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RESOLUTIONS

By Tanni L. Anthony

No sugar (okay, less sugar), no wheat, more exercise, not so much work, more play - fill in the blanks on what you want to improve in your life. We all have our new lists and it is tempting to think that the slate is clear of all that was not accomplished the year before. This year I am going to do a new approach and focus on the actual word RESOLUTIONS or in memo format—RE for the word regarding—**RE: SOLUTIONS**. This puts the focus on being proactive and ultimately focusing on what can work or, simply put, finding a solution or even solutions.

Think of this way. Rather than tell myself, “YOU need to exercise more,” I can reframe the need to improve my cardio and trim my waistline; I look for a solution to the question, “How to exercise?” All of a sudden things start to present themselves, a noon yoga class at my work, a “date walk” around our neighborhood hills with my husband on Saturday and Sunday mornings, challenging myself to a minimum of 10,000 steps each day, and a new gym mat at the foot of my bed for some morning stretching. Bit by bit, moments of exercise are being woven into my life with the side benefit of being with people that I love and enjoy.

Finding solutions means starting with the right question. If a student is struggling with reading, the educational team (parents included!) need to ask WHY? The goal is to find the root cause of the problem and then work on building solutions that can be tried over time. The key is to give the solution a chance, but not to assume that it will be successful. If reading does not improve, something new must be addressed. Solutions are only viable when they match the challenge.

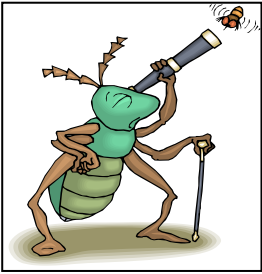
So whether your RE:SOLUTIONS are for yourself, your child, and/or your students – I wish you all the best. No more empty promises or well-intentioned proclamations of “This year, I will...!” Instead focus on a solution, give it time, measure the results, and do not be shy of admitting when it did not work, and when it is time to try again. A Belated Welcome to 2017!

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

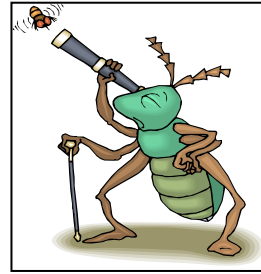
A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
January—February 2017

Table of Contents

Low Vision Evaluation News	2	Vision Coalition Notes	27
Orientation & Mobility	3	Colorado Connections	39
Resources and Materials	5		
CDE Happenings	6		
Calendar of Events	8		
Connecting the Dots	11		
Job Openings	16		
Transition Information	17		
Check It Out	20		
Just for Parents	25		



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC UPDATES

By Debbie Haberkorn

Northern Region Clinic: The Northern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held Friday, November 18, 2016 at Enight Skills Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Five students from three Administrative Units (Boulder Valley RE-2, Moffat County RE-1, and Weld County District 6) received evaluations. Six parents and three TVIs attended the evaluation with their students. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank Regional Coordinator Christina Martin, the Enight Skills Center for hosting the event, and TVIs Sally Burch, Sara Noel, and Janis Mountford who brought students.

Southern Region Clinic: The Southern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held January 12-January 13, 2017 at Low Vision Services of Colorado. Eleven students from seven Administrative Units (CSDB, El Paso County District 2, El Paso County District 11, El Paso County District 38, El Paso County District 49, Ellicott, and Pueblo County District 60) received evaluations. Seven parents and eight TVIs attended the evaluation with their students. The Clinic team would like to thank Regional Coordinator Wendy Watson, and TVIs Tesia Nasehi, Whitney Sandoval, Lori Mattick, Karen Wood, Morgan Turner, Wendy Watson, Diane Fitzkee, and Donice Fennimore who brought students.

One more clinic left for this school — go Metro Region!

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

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

O&M with Wheelchairs Resource

Be sure to check out Scott Crawford's resource through the American Printing House for the Blind. The book and the video modeling are very helpful.

https://shop.aph.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_Orientation%20and%20Mobility%20for%20Wheelchair%20Users%20with%20Visual%20Impairment%20or%20Blindness_36528722P_10001_11051

Also check out the following resources that were recently posted on the AER O&M Listserv.

http://www.wheelchairskillsprogram.ca/eng/documents/WSTP_Manual_4.1.50.pdf

Powered mobility for infants and toddlers: ctdinstitute.org

L. Hansen . Evidence and outcomes for power mobility intervention with young children.

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6175/ecd23db93c99bed0a7e3fe34319b8365411e.pdf>

L. Watanabe. Early intervention power: Who can Participate?

<https://mobilitygmt.com/articles/2014/01/01/earlyintervention.aspx>

http://lists.aerbvi.org/mailman/listinfo/aernet_lists.aerbvi.org

January Marked the Official Launch of A Shared Vision!

By Paula Landry

Our team of Pediatric Visual Impairment Specialists, Stefanie Kirkwood, Paula Landry and Sarah Vallese, completed its first full month of home-based, Early Intervention services. More than 35 babies, toddlers and their families received support, education and love. Our Executive Director, Steven Lindauer, has worked tirelessly in developing ASV's organizational model and operational processes, building relationships, as well as attending EI trainings. Thank you to the CCBs for including us! ASV is also thrilled to welcome our first intern, Caitlin Bleything, as part of our goal to help build overall vision service capabilities across Colorado! Caitlin is a TSVI graduate student and parent of a child with a visual impairment. She will be with ASV until May while completing her final practicum hours.

We currently have contracts with / in process with five Metro area CCBs (Developmental Disabilities Resource Center, Envision, Imagine!, North Metro Community Services and Rocky Mountain Human Services) and we are providing weekly, bi-weekly or monthly visits to families in these communities. In addition, our first Outreach trip to Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction is scheduled for the end of February and we've connected with several other regions including Durango, and Montrose in hopes of providing outreach and telehealth services in these areas within the next few months.

ASV will be partnering with other local agencies to develop a series of training modules in the areas of blindness and visual impairment, including deaf blindness, for statewide dissemination. ASV is also working on a family friendly Functional Vision Assessment to complement Early Intervention's new GO4IT process which is now being used in the development and implementation of IFSPs across the state.

We are truly grateful for the opportunity to continue working with Colorado's youngest children with blindness / visual Impairment and are excited to see what the future holds! Please visit our website at: www.ASharedVision.org or "like and follow" us on our A Shared Vision Facebook page!

CTD State and District Spotlight

Essentials of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



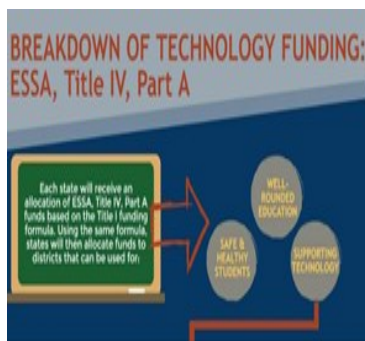
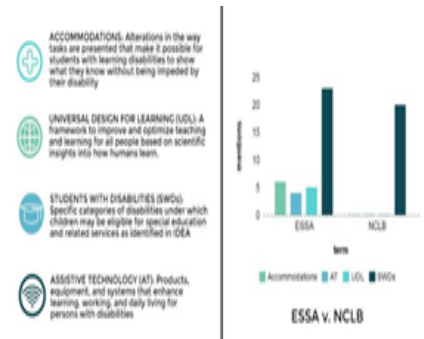
The Center on Technology and Disability (CTD) has developed three resources that provide important information related to students with disabilities in the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Learn how ESSA addresses technology-related issues that present opportunities to support students with disabilities:

Our latest quick guide, [Education Technology in the Every Student Succeeds Act](#), identifies the ways that ESSA can foster the enhancement of teaching and learning through the effective use of assistive and instructional technology. Find a variety of resources to support state and local leaders in your efforts to leverage technology to advance equal educational opportunities.

Looking for some quick resources? Download and share our infographics today:

[Every Student Succeeds Act: Students with Disabilities Front and Center](#) - See a side-by-side comparison of ESSA and NCLB to learn how they differ in their approaches to support the needs of students with disabilities.



[Breakdown of Technology Funding: ESSA, Title IV, Part A](#) - Learn how ESSA funds may be allocated to support state and district technology initiatives.

Center on Technology and Disability | ctd@fhi360.org | www.ctdinstitute.org

Resources and Materials



PATHS TO LITERACY

PATHS TO LITERACY—FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

This website is the result of a joint project between Perkins School for the Blind and Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI). By combining their resources and expertise, the goal is to assist educators and families in the quest to provide literacy experiences for children who are blind or visually impaired.

The information on this site ranges from a basic overview of literacy to various stages of development and special challenges, as well as an exploration of different media (print, braille, auditory strategies). They encourage you to add your ideas and questions, so that this will be an interactive hub of resources. There are continually new articles added to this site, so it is worth checking out on a regular basis.

For more information, go to: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/about-site>

Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The mission of Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, their families and blindness service providers.

Founded in 1920 by William Hadley and Dr. E.V.L. Brown, Hadley offers courses free of charge to its blind and visually impaired students and their families, and affordable tuition to blindness professionals. Today, Hadley is the largest provider of distance education for people who are blind or visually impaired around the world, serving more than 10,000 students annually in all 50 states and in 100 countries. Hadley is also the largest educator of braille worldwide. A 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, the school relies on contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations to fund its programs.

Hadley has a course for you if you are: (a) A blind or visually impaired individual 14+ years of age; (b) A relative of a blind or visually impaired child; (c) A family member of a blind or visually impaired adult; and/or (d) A professional or paraprofessional in the blindness field

The Advantages of Distance Education

- ✓ **Study in a location convenient to you.** Course materials and teachers' comments on your assignments arrive by mail or via email.
- ✓ **Study at any time, at your own pace.** Since you decide when to study, you can choose a time when you are least likely to be interrupted.
- ✓ **Receive specially-designed course materials in the medium of your choice—braille, large print, audio and online.**
- ✓ **Receive one-on-one attention from your instructor.** Your Hadley instructor will check, grade and respond to your completed assignments individually, as if you were sitting together in a classroom.
- ✓ **Contact your instructor with questions.** If you have a question about what you are studying, you can call our toll-free number (U.S. and Canada), write or email your instructor.



Gifted Identification and Twice Exceptional

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) requires all administrative units (AUs) in Colorado to identify and serve students between the ages of five and twenty-one, and age four in administrative units with Early Access, whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs.

Administrative units include: school districts, Charter School Institute (CSI), multi-district administrative units and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). There are a variety of important resources about Gifted Education at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/identification>

Twice-exceptional students are those who are identified as gifted according to state criteria in one or more of the categories of giftedness (cognitive, academic, creative, leadership, or arts) AND Identified with a disability according to federal/state criteria – and the disability qualifies them for either an IEP or a 504 plan. Check out the resources at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/twice-exceptional>

The goal of identification of a child as a twice-exceptional learner is to bring personnel together; both those trained in gifted education and those trained in special education. For the child with visual impairment, including blindness, this means that the teacher of students with visual impairments plays an important role to work closely with the gifted education personnel to determine accessibility to the identification tools and process. It may be that the team works to build a body-of-evidence to determine the child's qualifications for Gifted Education.

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 CDE 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



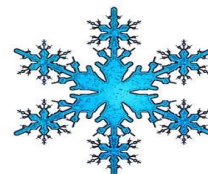
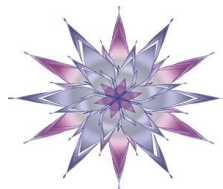
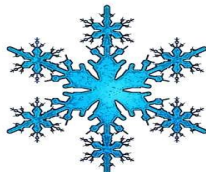
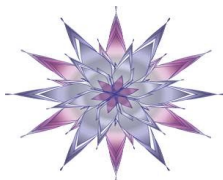
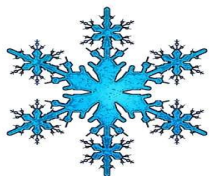
Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Visual Impairment

For information about the endorsement requirements for the Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth -21, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

<p>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must hold a Master’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Department. ✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for special education specialists: visually impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements
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For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

<p>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution ✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists ✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 320 hours, full-time, under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) licensed orientation and mobility specialist. ✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam ✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP orientation and mobility certificate
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Calendar of Events

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

- 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
- March 9** **Southern Region Meeting—CSDB**
 Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 12** **Southern Region Meeting—CSDB**
 Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 13** **Vision Coalition Meeting—Anchor Center for Blind Children**
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- April 19-22** **Council for Exceptional Children Convention & Expo**, Boston, MA
 Contact: <http://www.ceconvention.org/>
- May 4-6** **CDE O&M Seminar—Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton**
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- May 10** **Southern Region Meeting—CSDB**
 Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- May 11** **Metro Region Meeting** - in Aurora (accessibility apps)
 Contact: Nancy Cozart - ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
- June 12-13** **2017 SWAAAC Symposium—Thornton, CO**
 Contact: Maureen Melonis at melonis_m@cde.state.co.us
- June 14-16** **Western Region Early Intervention Conference** – Scottsdale, AZ
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

June 20-21 **Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness**—Denver
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

June 26-30 **16th international Mobility Conference**—Ireland
 For more information please visit: <http://imc16.com/>

July 2-7 **Adaptive Sports Camp** - Crested Butte
Contact: Brandon Mapes - brandon.mapes@summitk12.org

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

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

In Memoriam



Yesterday, February 6th, the news came that Bonnie Snyder had passed away. Bonnie contributed immensely to our shared field and gave gladly of her expertise to countless numbers of children and many, many teachers over the years of her career. She worked at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and, after her retirement, was a technology consultant for the Colorado Department of Education’s Exceptional Student Services Unit. In this capacity, she made several trips across Colorado to work with individual or small groups of TVIs and students. She teamed with UCCS personnel to sponsor annual technology seminars. She was a technology geek of the first order and worked tirelessly to find ways to children to have state-of-the-art technology at their hands.

Bonnie relocated to Tennessee in late 2015 to be with family. Several of us kept up with her via Facebook, where her posts continued her knowledge quests and determined advocacy for technology for people with disabilities. She was a great person, filled with smiles and tease. With our goodbyes, we say thank you to this talented, dedicated, and generous colleague and friend.



Participants will learn to:

- ✓ Complete a Literacy Skills Checklist for students with sensory loss and multiple disabilities;
- ✓ Identify three building blocks of literacy;
- ✓ Describe two strategies for developing joint attention and meaningful interaction;
- ✓ List three reasons to connect literacy related experiences into the daily routines;
- ✓ Identify strategies for adding literacy skills to established routines.

For more information:

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Gina Herrera

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Janet Zimmermann

Zimmermann_j@cde.state.co.us



COLORADO
Department of Education

Making It Routine: Connecting Communication, Schedules and Literacy

WHO: CO EI and School Age Providers Working with Students who are Deaf-Blind and/or with Significant Support Needs

WHAT: 2017 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness

WHEN: June 20-21, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day

WHERE: Lowry Conference Center, 1061 Akron Way, Denver, CO

The purpose of the Summer Institute is to build capacity of Colorado early intervention and school personnel to support the intervention and instructional needs of learners with deafblindness. This annual event is a foundational component of the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Loss Project.

Training Details:

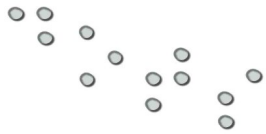
Research confirms that learners with multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness, no matter their age, benefit when literacy concepts are built from frequent, meaningful experiences. This two-day presentation will discuss reasons and strategies to connect communication, object schedules, and literacy related experiences to daily routines and regular school activities. Specific attention will be given to students with sensory loss combined with physical challenges and cognitive delays. Ideas for teachers to use with learners of all ages will be shared with picture and video examples

Registration:

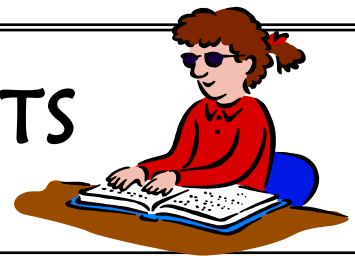
Registration is limited to 100 participants. Acceptance into the course will be based on a review of geographical distribution of participants across CO administrative units and personnel currently working as a team with a student who is deaf-blind as an initial priority.

Registration will be open until April 1, 2017.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2017-Summer Institute On DeafBlindness](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2017-Summer+Institute+On+DeafBlindness)



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

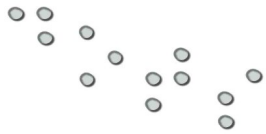
As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor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

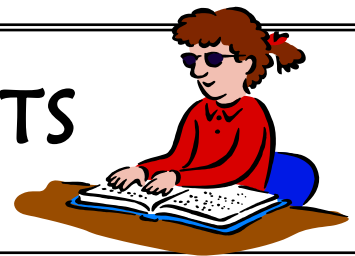
Braillewriter Repair

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

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



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille Challenge News

Thanks for all involved for hosting the Braille Challenge in Colorado. A huge thank you to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and to the Colorado Center for the Blind. Thanks to all the TVIs who contributed their time and brought students. Thanks to the participating students for coming out to show their braille enthusiasm and skills!

There is a 9News story on this event at

<http://www.9news.com/news/education/students-take-on-annual-braille-challenge/393653026%>

Students whose scores were high enough were sent onto the Braille Institute. Diane Covington from CSDB notes that we should hear in April if any of our Colorado students scored high enough to move on to the National Challenge in Los Angeles, CA.

Congrats to all who participated and to the following students who placed in their category.

Apprentice

1st - Salma Shareef

2nd - Cadence Flores

Freshman

1st - Hayden Roswell

2nd - Alexiele Mink

Sophomore

1st - Jasmine McCandless

Junior Varsity

1st - Deyannira Villa-Cazares

2nd - Issac Garcia

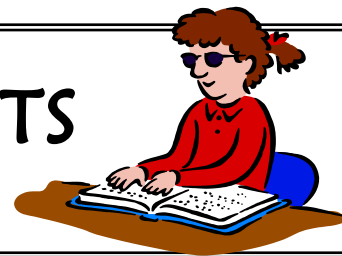
Varsity

1st - Johnnie Jean Duran



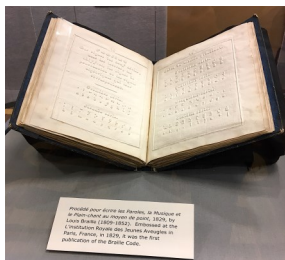
A NATIONAL PROGRAM
OF BRAILLE INSTITUTE

CONNECTING THE DOTS



January was Braille Literacy Month

Article from: <http://www.aph.org/news/>



Editor's Note: *Since our newsletter covers January and February, we have moved past January, but wanted to still share this important history of the code we celebrate!*

APH's copy of *Procédé pour écrire les paroles, la musique et le plain-chant au moyen de point*, 1829, by Louis Braille (1809-1852).

January marked Braille Literacy Month, an opportunity to take a step back and contemplate the importance of braille in the lives of children and adults who are visually impaired or blind. Literacy has taken on increased importance in our world as we've moved through history, and it has never been so critical to success and fulfillment as it is today. The ability to read and write, whether using the senses of vision, hearing, touch, or a combination of senses, is considered a critical skill for employment and leading a well-rounded life.

Literacy through touch has not always been a given for those who are blind, and methods of reading tactually have evolved. Thanks to APH Museum Director Micheal Hudson, we are able to provide you with a detailed chronology of the evolution of braille and the literacy it has brought to the hands of thousands of individuals.

Landmarks in Braille Literacy

1786: Valentine Haüy pioneers literacy for people who are blind when he invents the raised letter book at the Institut Royale des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, France.

1829-1837: Louis Braille introduces an elegant and easy-to-learn tactile code based on dots, providing a simple way to read and write. Its adoption around the world will take many decades.

1854: The Braille System is formally adopted in France, two years after the death of Louis Braille from tuberculosis.

1860: The system is published for the first time in America by the Missouri School for the Blind.

1871: The American Association of Instructors of the Blind (AAIB) adopts an American adaptation of braille—New York Point—and it is soon widely used in American residential schools.

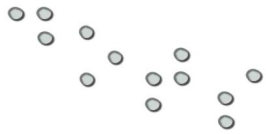
1875: The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) publishes its first New York Point book.

1878: Joel Smith, a teacher at the Perkins Institution, introduces a second adaptation of braille that he calls Modified American Braille. It is used by only a few U.S. schools initially, but they are influential—Perkins, the Overbrook School, etc. The period of competing systems will become known as the “War of the Dots.”

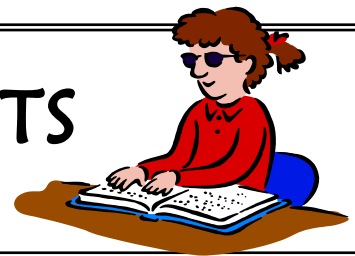
1892: Frank Hall, Superintendent of the Illinois School for the Blind, invents the Hall Braille Writer, the first successful mechanical braille typewriter. In 1894, Hall invents a stereotyping machines allowing the inexpensive and rapid production of embossing plates. The plates allow a dramatic expansion in braille production over the next thirty years.

1893: APH embosses its first textbooks in Modified American Braille.

1905: The Uniform Type Committee is formed by the AAIB and the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB) to adopt a single uniform code for all English speaking readers. The committee decides that British Braille—basically the original French alphabet code with a complicated set of contractions—was superior to both New York Point and Modified American Braille. Initially, the committee adapts a new code—Standard Dot—that combines the strengths of all three, but there is no enthusiasm for Standard Dot outside the U.S.



CONNECTING THE DOTS



January is Braille Literacy Month...continue

1918: After years of unsuccessful negotiations with the British, the Uniform Type Committee adopts Braille Grade One and a Half, basically British braille but with a simplified set of contractions. British readers can easily read the American code, but American readers cannot read the British.

1932: At the London Type Conference, delegates from the English speaking world approve a uniform braille system, Standard English Braille. It is mostly the British braille code from 1905, but with a concession to the Americans, contractions do not break over syllables.

1941-53: Thousands of infants have their sight damaged by the oxygen in their hospital incubators. The educational community is unprepared for the sudden spike in BVI students. Many overflow into the public schools, just as public opinion is shifting against segregated schools for children with visual impairments. In the public schools, Braille education is generally poor, and students with failing but residual vision are encouraged to use audio players and video magnifiers. Braille literacy in this generation drops dramatically.

1950: The Joint Uniform Braille Committee is formed by the AAIB and the AAWB to approve some proposed changes in Standard English Braille. In 1952, the committee recommends the adoption of the Nemeth Braille Code, an advanced code for mathematics.

1959: English Braille, American Edition is adopted by the AAIB and AAWB. The Joint Committee becomes the AAIB-AAWB Braille Authority.

1960s: Working with International Business Machines, APH adapts computers to translate print to Braille, dramatically increasing the speed of translation, and later, overall production.

1976: Oleg and Andie Tretiakoff, working in France, introduce the first commercially available paperless braille machine, the Digicassette. More advanced machines soon follow.

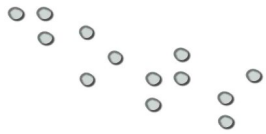
1976: The Braille Authority restructures, inviting other blindness organization to participate, into the Braille Authority of North America(BANA).

1990s: Blindness organizations begin to react to decreasing braille literacy. BANA determines that one cause is the complexity of the code and begins work to revise it. Organizations like APH develop tools to help parents and teachers assess at an early age when braille is the right choice. Consumer groups like the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind, unable to unite on other issues, are unified in their promotion of braille literacy. University programs responsible for training the next generation of teachers reemphasize braille.

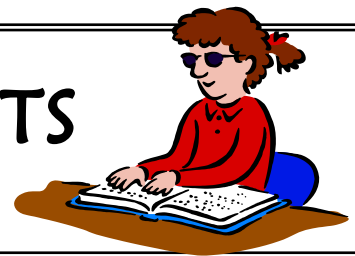
2004: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act is passed, requiring the creation of the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC), where parents, students, and teachers can find source files to produce accessible, student-ready specialized formats, such as Braille and audio, for students in K-12 with qualifying disabilities.

2012: BANA passes a motion to formally adopt Unified English Braille, a revised code which seeks to bring braille into the 21st century.

2017: APH introduces the Orbit Reader 20™, the first refreshable braille display available commercially for under \$500. The Orbit 20 is the end product of the Transforming Braille Group, an international body formed in 2011 and spearheaded by the Royal National Institute for the Blind in England



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Typhlo & Tactus Tactile Book Contest 2017



First Place winner of the previous contest

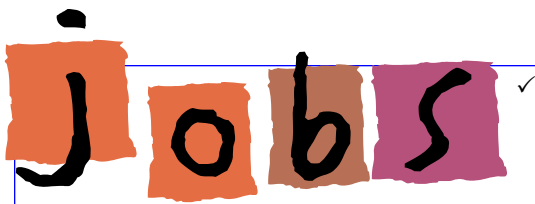
Entries Due August 10, 2017! Once again APH is the U.S. national contact for The International Tactile-Illustrated Book Prize, a biennial competition created to encourage improvement of the quality and quantity of tactile books for young children with visual impairments. Don't miss your chance to submit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

Southern Region – Jobs

- ✓ 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

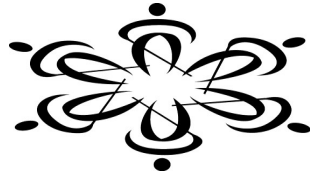
Metro Region—Jobs

- ✓ TVI (1.5 FTE) at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please contact Lindsay Standish at lstandish@anchorcenter.org

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



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)

Guidebook for Visually Impaired Students

This resource is designed to help find scholarships and information about assistive technology. They have also included an interview with a graduate student who is visually impaired, discussing the challenges and sharing support and advice for future and current students. Check out our full length guidebook here:

<http://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/helping-students-with-visual-impairments/>



TRANSITION INFORMATION

Scholarships from the Blinded Veterans Association

Spouses, dependent children, and grandchildren of blinded veterans are eligible for the annual Kathern F. Gruber Scholarships and Thomas H. Miller Scholarship to assist them with their higher education tuition. The scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit through an application process that is evaluated by a committee. Gruber and Miller scholarships are for one year only but recipients can re-apply and receive the award up to four times. The blinded veteran family member is not required to be a BVA member for the spouse or child to receive a scholarship. Qualifications for both programs are the same except for an added emphasis on music and fine arts for the Miller award.

The complete application package, including instructions and a press release, can be downloaded from

http://bva.org/BVA/Programs/Scholarships_Awards/BVA/Programs/Scholarships_and_Awards/Scholarships_Awards.aspx?hkey=f95af0c4-38a9-4a14-88a9-894047d4837b

Registration for the 2016-17 academic year has been closed. Scholarship applications for the academic year 2017-18 will be available in January 2017. All applications are due by mid-April. The Scholarship Committee usually meets to make decisions in early June. For additional assistance or information, please contact Scholarship Coordinator, at 202-371-8880, Ext. 313 or email cdumond@bva.org

AFB 2017 Scholarship Application Information

The application period for the 2017-2018 academic year starts on December 15, 2016 and runs through April 1, 2017.

Available AFB Scholarships for 2017

- **The Rudolph Dillman Memorial Scholarship:** Four scholarships of \$2,500 each to undergraduates or graduates who are studying full-time in the field of rehabilitation or education of persons who are blind and/or visually impaired.
- **The Paul and Ellen Ruckes Scholarship:** Two scholarships of \$2,000 each to a full-time undergraduate or graduate student in the field of engineering or in computer, physical, or life sciences.
- **The R.L. Gillette, Gladys C. Anderson, and Karen D. Carsel Memorial Scholarship:** One scholarship of \$3,500 given to a female undergraduate student studying music. In addition to the general requirements, applicants must submit with their supporting documents a music performance in a digital audio format such as MP3, WAV, or OGG. Performances can be submitted with an applicant's physical documents on physical media such as an SD card, USB Flash drive, or audio CD or submitted directly in a digital format to the email address info@afb.net. If submitted through email, please use the subject "AFB Scholarship Musical Performance Submission".

For more information, please go to: <https://www.afb.org/info/afb-2017-scholarship-application/5>. Be sure to follow the exact directions to complete the appropriate applications. This website has much more detail, so please go through the posted information carefully to proceed with the next steps for an application.



TRANSITION INFORMATION



OSERS

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is pleased to publish [*A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities*](#). This guide is being issued by OSERS, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Office of Special Education Programs to advance our efforts in ensuring that all students and youth with disabilities are equipped with the skills and knowledge to be engaged in the 21st century workforce. This document can be found at:

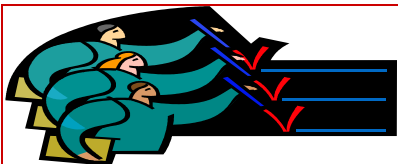
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/products/postsecondary-transition-guide-2017.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

This transition guide addresses the following topics to facilitate a seamless transition from school to post-school activities:

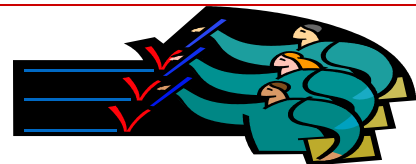
- Transition planning: opportunities and programs;
- Transition services and requirements, as authorized by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and the *Rehabilitation Act*;
- Education and employment options for students and youth with disabilities after leaving secondary school; and
- Supporting decisions made by students and youth with disabilities.

OSEP recognizes the significance of collaborative partnerships and hope that the information in this guide will assist students and youth with disabilities and their families in developing and pursuing their goals for adult life. Additionally, this transition guide will help students and youth with disabilities and their families to better understand how State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies work together to facilitate improved outcomes for students and youth with disabilities.





CHECK IT OUT!



NATIONAL CENTER ON DEAF-BLINDNESS—Intervener Certification

NCDB, The National Center on Deaf-Blindness, in collaboration with the Paraprofessional Resource and Research Center (PAR²A), is pleased to announce that during the first year of implementation of the National Intervener Certification E-Portfolio (NICE) process, the originally announced portfolio assessment fee of \$350 will be waived. Instead, once an intervener is ready to seek certification using the e-Portfolio process administered by the PAR²A Center, he/she will be charged an administrative fee of \$40 by the PAR²A Center. This decision was made in collaboration with OSEP under Grant #H326T130013 to encourage intervener participation in NICE. The fee structure may change in subsequent years based on cost and expense analyses of the process during this first year, October 2016 - September 2017, of the operation of NICE.

For more information about the NICE process, visit the [NCDB website](#)

To view the recording from NCDB's national webinar, National Intervener Certification E-Portfolio, held in November 2016, [use this link https://nationaldb.org/library/page/2634](https://nationaldb.org/library/page/2634)

Rethink School Discipline - Resource Guide for Superintendent Action:

As a part of Rethink Discipline, the Department of Education developed a resource guide with a set of potential action items to help school leaders implement safe, supportive school climate and discipline by engaging stakeholders, assessing the results and history of existing school climate and discipline systems and practices; implementing reform; and monitoring progress. This guide can be found at:

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/rethink-discipline-resource-guide-supt-action.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term

APH's Websites: They Want Your Feedback on Accessibility!

When accessing the web, are you a synthetic speech user, screen magnification user, or user of other accessible technologies? APH would like your feedback on the accessibility of their websites! If you have thoughts about the accessibility of the following: www.aph.org, shop.aph.org, or showcase.aph.org.

Please email your comments to communications@aph.org

Toys for Young Children who are Deaf-Blind

This user-friendly booklet pulls together a list of tactile/visual friendly toys for young learners who are deafblind. This compilation was put together by a Network of Teachers working with Deaf-Blind Students (NTDB) in the Rochester area of NY.

We have made it available through a downloadable link: <http://bit.ly/2glrgZ4>

Keeping in Touch Newsletter Posted Electronically

Each edition of the Keeping in Touch Newsletter is posted on line at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities

Since there are so many links in each newsletter, this electronic version will give you direct access to the content tied to each link.



Colleagues,

The U.S. Department of Education today made available to the public final regulations under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), aimed at promoting equity by targeting widespread disparities in the treatment of students of color with disabilities. The regulations will address a number of issues related to significant disproportionality in the identification, placement, and discipline of students with disabilities based on race or ethnicity. These regulations can be found at:

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/idea/part-b/idea-part-b-significant-disproportionality-final-regs-unofficial-copy.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term

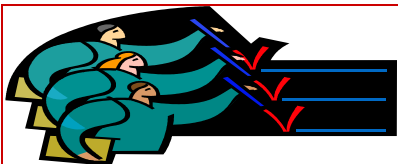
The final regulations incorporate changes to the Department’s initial proposals from the comments we received in many ways, including:

- Better addressing how the risk ratio applies to small districts;
- States need not calculate risk ratios for any racial or ethnic group that does not meet minimum cell or n-sizes set by the state;
- Explicitly prohibiting the use of quotas or of artificially reducing the number of children identified as children with disabilities; and
- Clarifying that states have flexibility not to identify significant disproportionality in districts that make reasonable progress in lowering risk ratios for two prior consecutive years.

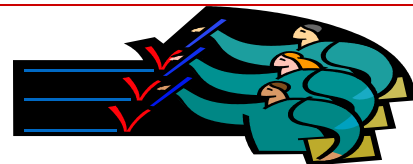
The Department also released a Dear Colleague Letter on **“Preventing Racial Discrimination in Special Education”**.

To view this document, go to:

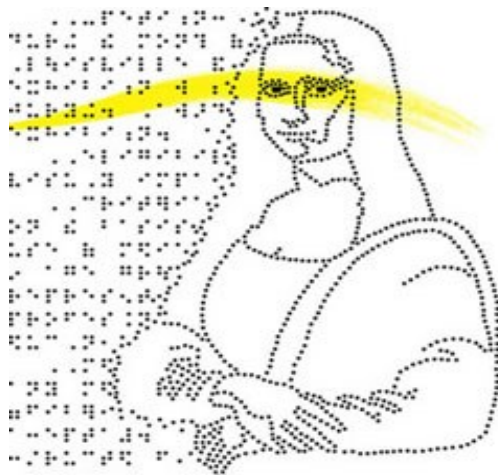
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201612-racedisc-special-education.pdf>



CHECK IT OUT!



The 2017 APH InSights Art Competition Begins

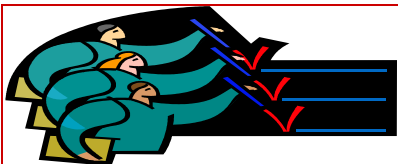


APH warmly invites artists who are blind or visually impaired, of all ages, to submit artwork for the **2017 APH InSights Art Competition**. For over 25 years, our renowned international contest has delighted the senses, provoked discussion, and most importantly, allowed artists who happen to have vision loss the opportunity to share their creative imagination with the world.

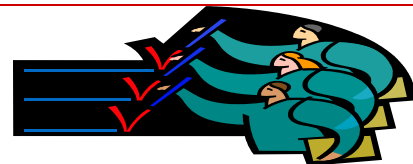
Artists may enter original artwork created in any medium, including (but not limited to) painting, drawing, printmaking, fiber, metal, and wood. This year's deadline for student artists from preschool through high school is **March 24, 2017**. The deadline for adult artists is **March 31, 2017**. Complete rules and entry forms will be posted on the APH website (www.aph.org/museum/programs/insights/) by the end of January 2017, but now is the time to consider completed works of art, or finishing up existing projects for submission in the spring. We are always deeply inspired and grateful for the unique, artistic expression from each artwork, every year.

The excitement continues when a committee of jurors begins the daunting task of selecting 32 award winners and 80 works of art in several categories, from the hundreds of entries we receive. Artwork selected as "best in category" will be displayed at the InSights Art Exhibit during APH's Annual Meeting, from **October 12 to 14, 2017**. Winning artists are also invited to celebrate their achievement at an awards banquet during Annual Meeting. Hundreds of Ex Officio Trustees, leaders in the field of blindness, teachers, and special guests from across the country attend this widely anticipated event. The banquet is a moving tribute to creative expression and independence for all artists who have vision loss.

We look forward to your participation in our contest. For more information, please email insights@aph.org, or call Rob Guillen, at 502-899-2242.



CHECK IT OUT!



“Rights of Students with Disabilities in Public Charter Schools” Webinar Now Available!

The sixty minute webinar, which has been pre-recorded for transcription purposes is available on the Office of Innovation and Improvement's website at <https://innovation.ed.gov/2017/01/18/rights-students-disabilities-public-charter-schools-webinar-january-18-2017/>

In addition to the webinar, the transcript and presentation slides are also be available.

The webinar is a presentation and brief Q&A of the guidance package released on December 28, 2016 developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The [jointly-issued Dear Colleague Letter](#) and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents on [Section 504](#) of the *Rehabilitation Act* (Section 504) and on the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), along with a [Know Your Rights](#) document, help update educators, parents, students, and other stakeholders to better understand the rights of students with disabilities in public charter schools under Section 504 and IDEA.

The package includes information about how to provide equal opportunity in compliance with Section 504 in key areas such as charter school recruitment, application, admission, enrollment and disenrollment, accessibility of facilities and programs, and nonacademic and extracurricular activities; as well as information about the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment under the IDEA.



Colorado AER Chapter Board

We thank our Colorado AER Chapter Board for all of their work and innovation to supporting our field. Please be in touch with any of these people as you may have a question or an idea of how the board can support our profession:

President: Brent Batron: bbatron@cocenter.org

Board Members:

Heather Solberg: hwparsons@hotmail.com heather.solberg@va.gov

David Gooldy: david.gooldy@gmail.com dgooldy@cherrycreekschools.org

Trina Boyd-Pratt: trinaboyd@comcast.net

Nancy Cozart: ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

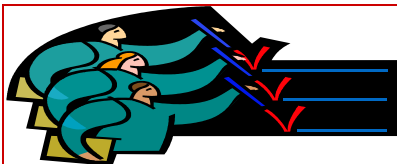
Sally Burch: Sally.burch@bvsvd.org

Ann Cunningham: acunningham@cocenter.org

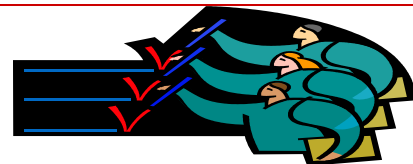
Michelle Robinson: Michelle.Robinson5@va.gov

Amber Rundle Kahn: amber_rundlekahn@engschools.net

The general CAER Chapter email contact is: caerboard@gmail.com



CHECK IT OUT!



Colorado Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Colorado AER Chapter AWARDS

The Awards will be given out once a year at the banquet in Spring. Nominations are encouraged throughout the year by members across the State. Here is a list of the Awards and the criteria:

President's Award: This award recognizes outstanding leadership in service to people with visual disabilities. The current board president will select and present this award.

Gary Schmidt Award: This award honors an AER member who works directly with student/clients. Nomination criteria include: ethical standards, sense of humor, degree of excellence in job performance, and professionalism. The CAER Board review the nominations.

Connections Award: This award recognizes cooperative efforts that cross organizational lines, perhaps even groups working collaboratively to benefit our field. The CAER Board considers the nominations.

Lifetime Achievement Award: This award is presented to professionals who have given of themselves to clients / students throughout their career and are preparing for retirement.

Ken Neve Award: This year CAER is introducing a new way to recognize an AER professional in the area specific to orientation and mobility. The Ken Neve Award honors a man who was an amazing teacher, co-worker and role-model in the world of O&M. Ken brought humor and warmth to all situations. He worked at the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for 26 years.

Nomination criteria include:

- a CAER member who is in the field as a practicing Orientation & Mobility Specialist
- dedication to life-long learning
- a role-model for others in the field.

The letters of nominations should be sent to: caerboard@gmail.com by April 15th, 2017



Save the Date!

Save the date for the 2017 SWAAAC Summer Symposium, taking place at the Adams 12 Conference Center in Thornton, Colorado on Monday, June 12th and Tuesday, June 13th. This two-day conference will feature internationally renowned presenters, local assistive technology experts, and knowledgeable AT vendors.

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!

just for PARENTS

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

Founded in 1983, the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children is a national membership organization of parents and friends of blind children reaching out to each other to give vital support, encouragement, and information. They have over 3,000 members in all 50 states and divisions or parent contacts in about 30 states plus Puerto Rico.

They are a division of the National Federation of the Blind. A goal is to keep members are well informed about the technological, legislative, and societal issues that affect blind people. They also provide resources, support, and expertise of 50,000 blind people who can serve as mentors and role models for our children.

The purpose of the NOPBC is to:

- create a climate of opportunity for blind children in home and society.
- provide information and support to parents of blind children.
- facilitate the sharing of experience and concerns among parents of blind children.
- develop and expand resources available to parents and their children.
- help parents of blind children gain understanding and perspective through partnership and contact with blind adults.
- function as an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind in its ongoing effort to achieve equality and opportunity for all blind persons.

For more information, go to www.nopc.org You can also contact the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130 for more information about the Colorado chapter and their activities.

APH's Websites: They Want Your Feedback on Accessibility!

When accessing the APH web, are you a synthetic speech user, screen magnification user, or user of other accessible technologies? APH would like your feedback on the accessibility of our websites!

If you have thoughts about the accessibility of the following: www.aph.org, shop.aph.org, or showcase.aph.org, please email your comments to communications@aph.org What a great invitation to ensure top accessibility of our beloved American Printing House for the Blind!



VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

January 18, 2017

Persons in Attendance: Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Dan Burke, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Julie Hutchison, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Lori Mattick, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, and Trina Boyd Pratt

Guest: Lindsay Standish

Absent: LaVerne Dell, Angela Sims

MISSION OF THE VISION COALITION

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

LEGEND OF ACRONYMS

- ASV = A Shared Vision
- CAER = CO Chapter of the Association of the Education and 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
- POBC = Parents of Blind Children
- TVI = Teacher of students with visual impairments



MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – TBD
- Colorado AER Chapter – Trina Boyd Pratt
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – to be determined
- Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
- Colorado Parents of Blind Children – Lori Mattick
- 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 – Julie Hutchison
- Southern TVI / COMS – Deb Andrews
- University of Northern Colorado VI Program – Paula Conroy
- Western TVI / COMS – Angela Sims



Announcements

We are happy to welcome Julie Hutchison, Lori Mattick, and Paula Landry to the Vision Coalition! Julie will be representing the northern TVI/COMS region, Lori will be representing the Colorado Parents of Blind Children, and Paula will be representing A Shared Vision. LaVerne Dell will no longer be our Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation representative due to changing job responsibilities. We thank LaVerne for all of her contributions to the Vision Coalition. She will work with Tanni to identify a new VC representative going forward.

Time on the Phone with Dr. Robert King

Dr. King took time to call into the meeting to begin a discussion about our partnership relationships between the medical and educational communities. Topics briefly reviewed for later more in-depth conversation include:

- Concerns with identification of students with low vision.
- Seeing eye doctor reports with CSM - central, steady, maintained. Dr. King shared that CSM is standardized nomenclature of reporting about the basic visual status a child who is nonverbal. It is hard to get an acuity with a young or older or nonverbal child with an acuity. Central means no eccentric viewing. Steady indicates that the child does not have nystagmus. Maintained describes that the child can hold his or her gaze.
- Dr. King agreed that It is helpful to do an educated guess on acuity. This led to a discussion of putting “estimated acuity ranges” on a proposed state eye exam report form. St. Vrain has developed a form with these forced field choices that we can use for our recommended forms.
- * The group agreed that it would be helpful to develop a general form for eye doctors to complete about eye exam results of students. It might be helpful to have a form for infants and toddlers (Part C) and one for school age children. to ensure we are capturing the information we need to identify children of all ages with pediatric visual impairment.
- * The topic of diagnosing cortical visual impairment was discussed. Dr. King explained that many of his referrals come from the primary care community and the NICU staff who are key to assisting with the diagnosis of CVI. Babies at risk are often identified early through referrals from pediatricians or other NICU staff. Parents are also a referral source. Children coming through these entities are unusually diagnosed early. It was suggested that One potential next step might be training on cortical and cerebral visual impairment for Colorado eye care specialists working with the pediatric population.

Medical reports do not currently target educational needs. Dr. King thinks it would be helpful to point out key consideration that might be helpful for the child’s education. There was discussion about what types of information might be most appreciated – such as noting head positions that are needed for a null point. Central vision or eccentric vision fixation is good information for TVIs as central vision is especially important for use of low vision devices. We discussed the need to give rationale for recommendations. We also discussed some of the pros and cons for certain types of medical recommendations that are educational in nature. Large print has been a common recommendation. It was suggested that it is better to note “the need for access to print enhancement.” This opens the door for a variety of tools, such as large print, zoom software, and low vision devices.

- * Both Dr. King and Dr. Kara Hanson will join us for our next Vision Coalition meeting for a next step discussion.

Assignment: Tanni will work with Nancy, Julie, and Jim on drafting an Eye Report Form that can be further reviewed / discussed at the April meeting. Tanni will also invite Dr. Theune to the April meeting.

Status Update of Assignments from the September 2016 Meeting

- 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. The Jan-Feb newsletter will have information about this topic.
- Assignment: It was suggested that CDE work with Jamie Lugo to videotape 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. New Assignment: Jamie shared that this is an internal School for the Blind goal for the next week!
- Assignment: The list of DVR Counselors will be disseminated in late October once LaVerne has finalized this information. This has not happened due to the turnover of DVR staff. New Assignment: Tanni will check with LaVerne about working to secure a current-draft. The good news is that both the northern and southern regions have worked closely with their representatives, who have attended their regional meetings!
- 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. This form is used by the CIMC for the doctor to determine legal blindness. This form has been modified by TVIs to fit their needs. New Assignment: It was suggested to take the CIMC form and the St. Vrain form and begin a merge document that can be reviewed at the April meeting with Dr. King and Dr. Hanson.
- 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. See discussion topics for more information.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our last meeting on 10-20-2016 was very productive and had a lot of input and information. Trina Boyd-Pratt is going to be a Foresight coordinator for TVI/COMS with school districts for this organization. On December 3, 2016, a meeting was held for TVI/COMS and parents at Mark Davis' office. The following issues were discussed: (a) need for doctor's report in order to ski. We discussed having this form and others updated on-line to access; (b) cost - regarding transportation, coordination with Rocky Mountain Express to shuttle to ski resort is an option. It currently costs \$900 for this 12-passenger van. The hope is to have families/districts contribute to this expense. Mark has said this cost is covered and, at times, the local Lions Clubs help with the cost. Other costs include meals, housing and ski guides. Trina shared that individuals have to pay for breakfast and dinner as well as any snacks. Lunch is part of the day on the slopes. Dialogue is happening about having set information being provided so expenses are equalized; (d) liability - check on personal and school district insurance. Encourage writing ECC goals/objectives in the IEP that can be addressed in events like this.

The FVA/LMA report writing was not addressed at this meeting. Nancy Cozart will work to follow up on this topic via email listservs.

Tasks to complete for Vision Coalition:

- Read the newsletter to get information.
- Give input on the Resource Allocations document. Colleagues can rate same students to check reliability.

- Give feedback on communication with and needs from eye doctors to Nancy Cozart to share at next VC meeting. (received no feedback to date)

Future Meeting Dates/Locations/Topics:

- Thursday Jan. 19, 2017 from 3:00-5:30 at CCB in Littleton- cooking techniques
- Thursday March 9, 2017 from 4:00-5:30 at Kennedy High School in Denver- Helen Keller Institute; Pen Friend; Contacts & Organizations for field trips
- Thursday May 11, 2017 from 4:00-5:30 in Aurora- Accessible apps; Ipad user to speak

(We will discuss on Thursday the option of switching our final meeting due to the O&M Conference.)

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

Southern Region discussed Indicator 13 (Transition Requirements) at our last meeting. The CDE *Compliance and Quality Tips* was handed out. We just completed our final southern region low vision clinic for the school year. It was a 2-day event that took place at Dr. Theune's office. We had 11 students attend, representing a variety of districts throughout El Paso and Pueblo counties. Thanks to all the TVIs, students and their families for making it a success!

Braggs--one of Wendy Uniwn Watson's students had an art project submitted to Imagination Celebration and it was chosen as one of their displays.

Regional Meeting dates: March 8, 2017; April 12, 2017; and May 10, 2017

Discussion:

- * *What are our options for caseload / workload formulas to help determine the time TVI / COMS provide to students with visual impairment, including blindness (VIB)? Response: There are guidelines on the CDE VIB webpage. There is a range of practice across districts. See the notes of our later discussion on this topic.*
- * *Can a TVI see the ESL tests ahead of time to ensure access, similar to PARCC? Or can we sit in and silently observe the ESL testing to then give feedback on questions that may have a visual bias? Assignment: TVIs should always check with their DACs for such information. Tanni will also check with her CDE Assessment colleague on this question.*
- * *CDE guidelines for eye report dates. Is there a way to get a permanent eligibility if we have an qualifying older eye report with a degenerative condition? Jim talked about what is needed for being APH Quota Eligible. Right now the new quota wording "current report, as defined by your state guidelines." Assignment: Tanni will seek some information about this topic. Guidelines Committee – Jim, Tanni, Julie, Nancy, etc.*

Western Region (Angela Sims)

Megan Crosby (Montrose TVI/COMS) loves her job. She reports the only excitement they have in Montrose is that it is finally ski season! "I have a first time skier and a second year skier this season. The students will be going with their classroom up to Telluride for three ski dates. I also had a student teach his first grade class and a 4th grade class about the braille alphabet. Each student then made a cinnamon and applesauce ornament with their first initial in braille. The braille dots were made out of whole cloves. It was a great activity and my student was very excited and empowered when he was able to show off his braille skills."

Angela Sims (Mesa TVI/COMS) has a student who is excited to participate in the Braille Challenge again this year. She is hoping to do well enough to make it back to the National Challenge. The Mesa Valley School District Vision Department was lucky enough to be the recipient of a \$350 donation from the Junior Eagles. They worked for a year collecting donations to give back to their community. They wanted the money they earned to help kids so they split the money between the teen homeless shelter and our vision department. We are very grateful they thought of us and will be using the money to purchase tactual books and adaptive toys.

Discussion:

Does anyone have any suggestions for computer math games that work with JAWS? More and more classes are using fun computer games to give students extra practice with a variety of math skills/concepts. Response: Jamie shared that they use iPads for math games. Trina brought up that they could explore this area at the upcoming JAWS training.

Northern Region (Julie Hutchison)

Staff Changes in the North: We welcome back Sally Burch, who has returned to Colorado and is now working for Boulder Valley School District. Lori Petrick is the new DVR rep for our area – Greeley, Boulder, Fort Collins and Longmont. Liz Wieder is a new TVI in Saint Vrain Valley School District. Danielle Burden is a new TVI in Greeley and will soon be finished with her COMS certification. Lorraine Chevarria is also now on board in Greeley as a half time TVI. Stefanie Smithgall is the new TVI and COMS in Brighton School District. Julia Hutchinson is the new Northern Region TVI Representative of the Vision Coalition.

DVR Discussion: Lori Petrick (DVR) introduced/discussed the goals and purpose of DVR with regard to transition-age students who are currently receiving vision services from their TVIs and shed quite a bit of light on our group.

Response: We agreed that, for those students who are interested in receiving services from DVR in the near future, Lori should be invited to IEP meetings – preferably when student is age 15 – to start conversations about what DVR has to offer and to provide student and family with packet of information. TVIs and DVR should encourage students to tour Colorado Center for the Blind, Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) Program and discuss possibility of community-based training programs, as there is a 6 month - 1 year wait list to get into these programs.

Service Time: The northern region discussed The Delphi Study and how/if we are using this for our braille students. The general consensus seemed to be no, as it doesn't really apply to students with additional disabilities and the majority of our caseloads have students with additional/multiple disabilities. We agreed that the Michigan and Colorado Tools should be used collectively as a better means of determining needs and services for our students. Both tools can be found on CDE's website, as well as the TSBVI website; TSBVI website has multiple resources for evaluating and determining needs of services (the Iowa guideline is on there, as well).

Videos as a Training Tool: The northern region agreed to begin using video tape recordings of students working with their TVI/COMS to then provide to the rest of the students' teams as a training tool; iPads are prevalent in many of our districts and we feel that this might be an effective and efficient way of showing proper prompts and reinforcement, as well as technique, when working with our students on particular tasks, goals, etc. We agreed that it would be helpful to start/continue using video recordings for consult purposes – have the para videotape student completing tasks or routines throughout the day and send to TVI so that they can "observe" in this way and provide more effective consultation for those times that they cannot be at the school/with the student.

Upcoming Meeting Date: January 27, 2016: At our 1/27/17 meeting, Trina Boyd Pratt will be providing our group with a braille cleaning workshop and we are really looking forward to this opportunity as, for many of us, the task and responsibility of keeping braille clean and working falls on the hands of the TVI.

Discussion:

We had a bit of conversation about the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) and its role with vision. Lori Petrick agreed to look into the process of when/how a student goes through DVR to SWAP or vice versa but we were wondering if any other TVIs have had much experience with SWAP and how TVIs have addressed IEP goals that both SWAP/DVR and TVIs could work on with a student during his/her academic school year. Response: It is important to work with SWAP personnel to educate their staff about the VI-related needs of the students. SWAP uses federal VR money and, therefore, its services should be available for all students with disabilities. The goal should be to determine what does the student need for career exploration and job skills and how can the TVI support accessibility for these learning tasks. We do have a handful of sites that do work with individuals who are visually impaired. SWAP personnel are not discouraged from working with those who are blind or have visual impairment and who meet the profile but often times find that SWAP is not the best service provider. Given that DVR can contract with other vendors who meet the required credentials who provide other necessary services simultaneously we would not be able to pay for SWAP at the same time.

They can open and close cases multiple times. There are also questions about using DVR funds for summer programs. Response: This is an area to further explore with VC as we have a new DVR rep assigned to our group. Assignment: Tanni will clarify the role of SWAP with her CDE colleague. It was also suggested that DVR come and train at our fall conference.

There seems to be an issue with the timing and scheduling of braille instruction, and the role of paraprofessionals in supporting braille acquisition, with the younger emergent literacy learners who benefit from early literacy instruction. Many of us agreed that if one's caseload is too large, then the early learning acquisition seems to fall on paraprofessional support (from multiple paraprofessionals per one student) and they're not adequately trained due to lack of consultative time. Paraprofessionals are being trained to reinforce braille skills with students initially provided by Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments and they cannot/do not deliver any new direct instruction, but they seem to be working with students most often in those times that direct braille instruction would be most beneficial. What can we do to rectify or resolve this situation? Response: The goal is to be defensible for braille instruction needs, using what formal or informal tools can document these needs. No assignments on this topic.

Can we create a criterion to supplement/compliment the outlining of roles of paraprofessionals that address vision instruction with particular attention to braille acquisition and when in the student's schedule it should be addressed? Or, does one already exist? Response: There is not any type of guidelines that address this need other than federal guidance that paraeducators do not provide instruction.

Colorado AER (Trina Boyd Pratt)

In-Kind Donation Committee: CAER is happy to sponsor the In Kind Donation Committee. This Committee receives low vision devices from donations and redistributes them to those in need. This may include children and adults in need of equipment. Please email the board at caerboard@gmail.com to find out what items the committee currently has and/or to apply to receive a device. If you want to make a donation, please email the board.

We have been approved for ACVREP accreditation! Good news, we will be able to offer our workshops and trainings with credit attached. Fees will vary per training, but CAER members will be getting a discount.

Fundraisers: We would like to get members involved in the great fundraisers we are planning for the upcoming year. The one coming up will be at the Spero Winery, February 11, 2017. There will be dinner, wine, and door prizes.

Remember to look on the website for opportunities to apply for Mini Grants and ACVREP reimbursement as members of CAER! Find information daily at <http://co.aerbvi.org/>

Upcoming Trainings/Conferences: February 4, 2017 - *Supporting and Teaching Windows with JAWS Workshop* at the Colorado Center for the Blind, Sponsored by CAER, 3 hours for ACVREP

The Annual CAER Banquet will be held Friday evening of May 5. This will include an awards ceremony.

Contact Information: Please contact CAER Board Members by email, if you have any questions or suggestions for the board. The board can be emailed at caerboard@gmail.com Website: <http://co.aerbvi.org/>

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (LaVerne Dell)

The Blind and Low Vision Services (BLVS) unit is celebrating its first birthday. We have learned a lot in our approach to covering the Front Range. We have seen many staff changes in the counseling unit, teaching units and the Business Enterprise unit.

With WIOA in full swing, we want to collaborate with our education partners to strategize the best approach to serving the youth in Colorado. We have more latitude and flexibility in serving the youth with visual impairments.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

After two months of planning and meeting with key personnel in the areas of blindness and visual impairment, Early Intervention Colorado and Community Centered Boards (CCBs), January marks the official launch of ASV!

ASV was founded by Paula and Stefanie Kirkwood. Steve Lindauer is their executive director. We are thrilled to welcome Sarah Vallese to the ASV Team this month after maternity leave for her newest addition, Josephine Ann (born 10/10/16). Caitlin Bleything, a TSVI graduate student and parent of a child with a visual impairment, begins her practicum with ASV this month as well.

We are currently serving almost 40 children and have contracts with five Metro area CCBs (Adams, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson and Weld Counties). In addition, we have connected with several other regions including Durango, Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction, Steamboat Springs, and Sterling and hope to be providing outreach and telehealth services in these areas within the next few months.

ASV will be partnering with other local agencies to develop a series of training modules in the areas of blindness and visual impairment, including deaf blindness, for statewide dissemination. ASV is also working on a family friendly Functional Vision Assessment to complement Early Intervention's new GO4IT process that is now being used in the development and implementation of IFSPs.

We are truly grateful for the opportunity to continue working with Colorado's youngest children with visual impairments and are excited to see what the future holds! Their website is: www.ASharedVision.org

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Lindsey Standish)

Program: Digital literacy and assistive technology: Anchor Center received a generous grant from Comcast to build an early childhood digital literacy and assistive technology program. The staff has been trained on the new equipment and programs. We are currently implementing it into our infant, toddlers, and preschool programs directly with our students and through parent education.

Community Outreach: A community outreach team has been formed on the Anchor Center staff. This team focuses on building community programming through creating opportunities for families to connect outside of Anchor Center while fostering relationships within the community. The goal of this program is for children from birth to 5 and their families to engage in community and therapeutic recreation activities while connecting to with each other and learning about available resources within the community.

Hiring: Currently hiring for TVI and ECSE positions. May be full-time or part-time based on the candidate's needs.

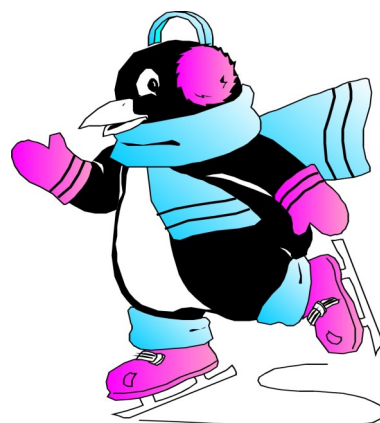
Events and Fundraising: Friday, February 10th, 6-9 p.m. at Anchor Center: 7th Annual Visions of Love benefiting Anchor Center for Blind Children. Chocolate and wine pairings, abundant hors d'oeuvres, music and more are all included in the price of your ticket. Our signature VIP experience also includes two exclusive tasting lounge passes. Advance Tickets - \$45/person; Day of Event Tickets - \$55/person; VIP Tickets - \$75/person. Purchase tickets securely online.

Colorado Chapter of Parents of Blind Children (Lori Mattick)

Lori is a member of the Colorado Chapter of Parents of Blind Children. She is working to connect with her POBC colleagues.

Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Dan Burke)

In the fall the Colorado Center for the Blind partnered with the National Federation of the Blind of Denver for an October civics program, which featured Arapahoe County Clerk and Elections officials demonstrating the nonvisually-accessible voting system, as well as the League of Women Voters of Colorado discussing ballot initiatives. In November, we attended a tactile art exhibit at NCAR in Boulder, and we hosted a December Holiday Party with 25 kids and yours truly debuting as Santa Claus.



Here's what's coming up this spring:

January 20, 2017: Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, Colorado Springs; Sports and fitness day, including Zoomba, cardio drumming and much more!

February 4, 2017: Friends and Family Seminar: As a family member of a blind person, you may have a lot of questions and want to talk about your ideas and feelings around blindness. Join us for this seminar. Register by contacting Duncan Larsen at (303) 778-1130 Ex. 226, or dlarsen@cocenter.org

February 11, 2017: Fun Activities and Skills Training (FAST Saturday), Hammer and nail in the woodshop, make a go-round of the gym's exercise equipment and tactile Valentines!

February 11, 2017: Wine Tasting and Italian dinner: Parents and teachers: Support the Colorado Association of Educators and Rehabilitation professionals, Spero Winery, tickets \$50

March 10, 2017: Career and College fair: Hosted by the Colorado Center for the Blind; find out what it takes to attend college and be successful, learn about rehabilitation services, meet employers from several industries and meet positive successful blind role models.

April 8 2017: Fun Activities and Skills Training; (FAST Saturday) Sports and Rec Day; yoga, cardio drumming, goalball and more!

April 21-23, 2017: Snow Shoe trip in Estes Park Colorado

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

The CIMC is in process of its two Counts (Count day was the first Monday in January) and we are asking for book orders for next year. Please be proactive with following the procedures for the two counts. We want to be sure we know all of our children and youth with visual impairments in the state and to be sure that we have an accurate count of students who are legally blind and eligible for APH quote funds. Also it is not too early to order books for next year as Colorado is one of all the states who will be getting in line for books in braille.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

CSDB hosted our annual Parent-Teacher conferences. Parents were provided a number of different workshops and activities as well as their individual conferences. Feedback was very positive from those that attended. 61% of parents attended from the School for the Blind Students in Recreation and Leisure class had the opportunity to go on a guided nature walk through Red Rock Canyon. This walk included identifying bird sounds, tasting wild onions, and experiencing the outdoors with the help of an expert/hiking friend, Joe Lefleur.

Key Activities:

- White Cane Day was celebrated with face painting, yard games, and a picnic lunch at Acacia Park on October 14th. Students enjoyed a performance from the Bulldog Band, student speeches, an elementary skit, and a guest speaker during the official program.
- The week before Thanksgiving break, CSDB hosted a *Dinner in the Dark* for families. Parents listened to a short presentation, were taken through the lunch line with a human guide, and ate a Thanksgiving meal all under blindfold. It was a wonderful and emotional experience for many of the participants.
- The *Waldo Waldo 5K* on Saturday, October 22nd was a success with 5 families showing up to participate. Ability ranged from running most of the 5K to walking their first 5K! Parents enjoyed getting to walk with other families and connect.
- The Bulldog Band was invited to perform at the Tactile Gallery Anniversary Celebration in October and also at the Colorado Association of School Board Conference in December. They were well-received and wonderful ambassadors for CSDB.

- A group of selected high school students represented CSDB at the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado Annual State Convention on October 28th, by participating in various workshops and panels.
- The elementary department concluded their community service project by delivering all of the food they collected to the El Paso County Homeless Veterans on Friday, December 16th. Our secondary students participated in a friendly game of Quiddich during Friday workshop time. Quiddich wouldn't be the same without costumes, broomsticks, and of course each of the students' imaginations. This was a student organized and led activity.

Discussion:

We are giving the DIBELS test on grade level and without extra time to meet state requirements. The instructions for braille tests do not mention the timing being any different. After we administer the correct timing and grade level, we will then give students extra time or lower levels so we can have additional information for instruction. Is this what other districts are doing? Response: It is fine to do the second level of information probe for more detail. DiBels should be administered without extra time per its standardized procedures. There is interest with the company of investigating if different norms should be used with students who are braille readers and so this might be an area of change in the future.

CSDB Outreach Services (Sara Noel)

Distance Expanded Core Curriculum Class Opportunity: The School for the Blind at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind provides Expanded Core Curriculum classes for students who are blind or low vision. Starting in January, CSDB will offer a pilot connection to the ECC class through video/audio conference for a few middle school or high school students from throughout Colorado. This class would not provide credit, but would provide instruction in the ECC area of Social skills, touching on topics in self-advocacy and independent living. This connection will also allow students to meet and interact with peers who are blind or have low vision. The pilot Distance Learning ECC class will be offered at no cost on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:40-3:30 p.m. Students would need access to a computer with high speed internet and a webcam. Multiple students could be on one computer together. Adult supervision and assistance would be required during class time.

Please contact Deb Branch dbranch@csdb.org, Distance Learning Coordinator at CSDB for more information about the classes or with potential students.

Upcoming Events:

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

University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)

UNC started another semester on the 9th of January. We just began the final year of the current five-year grant. We congratulate our graduates: Erin Noe, Beth Allred (now out of state), Tamara Miller, and Will Reynolds. A few of these individuals will continue to work on finishing their O&M certificate over the next semester and summer months. We have a large group of graduates coming up in May so stay tuned for that. Our National Leadership Consortium on Sensory Disabilities (NLCSD) Fellows are very busy and are working hard. In addition to coursework, they are involved in many enrichment activities!

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. We are thrilled to share that we now have three Technical Assistance Specialists. Callie Spotted Elk has been hired to do specific work on the topic of interveners. She will be building networking opportunities for our existing interveners and information materials on the role of the interveners. Callie joins Kathryn Daniels and Wendy Stoltman as Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists for the project. Kathryn and Wendy provide onsite child-specific consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Shannon Cannizzaro is our Family Specialist. To request 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 are due back into CDE by January 15. Thank you in advance for helping to keep our census data up-to-date. A child can be registered at any time in the school year. If you work with a learner with both vision and hearing loss, please be sure to work with Tanni to register the child. 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 has been planned! The dates are June 20-21, 2017. The featured speakers will be Dr. Julie Durando and Ira Padhye. Their topic will be making It Routine. Key objectives will be learning to: (a) complete a Literacy Skills Checklist for students with sensory loss and multiple disabilities; (b) identify three building blocks of literacy; (c) describe two strategies for developing joint attention and meaningful interaction; (d) list three reasons to connect literacy related experiences into the daily routines; (e) identify two strategies for adding literacy skills to established routines, and (f) identify two strategies to select objects to represent.

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: This year, the annual CDE O&M Seminar will have three days of content. The first day will be a make-up day for the full-day session that was cancelled due winter conditions during last year's seminar. The featured speakers will be Diane Brauner, Ed Summers, and Chris Tabb. This year's topics will be O&M strategies specific to: (a) teaching auditory perception, (b) teaching the use of technology specific to IOS products, (c) evaluating and developing auditory skills, and (d) teaching location literacy. The training will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind on May 4-6, 2017. CCB is located at 2233 West Sheppard Avenue, Littleton, CO. The registration information has been sent to Colorado O&M Specialists. This is a restricted training for this audience.

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: The Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have occurred for the Western, Southern, and Northern regions. Thank you to all who have participated! We are grateful for our returning LVE Clinic returning team of Dr. Tom Theune, Jim Olson, Wendy Stoltman, and Debbie Haberkorn. We are looking forward to one final future clinic in the Metro Region.

Recruitment and Retention: Most TVI/COMS 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. There have been some staffing changes across the state. Lorraine Chevarria is no longer with the Anchor Center for Blind Children and is now working half-time with the Greeley / Weld District and working as a private contractor with Early Intervention Colorado. Paula Landry, Stefanie Kirkwood, and Sarah Bickford Vallese are with a new nonprofit agency called A Shared Vision.

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 COMSs. 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 only to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate addresses AND families of children with visual impairment, including blindness that are currently enrolled in our Colorado early intervention or 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

Data Review

Tanni shared a series of slides of educational performance of students with visual impairment, including blindness based on state assessment data. The group discussed key issues such as the effects of least restrictive environment, growth trends across grade levels, etc. *Assignment:* Tanni will update the slides with key talking points and send out to the field.

Proposed CDE Funded Projects for School Year 2017-18

CDE ESSU

- ◇ State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment (possible topics were discussed)

Defense of a state conference: TVI are expected to know a variety of populations, content, age areas. It is so much. It is one of the most low incidence and specialized professions. Convene and share. Key topics of need: DVR, OHN, Assessment for students with MD and VI, instructional programing with instruction.

- ◇ Low Vision Evaluation Clinics

A suggestion is to merge the northern and metro clinics into a north Denver clinic. It may be time to move the Western clinic to a different location.

- ◇ CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar

Only way to address this specialty area is a state convening. This is critical to maintain for these unique and high liability professionals.

- ◇ Braille Competency Testing and Mentor Support

No need right now for UEB Math training at this point.

- ◇ Keeping in Touch Newsletter
- ◇ Vision Coalition

CSDB – Blindness

- ◇ CIMC
- ◇ Low Vision Clinics





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). The materials used in the 2016 CDE Braille Refresher Course will be converted to practice test materials for test candidates for the CDE Braille Competency Test. It is anticipated that these items will be posted on the CDE webpage specific to braille testing by March 15, 2017. As such, these materials will be fully retired for their use with Colorado TVIs who had demonstrated braille competency with the English Braille American Edition Code.

For those individuals who are in process of completing their 15 braille renewal modules, all remaining modules must be completed in UEB format. For all TVIs who will demonstrate their initial braille competency with the CDE Braille Competency Test in UEB format will be required to take all 15 renewal modules in UEB. As noted, there are no braille competency materials remaining in EBAE format.

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>

Our thanks to Paula Conroy and Sally Burch who “tested” a variety of caseload / workload formula tools to gain more perspective on these tools. Their recommendation was to update our existing guidelines document on the CDE website. The *Guidelines for a Caseload Formula for Teachers Certified in the Area of Visual Impairments* have not been updated since 2003. *Assignment:* Trina, Julie, and Nancy would like to work with Amber Rundle Kahn on the possibility of tweaking our existing tool.

Next Meeting Dates:

April 13, 2017 – Anchor Center for Blind Children, 2550 Roslyn Street, Denver.

Agenda Items:

- Working with our Ophthalmological and Optometric Communities – discussion with Dr. Kara Hanson and Dr. Robert King.
- Caseload Formula Update
- DVR Office
- IDEA Set Aside Budget Update





colorado connections



We are so happy for **Kari (McIntrye)** and **Drew Finholt** on the birth of their son, Keegan James. He was born on January 2 and weighed in at 5 pounds and six ounces, and was 20 inches long. Such joy!

- * Congratulations to **Jeff Hadala** of Jefferson County School District for earning his initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate. Jeff is the 9th person to demonstrate braille competency on our new UEB-revised state test. Congrats to **Leslie Kelly-Watrobka** of Jefferson County School District, **Wendy Unwin Watson** of Pikes Peak BOCES, and **Anitha Muthukumaran** of Douglas County School District for earning their CDE Renewal UEB Competency Certificates! Hats off to the following people who have earned CDE Braille Competency Renewal hours: **Meghan Crosby, Erin Kerr, David Gooldy, Abby Horner, Anitha Muthukumaran, Jordan Robinson, Leslie Kelly-Watrobka, and Wendy Unwin Watson**. Thanks to braille proctors: **Nancy Cozart, Christine Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein**.
- * **Lorraine Chevarria** is now work half-time for the Greeley 6 School Districts. This is exciting news as this position has been vacation for the first half of the school year. Lorraine will also continue to provide early intervention, home-based TVI services to several Community Center Boards. Congratulations to Lorraine on her new position!
- * We send our thanks and support to **Jim Olson** and **Debbie Haberkorn** for all of their amazing work at the Colorado Instructional Materials Center. The CIMC is down two staff right now and Jim and Debbie are working extra hard to complete our annual APH and VI State Count, keep up with braille orders, send out APH products, work with the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics, and a host of other tasks. We appreciate you two!
- * A huge thank you to our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinators this school year. Thank You, Thank You, and Thank You to **Angela Sims, Wendy Unwin Watson, Christina Martin, and Nancy Knight**. This is always above-and-beyond work and is so appreciated.
- * Congrats to **Wendy Unwin Watson** for passing the ACVREP O&M Test to gain this nationally-recognized COMS certification!
- * **Tanni Anthony** and **Gina Herrera** of the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss **Project** presented a training on *The Why, What, How, and Where of Accommodations* at the February Parents Encouraging Parents Conference on February 3, 2017.



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. The American Printing House for the Blind bestowed 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), and Kay Ferrell (CO).

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