK IT OUT!



Give Us Your Feedback on Teacher's Pet Software!

Calling all test creators and test takers! APH needs your feedback. APH is in the process of modernizing *Teacher's Pet*, a test creation and administration program. Please take a moment to complete a short online survey about the tools you use to create and administer tests in the classroom and at home. Help them make *Teacher's Pet* a valuable tool in your toolbox.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TP-general>.

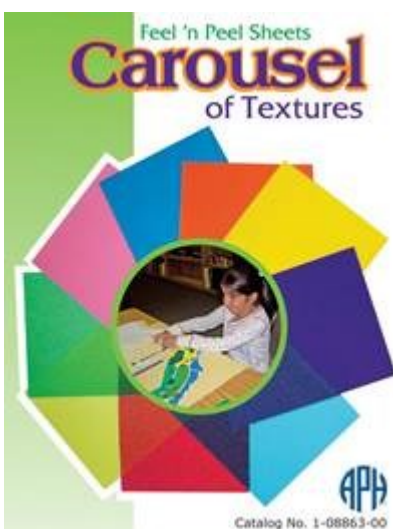
Find a Winter Sports Camp!

2017 Winter Sport Camps are taking registration now!

Find a camp near you: www.aph.org/physical-education/camps/



Share Your Creativity with Carousel of Textures!



APH invites you to share your creative uses of Carousel of Textures with other teachers and parents. Please send photos of your adapted maps, storybooks, games, graphs, and more to Karen J. Poppe, Tactile Literacy Project Leader, at kpoppe@aph.org to be featured in an online gallery of ideas to spark new uses for the product.



The DIAGRAM Center

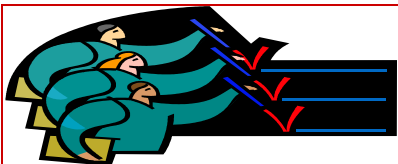
The explicit goals of the DIAGRAM Center + for 2020 are:

1. Increased number of new educational materials that are born accessible and readily available to children and students with disabilities
2. Increased use of new tools and technologies to create accessible education materials, especially STEM content, for children and students with disabilities
3. Increased knowledge of the accessibility features specific to the needs of students with print disabilities and students with disabilities not traditionally associated with print disabilities
4. A community of technology developers, publishers, and end users building knowledge and contributing to the development of tools/services.

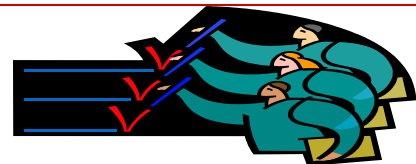
Highlights of their planned activities include:

- Prototyping a repository/registry of accessible images in multiple modalities (description, tactile, 3D objects), focusing on fundamental STEM concepts while eventually expanding to more multimedia such as interactives and video.
- Piloting the timely customization and delivery of manipulatives for children with various disabilities, including working with partners such as gh and Derrick Smith
- More work on accessible math, including more input and output options and a MathML support finder
- An open repository of examples of reusable demonstration code for accessible versions of the most common digital interactions and modalities (e.g., haptic CSS, video transcription, interactive sliders, other stylesheets, 3D web-based models).
- Leveraging the video work of the VDRDC (Video Description Research and Development Center) and their YouDescribe software.
- In partnership with George Kerscher and the U.S. Fund for DAISY, furthering development of Radium to add and maintain accessibility features, especially ensuring support for the Diagrammar content model.
- In partnership with WGBH/NCAM, developing and releasing demonstrations of accessible STEM digital learning assets (including videos and activities) for young children, based on the popular program PEEP and the Big Wide World
- R&D on tech for children with disabilities not traditionally associated with print disabilities, including user testing, and working with publishers and educational technology companies who serve them
- Integration and implementation tools and services, packaged for publisher partners and academic institutions, to make “born accessible” a reality in their workflow.
- An annual DIAGRAM Report, a “horizon report” covering key promising new and existing technologies for multi-modal access to and creation of STEM materials.
- Continue our leading work on technical standards development, community engagement and expansion, technology development partnerships, and training and knowledge sharing.

For more information, please go to: <http://diagramcenter.org/>



CHECK IT OUT!



natural resources

What Has Happened to Play?

Current educational mandates are creating changes in early childhood settings. More and more direct teaching of academic skills is being required at younger and younger ages.

In this thought-provoking, research-based article, Diane Levin urges all educators who understand the vital role of play in the lives of young children to take action toward restoring play as a central part of childhood. Read the article at <http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2016/endangered-play>

Interested in an annotated set of evidence, print, audiovisual and web resources on play? Check out: <http://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/resources/handout-resources-support-incorporating-playful-approaches-learning-and-development>

A Better Start: Why Classroom Diversity Matters in Early Education

Over the past decade, public investments in early childhood education have increased, and policymakers have focused on creating high-quality, sustainable preschool programs. However, largely missing from early childhood policy discussions is consideration of classroom diversity and how it affects the equity, quality, and sustainability of preschool programs. Studies have shown that socioeconomically and racially diverse preschool classrooms offer important cognitive and social benefits for children, but few children enrolled in public preschool programs have access to these types of classrooms.

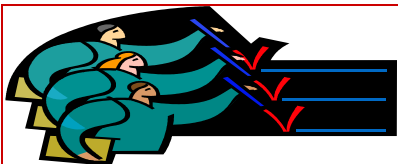
This publication summarizes what is known about racial and economic diversity in Head Start and state pre-K classrooms, discusses how diversity and quality are linked, and recommends steps policymakers can take to increase diversity in preschool classrooms.

https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/production.tcf.org/app/uploads/2015/04/29222920/A_Better_Start-11.pdf

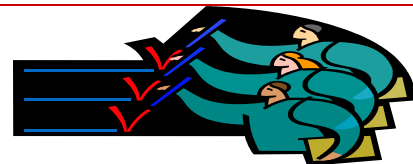
New APH Pinterest Content to Check Out!

The American Printing House for the Blinds recently added three new boards, including Social Studies, Concept Development, and Language Arts to their Pinterest site (<https://www.pinterest.com/aphfortheblind/>).

They also updated their STEM Resources board, changing it to STEAM Resources, reflecting the inclusion of art education and health science education as a part of this board. Now we offer a board that covers every area of the Common Core Curriculum and the Expanded Core Curriculum. Happy pinning!



CHECK IT OUT!



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO

2016 STATE CONVENTION

October 27-30, 2016

The 2016 State Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado will be held at the Denver Marriott South--10345 Park Meadows Drive Lone Tree CO 80124. Convention activities will begin on Thursday, October 27 and conclude at noon on Sunday, October 30. Save the date! Details to follow when they become available.

PSAT/SAT Braille and Large Print Practice Materials

College Board has braille and large print practice materials available. You can get them by contacting them at SSD Customer Service (212-713-8333) or ssd@info.collegeboard.org.

Also, the assistive technology version is available here:

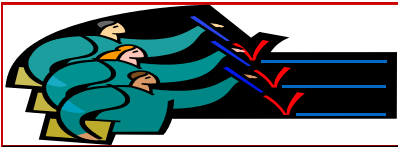
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-test-assistive-technology>



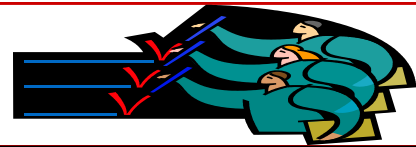
The American Printing House for the Blind has a strong interest in accessibility, and the influx of digital and online tests used in schools has posed new challenges for students with visual impairments and the teachers who work on their behalf. We have worked collaboratively with test publishers such as Pearson and ACT to ensure accessibility of these tools, but the challenge continues as tests taken on computers become more intuitive. The APH had an recent opportunity to team with Northwest Evaluation Association to improve accessibility for students who are blind and visually impaired. The not-for-profit Northwest Evaluation Association™ (NWEA™) is a global educational services organization. In 2016, NWEA products and services support educators and their students in over 7,800 schools, districts, and educational agencies worldwide.

Beginning in fall 2016, schools and districts began using an accessible version of NWEA's **Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®)** growth assessment that supported refreshable braille display and JAWS screen reader. NWEA worked with various people, schools, and organizations such as Bryan Gould at the National Center on Accessible Media (NCAM) and Dr. Lisa Jackson at the Arizona School for the Blind. See the links below for articles by each of these individuals as well as others.

According to Brian Tosky, NWEA's Product Manager of Platform Accessibility and Accommodations, "NWEA's MAP tests incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to help meet the needs of learners who are visually impaired, helping us support our mission of partnering to help all kids learn. Using UDL principles and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), NWEA offers an accessible assessment which creates a student experience that is most authentic to their everyday learning needs."



CHECK IT OUT!



With permission from APH Vice President Dorinda Rife, APH Director of Accessible Tests Debbie Willis contacted NWEA and asked if they would be interested in having APH staff conduct accessibility reviews of MAP test items. Willis received a positive response from NWEA Product Manager Brian Tosky.

Tosky's colleague Kat McLaurin agreed to set up four one-hour test sessions and to proctor these. McLaurin provided access to APH staff to sign in and take accessible MAP tests.

Ferrara's review stated, "Nearly all English Language Arts (ELA) items were accessible; there was one drag 'n drop which I reported to the (NWEA) team as inaccessible. The others were very accessible." Ferrara went on to say, "Most math items were accessible; there were a couple of items that may present cognitive overload. The second, more advanced math test, however, had several accessibility problems. There were several items with variables that were not spoken; others had graphs with no (text-based) descriptions, and answers where JAWS said only 'checkbox' because no alt-text was included. Overall the percentage of inaccessible items was low, and each item [with a problem] was reported as inaccessible to the [NWEA] team."

Each of the four accessibility reviewers sent their specific concerns/issues directly to the NWEA team via their built-in reporting system. In addition, each of the four reviewers sent general reviews to Debbie Willis who shared these with NWEA staff. After testing was completed by APH staff, Tosky relayed, "...I want to thank you and everyone at APH who looked at our tests. We know that the only way we can improve and make our assessments fully accessible is by putting it in the hands of the experts and this feedback is only going to improve MAP."

Below are some informative links regarding various aspects and people, schools, companies involved in working toward accessibility of MAP for test takers with visual impairments. Many thanks to NWEA staff and their commitment to a fully accessible version of MAP!

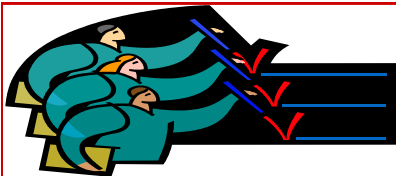
- <https://www.nwea.org/about/history/>
- <https://www.nwea.org/assessments/map/accommodations-accessibility/>
- <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2016/what-does-equity-and-accessibility-look-like-within-assessment/>
- <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2016/three-field-study-pro-tips-going-rogue-by-creating-accessibility-in-the-classroom/>
- <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2016/assessments-build-student-independence/>
- <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2016/making-map-accessible-for-students-with-visual-disabilities/>
- <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2016/testing-students-who-are-visually-impaired-or-blind-what-am-i-missing/>

NFB-Pearson STEM Survey

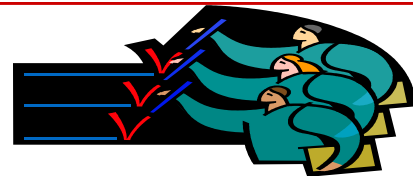
The NFB and Pearson seek to remove access barriers to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses. To do this, we need to better understand the barriers blind STEM students have encountered and have thus designed a detailed survey to help us gather information regarding classroom training, support, and educational materials. Please take time to complete this survey, or encourage your child or student to complete the survey, by Friday, December 2. Participation in this survey is critical; the survey results will help us broaden access to STEM subjects for future blind students. Participants will be entered into a drawing to win one of twenty \$25 Amazon gift cards.

- [STEM survey for college students and adults](#)
- [STEM survey for middle and high school students](#)

Click on the link to complete the survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NFBAdultSTEM>



CHECK IT OUT!



OSERS

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

News, Events and Updates from the Office of the Assistant Secretary

Benetech Delivers 10 Million Accessible Ebooks

- *Benetech's Bookshare technology makes reading possible for over 425,000 individuals unable to read standard print*
- *Empowers students and adults to succeed in school, work and social inclusion*

Benetech, the leading nonprofit empowering communities in need by creating scalable technology solutions, recently announced that over 10 million accessible ebooks have been downloaded through its Bookshare initiative. Bookshare is the world's largest online library for people who are blind, visually impaired or have a physical disability that interferes with reading, such as dyslexia. Through its extensive collection of educational and popular titles, specialized book formats, and reading tools, Bookshare offers individuals who cannot read standard print materials the same ease of access that people without disabilities enjoy.

In 2007 and 2012, Bookshare received two five-year awards from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), to provide free access for all U.S. students with a qualifying print disability. Bookshare is an initiative of Benetech, a Palo Alto, CA-based nonprofit that develops and uses technology to create positive social change. www.bookshare.org.

Benetech works with over 820 publishers to collect new releases and existing books that are currently unavailable to individuals who cannot read standard print. Bookshare's technology converts the digital files to accessible formats, including braille, audio, highlighted text and large-font text. Over 425,000 Bookshare members in 70 countries access the growing list of 460,000 titles made available by this technology. The Bookshare library is free for all U.S. students with qualifying print disabilities.

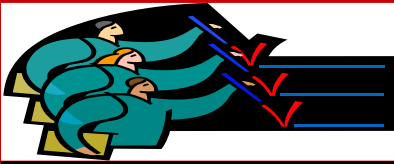
"Access to information is a basic human right," said Jim Fruchterman, founder and CEO of Benetech. "Our Bookshare initiative is focused on using technology to make sure individuals who are unable to read standard print can exercise that right. Today's milestone is a celebration of what is possible when technology is used for social good."

Building State P-3 Systems Webinar and Resources

The Center for Enhancing Early Learning Opportunities –
Hosted a webinar highlighting the P-3 systems work of three states –
Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Massachusetts

If you follow this link <http://ceelo.org/building-state-p-3-systems-webinar/>

The webinar is 90 minutes long. It is worth a listen if you are interested in what system support for P-3 learning can look like. Some of the topics presenters addressed include; state/local partnership, community partners, balancing state oversight and local flexibility, and governance/advisory structures.



APH Helps Release Annual Reports from Historic Residential Schools for the Blind



Perkins School, South Boston. 1838 hotel building used from 1839-1912

If you are doing a history project on one of the historic residential schools, your toolkit just grew a bit. Over this last summer, the APH museum intern, Mikayla Powell, spent time scanning their collection of historic annual reports. She photographed every page of over 330 annual reports. Through our cooperative relationship with the Internet Archive, the reports were then uploaded to the Archive's servers, and the scans were converted into searchable pdf files as well as accessible formats like Daisy, Epub, and full text. All of the newly scanned reports are now available for researchers and general readers worldwide. APH is cooperating with the archivists at Perkins School for the Blind, led by Jen Hale and Jennifer Arnott, to avoid duplication of effort on the scanning front, but between the two institutions, large numbers of residential school reports are now available. You can find a list of reports available from Perkins at <http://www.perkinsarchives.org/annual-reports-us-canada.html>

Reports scanned at APH this summer included issues from Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania (Western and Overbrook), South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. APH does not have every issue of each state school's report, so our next step will be to reach out to the states to help fill in the gaps.

Here is a brief primer on how to use the newly scanned reports.

Go to <https://archive.org>. You can type in the name of the school in the search box and go directly to a list of reports.

One hint: remember that schools frequently changed their names over the years. For example, the Washington State School for Defective Youth thankfully became the Washington State School for the Blind in 1913. If you go to our on-line exhibit on the residential schools, found at <http://www.aph.org/museum/programs/schools/>, the exhibit can help you with all the name changes.

For more information, call Mike Hudson at 502-899-2365 or by email at mhudson@aph.org.

just for PARENTS

[U.S. Department of Education Announces \\$2.5 Million in Grants to Operate Centers for Parents of Children with Disabilities](#)

The U.S. Department of Education announced the award of \$2.5 million in grants to operate 23 Community Parent Resource Centers in 17 states and a Parent Training and Information Center to serve American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The centers provide parents with the training and information they need to work with professionals in meeting the early intervention and special needs of children with disabilities.

For a list of Department-funded parent training and information centers, visit www.parentcenterhub.org.

The one award funded to Colorado is as follows:

THRIVE Resource Center, Denver, CO—Yvette Burkhalter—Yvette@thrivetr.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.
- The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People (www.thelegalcenter.org) and
- The Arc of Colorado (www.thearcofco.org) are other resources for families looking for advocates.

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

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

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

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

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

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

Thanks to everyone for helping to keep our mailing list up-to-date!

Send changes to: anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202. Or please leave a voice message at (303) 866-6681. Thank you so much!



colorado connections



Congratulations to **Elsa and Brian D'Angelo** on the birth of their son. Ronan Marvel Phipps was born May 6th and weighted 6 lbs 15 ounces and was 19.5 inches long. Happy Baby Wishes to **Nicole and Jeff Anderson** on the birth of their daughter Lilian Grace who was born on May 15th. Lilian Grace weighed 6 lbs and 10.2 ounces and was 19 inches long. More happy baby wishes to **Sarah (Bickford)** and **Christopher Vallese** on the birth of their daughter Josephine Ann, born October 10th at 11:10 p.m., weighting 6 lbs and 9 ounces. She joins big sister Lily.



Happy Belated Wedding and Marriage Wishes to **Jen (Klyczek)** and **Bryan Parker** who were married on March 26, 2016. Jen is working as a TVI with Developmental Pathways. Congratulations to **Melinda (Holtz)** and **Chris Russell**, who were married on August 5th, 2016.

- 🔊 Congratulations to **Tina Boddicker**, a brailist in District 11, for earning her National Library of Congress certification in braille transcribing! A big shout out to Littleton Public School brailist **Lisa Brocard** for earning her NLS Letter of Proficiency in UEB. Congratulations to **Tina Martin** of Poudre School District, **Danielle Burden** of Greeley-Evans School District, and **Carol Jordan** (private contactor) for earning their CDE Certificates of Braille Competency. Congrats to **Jasmine Gomez** of DPS for earning her CDE Renewal UEB Competency Certificate! Hats off to the following people who have earned CDE Braille Competency Renewal hours: **Taryn Galow, Jasmine Gomez, Jeannie Lei, and Wendy Unwin Watson**. Thanks to braille proctors: **Nancy Cozart, Christine Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein**.
- 🔊 A very big thank you to the following individuals who shared their time and resource information at the September 29, 2016 State of the State Resource Night. They included: **Debbi MacLeod** (Talking Book Library), **Julia Zannon** and **LaVerne Dell** (Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), **Michael Turner** (Learning Ally), **Kristy Murdock** (CSDB Outreach), **Jim Olson** (Colorado Instructional Materials Center), **Kevin Brouard** (United States Association of Blind Athletes), **Rossana Longo Better** and **Gina Rivera** (Audio Information Network), **Mark Davis** and **Bill Murphy** (Foresight Ski Guide), **Brent Batron** and **Julie Deden** (Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program), **Lindsay Standish, Lorraine Chevarria, and Callie Spotted Elk** (Anchor Center for Blind Children), **Jamie Lugo** (CSDB School for the Blind), **Trina Boyd Pratt** (CAER), and **Tanni Anthony** (Colorado Department of Education Exceptional Student Services Unit).
- 🔊 The most recent edition of *Future Reflections*, a quarterly publication of the National Federation of the Blind, contains a story by **Jo Pinto**. Jo is our braille proofreader of the CO Braille Competency Test. The story, "Learning to Raise My Hand--And Find My Voice" is a short memoir about an experience she had as one of the first blind students in the public school system. Congrats on this published story to Jo.
- 🔊 Congratulations to **Michelle Chacon** on her new leadership role in New Mexico as the Outreach Itinerant Mentor with the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Michelle was the TVI and COMS in Adams 50 for 9.5 years and an important member of our Colorado community. She started her new role on October 25th. We wish you all the best, Michelle!
- 🔊 **Will Reynolds** is the new TVI / COMS in Westminster School District. Will has a degree in social sciences for secondary education, and an endorsement in culturally and linguistically diverse education. He worked at Poudre School District for three years as a paraeducator with students with visual impairments. He received his MA from UNC in August for his TVI license and is working to finish his O&M requirements by this next summer.

State of Colorado Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

Joyce Rankin
3rd Congressional District

Deborah Scheffel
6th Congressional District

Angelika Schroeder
2nd Congressional District

Steve Durham
5th Congressional District

Valentina (Val) Flores
1st Congressional District

Jane Goff
7th Congressional District

Pam Mazanec
4th Congressional District

**Katy Anthes
Interim Commissioner of Education**

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Exceptional Student Services

1560 Broadway, Suite 1100

Denver, CO 80202



COLORADO
Department of Education

The contents of this handout were developed under a grant from the United States Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

25-23B-3401

MAIL TO: