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# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

## Live the Life You Want!

Live the life you want, nobody can stop you!  
Shoot for the sun, and break on through.  
So you're blind, you'll be fine, we got good news,  
You can live the life you want, yes we know the truth!

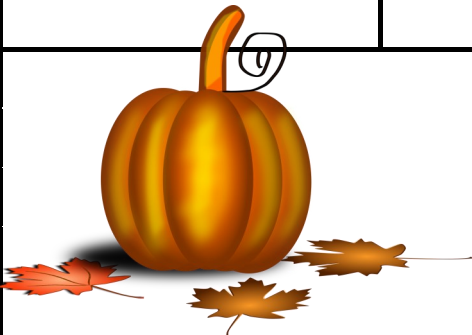
Grab a cane, get trained.  
Got to keep moving.  
Make a change in a wage that's what where doing.  
Come with me! Yeah!

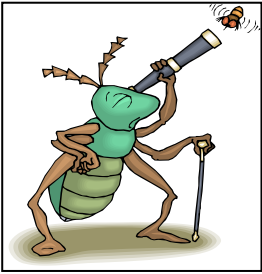
Live the life you want, nobody can stop you  
Shoot for the sun, and break on through  
So you're blind, you'll be fine, we got good news,  
You can live the life you want, yes we know the truth

You and me NFB, Lets dream together!  
NFB you and me, Lives on forever.  
You will see, yeah  
Live the life you want, nobody can stop you!  
Shoot for the sun, and break on through  
So your blind you'll be fine, we got good news  
You can live the life you want!

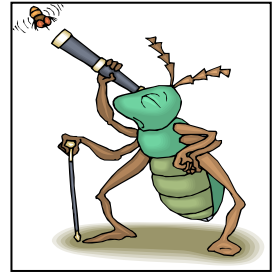
Yes we know the truth, we know the truth

This song was debuted at the 75<sup>th</sup> NFB Convention in July 2015.  
Check out the song at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

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# LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



## Low Vision Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2017-18

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator
<b>Southern Region</b>	Clinic paperwork due on November 15, 2017 Clinic Dates: <b>November 30—December 1, 2017</b>	Debbie Haberkorn
<b>Southern Region</b>	Clinic paperwork due to Debbie Haberkorn on February 6, 2018 Clinic Dates: <b>February 22-24, 2018</b>	Nancy Knight
<b>Southern</b>	Third day of the Southern Regional Clinic to be determined.	Debbie Haberkorn

### Western Clinic Update

The Western Slope Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held September 29-30, 2017 at the Hawthorne Building in Grand Junction. Six students from three Administrative Units (Durango 9-R, Mesa County School District 51, and Mountain BOCES) received evaluations. Six parents and four TVIs attended the evaluation with their students. The Low Vision Evaluation Clinic team would like to thank Regional Coordinator **Angela Sims** for helping to make the clinic such a success. Thank you to **Julie King, Erin Noe, Julie King, and Karen Pacheco** who brought their students for evaluations.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*  
\* **Attention all TVIs!** \*  
\* Please be thinking now about which of your students are candidates for the Regional \*  
\* Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. We want to ensure that every slot is filled with a \*  
\* deserving student. It takes advance planning to get the paperwork completed to fully \*  
\* prepare for each student attending a clinic. You can find the LVE forms on the CDE \*  
\* website. [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision\\_Activities.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities.asp) \*  
\* Thanks for your partnership to promote a successful clinic for your student(s). \*  
\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

# ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

## Indoor Explorer: An Experimental Feature of the Nearby Explorer App

The American Printing House for Blind (APH) Nearby Explorer™ is a powerful location exploration app for use on Android™ and iOS devices. It includes maps for the United States and Canada, covering millions of points of interest (POIs) and empowering you to independently explore with confidence. APH recently released two new iOS versions of Nearby Explorer that include our new Explorer feature. These versions include the paid, full Nearby Explorer app and the free, lite Nearby Explorer Online™ app. Note that the free version requires a network connection.

How the Indoor Explorer Feature Works: In supported venues, beacons are strategically placed on walls, and their locations are mapped. The beacons signal their locations to your phone. The app gathers information about the indoor environment from OpenStreetMap. The app compares a beacon's location and signal strength with the map to determine your location and local points of interest (POIs).

Features: Virtual go-to may be used for exploring indoor spaces remotely, including floor-by-floor. Nearby places equipped with the beacons are announced as you approach. Switching between outdoor and indoor mode is seamless and automatic.

**NOTE:** The Indoor Explorer feature is currently available only on iOS devices. It will be available for Android devices in the future. For more information, check it out at [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

## Pedestrian Research from Transportation Research Board (TRB)

Some great topics in research on pedestrians, including those specifically addressing pedestrians who are blind and visually impaired in volume 2661 of the Transportation Research Record:  
Journal of the Transportation Research Board.

<http://trrjournalonline.trb.org/toc/trr/2017/2661/>

You will only be able to see the abstracts unless you are a member of TRB,  
but the abstracts provide a helpful summary!

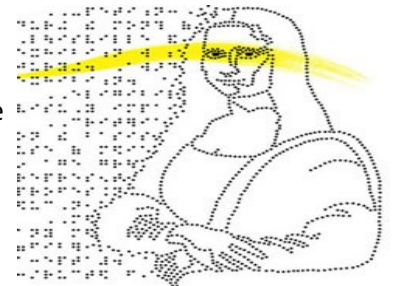
APH invites artists who are blind or visually impaired to submit artwork for the **2018 APH InSights Art Competition and Exhibition**. For 27 years, our renowned international contest has delighted the senses, provoked discussion, and most importantly, allowed artists who happen to have vision loss the 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 16, 2018**. The deadline for adult artists is **March 23, 2018**.

[Complete rules and entry forms are now available for download on the APH InSights Art webpage.](#)

Winning artwork in nine categories and other selected pieces will be displayed at the APH InSights Art Exhibit during APH's 2018 Annual Meeting in Louisville, **October 4-6, 2018**.

We look forward to your participation in our competition. For more information, please e-mail [insights@aph.org](mailto:insights@aph.org), or call Rob Guillen at 502-899-2242



# CVI TRAINING UP DATE!

## Make-And-Take Session Northern Regional Meeting

By Julie Hutchinson

On October 6, 2017 nine TVIs from the northern region participated in a Make-and-Take get together following Diane Sheline's presentation at the CDE State B/VI conference. Our region was very impressed with Diane's assessment and literacy tools for students with CVI and agreed that we should create some of these tools to use with our students, as many of the TVIs in this region have a high population of students with CVI or multiple impairments. At this make-and-take, the TVIs listed below created two tools to encourage visual attention and test the preferred visual field, visual acuity at near, and color preference.

The first item created was an assessment book Diane titled "Yellow Dot, Yellow Dot, Where Are You?" – or "Red Dot" respectively. Each district received an eight-page booklet and added either yellow or red foam dots (one per page) decreasing in size from 4 inches in diameter to 1/8 inch in diameter. The dot was placed on a different location of the page for each page. Ten books were made, as two districts were absent and so we created the books for them; technically, thirteen books were made because three TVIs opted to put yellow dots on one side of the pages of their book and red dots on the reverse sides of the pages. Each TVI at the meeting went home with at least one completed assessment book. The second item created was a Mardi Gras bead curtain to be used with either the mini lightbox or an all-in-one board or something similar. At the B/VI conference, Diane stated that the Mardi Gras Bead Curtain can be used to encourage more visual attending behavior for the student with CVI who visually functions in Phase I or to encourage greater use of function with vision for the student with CVI who visually functions in Phase II (interaction with the beaded curtain with either hands, feet or other body movements). Previous to our make-and-take meeting, the northern region agreed that it would be beneficial to create these curtains, and in different colors. So, each TVI created a Mardi Gras bead curtain in either green, yellow or red. Extra beads were leftover, and so again we created extras for those TVIs who were not in attendance. In total, 13 bead curtains were created.

At the end of the Make-and-Take meeting, the northern region TVIs agreed that it would be most beneficial to focus on creating two to three different literacy-based books for students with CVI at our next meeting, which is scheduled for January 26, 2018. At this meeting, we will either adapt current stories to be more CVI-friendly and/or create new books based on the unique needs of this population of students. We are really looking forward to this next meeting and thank the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project so much for giving us the opportunity to come together, share ideas, and create tools that will undoubtedly benefit our students' in multiple areas of their lives!

### TVIs in Attendance

Teresa O'Brien – Thompson

Carol Love – St. Vrain

Liz Wieder – St. Vrain

Julia Hutchinson – St. Vrain

Danielle Burden – Greeley

Janis Mountford – Greeley

Sally Burch – Boulder Valley

Abby Horner – Centennial BOCES

Lorraine Chevarria – Developmental Pathways



Photo Caption: Front Row: Lorraine, Teresa, and Carol. Back Row: Abby, Liz, Julie, Danielle, Sally, and Janis



# CVI TRAINING UP DATE!

## Make-And-Take Session Western Slope Regional Meeting

By Angela Sims

On October 28 five of the Western Slope TVIs were able to get together in Grand Junction for a CVI Make and Take Session. **Julie King** (Eagle), **Meghan Crosby** (Montrose), **Beth Myers** (Delta), **Erin Noe** (Mesa Valley), and **Angela Sims** (Mesa Valley). The TVIs were able to spend the day making CVI books and discussing different strategies to try with their students. A total of 29 books were made following examples of books from Diane Sheline's "Strategies to See" website. Five different books were made to use with students:

**Three Silver Pie Tins and One Red Puff** (6 books made)

**Three Bright Red Pom Poms Lined Up in a Row** (7 books made)

**One Yellow Slinky Bouncing Up and Down** (5 books made)

**Five Little Lights** (5 books made)

**Yellow Spot, Yellow Spot.... Where are You?** (6 books made)



The **Yellow Spot, Yellow Spot.... Where are You?** was made so all TVIs could have a copy to use as an assessment tool. *Slinky Jr.* were sent home with the TVIs, so they could add lights and also use it as an assessment tool.

Based on materials available, a few extra books were made and sent with Julie King to deliver to Brooke Miller (Colorado River BOCES and Brandon Mapes (Summit)). Photos of Beth Myers and Julie King.

## Make and Take Session Douglas County School District

By Anitha Muthukumaran

In Douglas County used their Professional Development Day to do a CVI Make and Take session. The Douglas County VI Team attended, as did **Will Reynolds** from Westminster Public Schools. In attendance from DCSC were **Diane Anders, Nicole Anderson, Denise Brendle, Elaine Brown, Peg Collins, Karin Hensel Shelley Moats, Brenna Moser, Anitha Muthukumaran, Darcy Rufien, Michelle Seela, and Edie Smith**. We did a lot of make and take: Pictures are attached. The conference was great and helped us all realize that simple materials/books can make a world of difference for our kids with CVI!

We did the following in our make and take:

a) **Five little lights book**

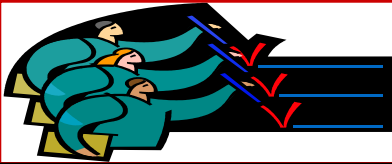
b) **Slinky bouncing up and down book - for concepts such as bottom, top, left, right, middle.**

c) **Slinky on a puck light**

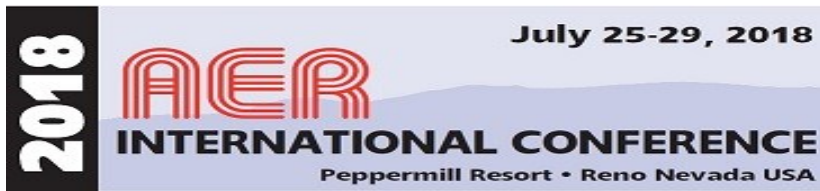
d) **Variety of screens for the light box**

e) **Puff balls for the flash light.**





**CHECK IT OUT!**



## Save the Date!

**AER International Conference 2018**  
**July 25-29, 2018**  
**Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nevada USA**

Learn more about submitting proposals for conference presentations and about our fabulous location. Brought to you by the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Go to [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)



## HKNC Offers Online Learning Opportunities!

Did you know you can get continuing education credits with HKNC online learning? Courses are now available for continuing education credits in multiple fields. Vocational Rehab, Mental Health, Interpreting, and more. [www.hkonlinecourses.org](http://www.hkonlinecourses.org)

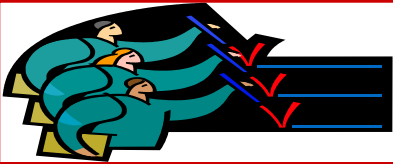
HKNC encourages you to take a look at some of the [free trainings](#) they offer by going to the link below. You will find informational videos on many topics, including Touch Signals, SSPs, and Advocacy in the Deaf-Blind World. <https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/online-learning-tools>

Helen Keller National Center is pleased to announce a series of online courses aimed at providing professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to support individuals who are deaf-blind. Your organization is encouraged to take advantage of the online learning options available through HKNC.

Please check our website for announcements of our new courses and informational videos at [www.hknc.org](http://www.hknc.org) or contact the Professional Learning Department with any questions about on-site or online professional learning opportunities at [PLD@hknc.org](mailto:PLD@hknc.org)

## Anchor Center for Blind Children Promotional Video

Please be sure to check out this wonderful new video of the important services at the Anchor Center for Blind Children! Go to: <https://vimeo.com/236296367>



# CHECK IT OUT!



'LOOK' IS A FREE INTERACTIVE READING  
TOOL FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY CVI

CVI SCOTLAND

## SHARING AND DEVELOPING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CVI

CVI Scotland is delighted to introduce a new reading tool they have developed called Look.

They understand that many people with CVI struggle with reading. One of the reasons is once more...clutter!

Many think of clutter in terms of a busy classroom wall, or an untidy bedroom, or fussy wallpaper. These are examples of clutter and will create challenges for the person with CVI, but for many it goes much further.

When reading, a child with CVI may struggle, losing a word within (the clutter of) a sentence or paragraph of many words, particularly when they are learning to read and don't recognize most of the other words. For some children, the single word itself is a clutter of individual letters, each of which must be individually learnt, and recognized, then put with the other individual (learnt, recognized) letters, in the same original order, then somehow reviewed to form the word, and this is not only difficult, it doesn't make any sense. This is actually how most of us learnt to read, and without CVI it is a very effective method, but for many with CVI, it is stressful and frustrating.

There is a different approach that has proven very successful for some children with CVI, and this is to learn to read using recognition (rather than phonetically, as described above).

With this in mind they developed Look, a reading tool that hopefully ticks a number of different boxes. Look presents individual words with a range of settings options, on a clear uncluttered screen to create the optimal environment. Combining Look with an approach to reading using recognition can enable some children with CVI, who have struggled with reading, to both learn to read, and develop their reading skills independently.

They asked eleven year old Katherine to help us throughout development, and the case study below shows her amazing journey over two months, from not being able to read, to being able to read a story to herself for the first time. Key was that she loved it. For the first time text was presented in a way that made sense to her.

They have worked to explain in detail what is meant by Reading Using Recognition.

CVI Scotland is interested in your feedback.

Please email them at [info@cviscotland.org](mailto:info@cviscotland.org) if you have any comments or suggestions.

[Look: Free Reading Tool](#)

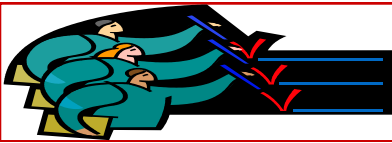
[Look: Settings Instructions](#)

[Look: Reading Using Recognition](#)

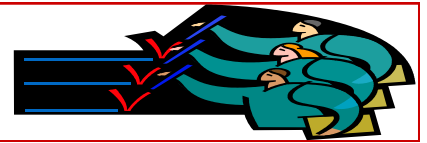
[Look: Case Study Katherine](#)

[Look: Kiera's Secret](#)





# CHECK IT OUT!



## ASSISTANCE FOR THE BLIND AND LOW VISION

### THE HOWARD FUND

In 1932, Mrs. Ida B. Howard bequeathed \$10,000 to the Colorado Workshop for the Blind. The bequest was made for the sole purpose of helping Coloradans with low vision or blindness increase their independence and ability to participate in all aspects of life. Mrs. Howard's generosity established The Howard Fund.

The fund has grown through the years with the inclusion of gifts and bequests, which have been donated to benefit blind and low vision people in Colorado.

### FUND AWARDS AND APPLICATIONS

To honor the spirit in which the Howard Fund was established, funding will be awarded for direct services benefiting persons who are blind or low vision. Funding priority will be given to people with a financial need and no access to other funding sources.

To apply for funding you must complete either an Individual or Organizational Application for assistance available on our website: [colorado.gov/dvr/howardfund](http://colorado.gov/dvr/howardfund).

### FUND AWARD ELIGIBILITY

The disbursements from the fund shall be made for the purpose of contributing to the ability of people who are blind or low vision to participate in all aspects of life.

Disbursements may be made for, but are not limited to, the following:

- Paying expenses incidental to meetings and conferences which promote the rehabilitation and independence of blind people.
- Assessing the skills and needs for rehabilitation for people who are blind or low vision such as travel, personal care, grooming, eating, financial management, home management and other social skills. As well as providing for costs of equipment needed to teach these skills for which appropriated funds are not available.
- Matching funds or providing direct funds for demonstration projects directed toward continuing services by other resources.
- Purchasing equipment for demonstration or training purposes.
- Providing for costs of disseminating public information regarding the Howard Fund and capabilities of blind and low vision persons.

### GET STARTED

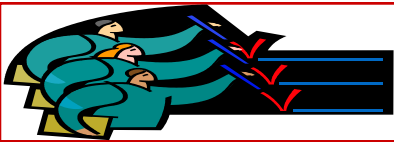
To apply go to [colorado.gov/dvr/howardfund](http://colorado.gov/dvr/howardfund) and fill out an application or contact your local DVR Office for more information.



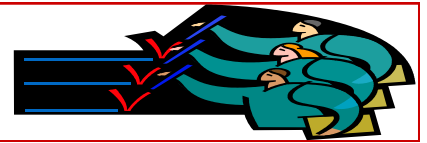
**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Labor and Employment

[colorado.gov/dvr](http://colorado.gov/dvr)  
[facebook.com/ColoradoVR](https://facebook.com/ColoradoVR)  
[twitter.com/COVocRehab](https://twitter.com/COVocRehab)





# CHECK IT OUT!



## GRANTS UPDATE: OSEP's New Investments

Below is a list of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Program's most recent investments. You can read more about each of the centers and projects in at <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/1bee42c>

- **Research and Development Center on Developing Software to Adapt and Customize Instruction in Digital Learning Environments** is a new investment that was awarded to the Center for Applied Special Technology (**CAST**), Inc.
- **Educational Materials in Accessible Formats for Students With Visual Impairments and Other Print Disabilities** was awarded to Benetech's Bookshare® initiative.
- **National Technical Assistance Center for Inclusive Practices and Policies** was awarded to the University of Minnesota. This is now known as the TIES Center.
- **National Center for Digital Open Educational Tools and Resources Supported by Evidence to Enhance Personnel Preparation and Professional Development for Educators of Students With Disabilities** was awarded to Vanderbilt University. This is known as the IRIS Center.
- **National Center for Improving Teacher and Leader Performance to Better Serve Children with Disabilities** was awarded to the University of Florida. This is known as the CEDAR Center.
- **National Center to Enhance Educational Systems to Promote the Use of Practices Supported by Evidence** was awarded to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This is known as SISEP.
- **Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC)** was awarded to the University of Connecticut Health Center.
- **Early Childhood Systems Technical Assistance Center** was awarded to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This is currently known as ECTA.
- **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation** is a new investment that was awarded to the University of South Florida.

# Resources and Materials

## New Materials in the CO Deaf-Blind Project's Lending Library

To check out items, please be in touch with Tanni. To review the inventory, go to the following webpage:  
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db\\_resources](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db_resources)

### DVD – *Alternate Routes: Adapting Orientation and Mobility Techniques*

- Authors: Janet Cason, Barbara Fultz, and Mary Trainor
- Publisher: Perkins
- Includes upper and lower techniques, trailing and cane positions, along with several other techniques

### Book – *Communication and Congenital Deafblindness – Congenital Deafblindness and the Core Principles of Intervention*

- Authors: Inger Rodbroe and Marleen Johnson
- Publisher: VCDBF
- First book in a series to inspire all partners involved in communication with deafblind persons and the core principles of intervention

### Book – *Communication and Congenital Deafblindness – Transition to Cultural Language*

- Authors: Jacques, Inger Rodbloe and Marleen Johnson
- Publisher: VCDBF
- This book in this series distinguishes between the cultural languages that exist that are either perceived by vision or hearing and how that relates to someone who is deafblind.

### Book – *Communication and Congenital Deafblindness – Contact and Social Interaction*

- Authors: Marleen Johnson and Inger Rodbroe
- Publisher: VCDBF
- This book in the series details the early communication with congenitally deafblind persons in everyday situations.

### Book – *Communication and Congenital Deafblindness – Meaning Making*

- Authors: Jacques Souriau, Inger Rodbroe and Marleen Johnson
- Publisher: VCDBF
- This book in the series detail the way human beings understand the world being an essential issue for seeing and hearing partners of congenital deafblind persons.

### Book – *Drawing with Your Perkins Braille*

- Author: Kim Charlson
- Publisher: Perkins
- Explains how to create artwork using the braille

### Book – *Family – Knowing Families, Tailoring Practices, Building Capacity*

- Authored and Published by the Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children  
This book provides guidance to families and professional about the most effective ways to improve learning outcomes and promote development of young children, birth-5, who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities

# Resources and Materials

Book – *Help Yourself: Mealtime Skills for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired*

- Author: Sue Shannon
- Publisher: Perkins
- This book gives methods for mealtime skills

Book – *How We See It*

- Authors: Dennis Lolli and Flo peck
- Publisher: Perkins
- Children with low vision, age birth – 22. This book addresses their needs and also if they have additional disabilities

Book – *Making Science Accessible*

- Authors: Michele Engelbrecht
- Publisher: Perkins
- A guide for teaching introductory physics to students who are blind or visually challenged

Book – *Sports for Everyone*

- Authors: Haley Schedlin and Lauren Lieberman
- Publisher: Perkins
- A handbook for starting sports camps for children with visual impairments

Book – *Undaunted by Blindness*

- Author: Clifford E. Olstrom
- Publisher: Perkins
- A history of individuals who have made significant contributions to society in spite of their visual challenge



## New Downloadable Manuals Available

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

Newly added manuals include:

- Spangle Tangle: Play and Explore
- Reach and Match: Keeping in
- TouchGames for People with Sensory Impairments

# Resources and Materials

## Student Engagement Project - University of Nebraska-Lincoln

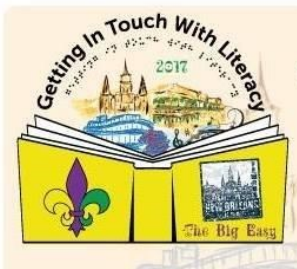
The Student Engagement Project, which is based out of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, hosts a wealth of information and strategies around the complex topic of student engagement to improve outcomes for students. It also includes graduation and dropout prevention strategies recommended for a particular tier of intervention.

Here is the link to the website: <http://k12engagement.unl.edu/welcome>

## 13th Biennial Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference

New Orleans, Louisiana

December 6-9, 2017



GITWL 2017 brings together the most current thinking on all forms of literacy, including print, braille, auditory, tactile graphics comprehension and the use of assistive technology. Presentations will address the needs of a range of ages and all levels of ability, including the range of conventional and functional literacy.

<http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>

## CVI Connect

Is a community of professionals and technology that offer hope and confidence in the form of personalized education, training and support for children with Cortical Visual Impairment. CVI Connect is a new iPad-based software system, designed for use with children with CVI.

For more information: <https://cviconnect.co/>

## Bookshare

The world's largest online accessible library of copyrighted content for people with print disabilities. Through its technology initiatives and partnerships, Bookshare seeks to raise the floor on issues of accessibility, so that individuals with print disabilities have the same ease of access to print materials as people without disabilities. In 2007 and 2012, Bookshare received two, five-year awards from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), to provide free access for all U.S. students with a qualified print disability. The Bookshare library now has over 189,000 books and serves more than 250,000 members. Bookshare is an initiative of Benetech, a Palo Alto, CA-based nonprofit which creates sustainable technology to solve pressing social needs.

For more information, visit: [www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org)

## Easy Branch Orientation & Guide to Staff Training

The Branch Military PTAC has created a guide to its most useful materials on military families: their culture, their unique needs, and the military systems that support them when they have a child with a disability.

The guide also includes links to parent handouts.

Please find these resources at: <https://branchta.org/easy-branch-guide-staff-training/>





## 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.

## Colorado's 21st Century Skills

CDE launched an opportunity for feedback on updates to Colorado's 21st Century Skills as part of the standards review and revision process. The 21st Century Skills are the essential skills students should develop to be successful in the post-secondary education and the workplace, such as initiative and innovation.

Those interested can review the Essential Skills Guidance document draft (PDF) and provide feedback at:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/casreview-essentialskills>

For more information, go to : <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/casreview>

## CDE Licensure Requirement for O&M Specialists

If you are working in a Colorado administrative unit as a School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, 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](mailto: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><b>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired</b> <b>Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 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.</li> <li>✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for special education specialists: visually impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements</li> </ul>
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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><b>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist</b> <b>Ages 0-21: (11.03)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution</li> <li>✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists</li> <li>✓ 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.</li> <li>✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam</li> <li>✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP orientation and mobility certificate</li> </ul>
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## EDUCATOR TALENT

Effective Educators for Every Student and  
Effective Leaders for Every School

### **Educator Talent Website**

There is a new Educator Talent website! Their mission is to develop, deploy and support talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom and all students are prepared for college, career, and life.

Check it out at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent>



# Calendar of Events



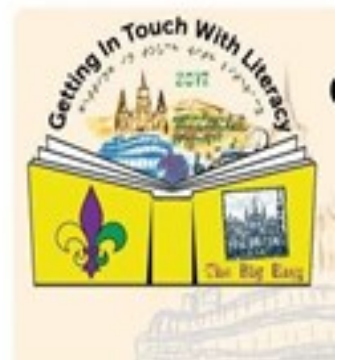
2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017

**Nov 30-Dec 1**      **Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**—Southern Region  
Contact: Debbie Haberkorn— [dhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org)

**December 6-9**      **Getting in Touch with Literacy**—New Orleans, LA  
Contact: <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>

**December 13**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting**—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson— [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

**December 14**      **Vision Coalition**—CO Center for Blind  
Contact: Tanni Anthony— [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)



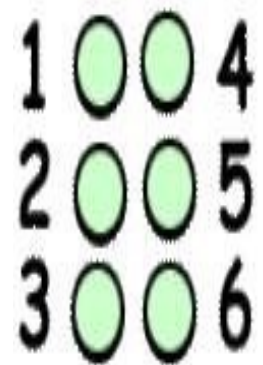
2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018

**January 10**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting**—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

**January 18**      **Braille Challenge** – CSDB in Colorado Springs, CO  
Contact: Jamie Lugo at [jlugo@csdb.org](mailto:jlugo@csdb.org)

**January 18**      **CAER Board Meeting**—CCB in Littleton  
Contact: Brent Batron at [bbatron@cocenter.org](mailto:bbatron@cocenter.org)

**January 25**      **Braille Challenge** – Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, CO  
Contact: Diane Covington at [dcovington@csdb.org](mailto:dcovington@csdb.org)






# Calendar of Events

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

- February 8-9**      **PEAK Parents Center's - Inclusive Education Conference—Colorado Springs, CO**  
Contact: Pam Christy at [pchristy@peakparent.org](mailto:pchristy@peakparent.org)
  
- February 14**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
  
- February 15**      **CAER Board Meeting—CCB in Littleton**  
Contact: Brent Batron at [bbatron@cocenter.org](mailto:bbatron@cocenter.org)
  
- February 22-24**    **Low Vision Evaluation Clinic—Metro Region**  
Contact: Nancy Knight at [nknight@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:nknight@lps.k12.co.us)
  
- February 22-24**    **Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) - Colorado Springs, CO**  
 For more information go to [www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp)
  
- March 14**          **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
  
- March 15**          **CAER Board Meeting—CCB in Littleton**  
Contact: Brent Batron at [bbatron@cocenter.org](mailto:bbatron@cocenter.org)
  
- April 1**            **Braille Book Order Deadline to the CIMC for the Following School Year**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
  
- April 5**            **Vision Coalition— Talking Book Library**  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony - [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
  
- April 11**          **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
  
- April 12**          **Metro Regional TVI/COMS Meeting—Denver, CO**  
Contact: Jeannie Lei at [jlei@cherrycreekschool.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschool.org)





# Calendar of Events



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

- April 26-28** Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) - Mt. Crested Butte, CO  
For more information go to [www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp)
- April 28** Sensory Safari - Colorado Springs  
Contact: Donna Keale at [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)
- May 9** Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- July 25-29** AER International Conference 2018—Peppermill Resort, Reno NV  
Contact: [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)
- September 12** Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- October 10** Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- November 14** Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- December 12** Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)






# Calendar of Events

2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019

Good for the Southern Region who have scheduled their monthly meetings into the 2018-19 school year!

- January 9**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- February 13**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- March 13**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- April 10**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- May 8**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)



2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020

- June 22-25**                    **International Mobility Conference (IMC) 17 – Gothenburg, Sweden**  
 For more information: <http://ips.gu.se/english/cooperation/conferences/imc17>

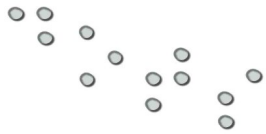
**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

**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.

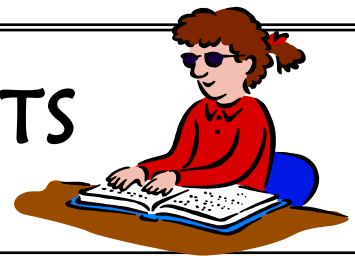
**TVIs and COMSs:** If you have any changes in program contact information, please Tanni these changes.

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

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



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy, if you are in the process of earning your initial Colorado Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. The CDE Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education Exceptional Student Services Unit for their important 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 process across the state.

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

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

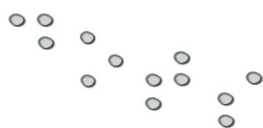
As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor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

Be watching for practice test items to be posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs)

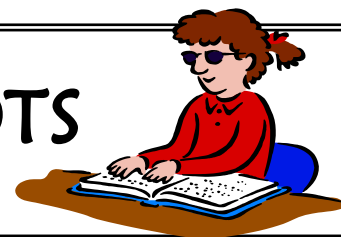
## Braillewriter Repair

Mark Carpenter is available for braillewriter repair.

His contact information is: Phone: 719-634-8720 and Email: [carpdiane@yahoo.com](mailto:carpdiane@yahoo.com)



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Braille Tales



**Sign up for Braille Tales today  
and start receiving free books!**

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) believes early exposure to reading develops crucial braille awareness skills and promotes enthusiasm for literacy.

By enrolling in Braille Tales, participating families receive free print-braille books every other month until the child reaches his or her 6th birthday.

**To be eligible for the program:**

- Child or parent must be blind or visually impaired
- Child must be age 5 or under
- Family must reside in the U.S. or its outlying areas

**To apply visit:** [www.aph.org/BrailleTales](http://www.aph.org/BrailleTales)

APH's partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library gives us access to a collection of age appropriate books from which we select the most effective content for early braille readers.



**American Printing House  
for the Blind, Inc.**

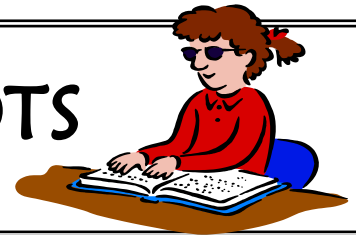
### **Exciting News!**

APH is announcing the official launch of BrailleBlaster, a revolutionary new software tool that translates text into braille—more quickly, easily, and accurately. Students can now have braille textbooks on the first day of class along with their sighted peers, instead of waiting weeks or months for their learning materials. Best of all, BrailleBlaster is FREE to anyone who wants to download it. Learn more: [www.brailleblaster.org](http://www.brailleblaster.org)





# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Make the SMART Brailier Even Smarter – Free Upgrade for UEB!



As of September 5, 2017, APH began shipping SMART Brailiers with updated software that makes Unified English Braille (UEB) available in the Language Settings! To change to UEB, choose "English-U.E.B."

**Any SMART Brailiers you already have can be updated with this latest free software.** Download the instructions and latest software to update your SMART Brailier at

<http://www.perkins.org/solutions/featured-products/smart-brailier/update>

The APH SMART Brailier by Perkins is an updated Perkins Brailier that displays, vocalizes, and produces embossed braille based on what a student types. With the built-in app "Building on Patterns: Kindergarten," early braille students can have continual access and opportunity to practice braille outside of traditional braille lesson plans with TVIs

## DEADLINE EXTENDED! Be a Braille Badges Designer – Contest Ends December 31!



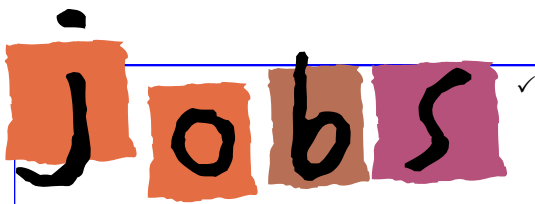
Digital Art Competition and Exhibition for Artists Who are Visually Impaired and Blind

[Braille Badges](#) are APH's accessible set of Apple's iOS iMessage® Stickers. These fun, expressive badges include themes related to visual impairment and are connected to holidays, special events, APH products, characters, and more.

Imaginative artists from schools across the country are invited to help APH stock our stickers archive by submitting designs for Braille Badges at <http://www.aph.org/contest/braille-badges/>

APH will choose three winners from each level (Pre-K through Elementary; Middle School; and High School) and award first, second, and third place prizes based on originality and creative style.

**Deadline for submissions is now December 31, 2017.**



## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with current vacancies for this school year or anticipated vacancies starting in the Fall of 2018. 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](mailto:charlie.carter@thompsonschoools.org)
- ✓ **TVI/ COMS** (1 FTE) for Greeley Schools. For more information, please contact Kate Green at [kgreen4@greeleyschools.org](mailto:kgreen4@greeleyschools.org)

### Southern Region – Jobs

- ✓ **CSDB** - Please be in touch with Chelle Lutz for CSDB Openings. She can be reached at (719) 578-2100.
- ✓ **1 TVI / COMS** opening for Pikes Peak BOCES. For more information, please contact Trish Reitinger at [Reitinger@ppbooces.org](mailto:Reitinger@ppbooces.org) or 719 622-6205

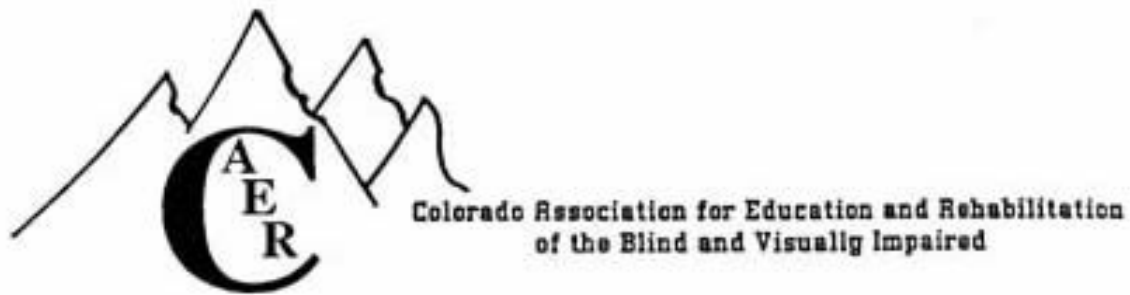
### Metro Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI (1 FTE)** As well as a Full-time substitute for the Fall Semester and a brailist / para in the Denver Public Schools District. contact Brandy Samuell at [brandy\\_samuell@dpsk12.org](mailto:brandy_samuell@dpsk12.org) for information.
- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (1 FTE )- Immediate vacancy for Cherry Creek School District. For more information, contact Frances Woolery-Jones at 720-554-554-4228 or [fwoolery-jones@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:fwoolery-jones@cherrycreekschools.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!

Please keep Tanni in the communication loop about the status of your vacancies.

We need to work together to fill these positions! If you have ideas about how best to home grow and support new personnel to the field, let your Vision Coalition representative know!



## CAER IS FOR YOU!

As professionals who serve the community of individuals who are blind/visually impaired, we have an active Colorado chapter of our national AER professional organization. Within our specialized field, there are a number of ways to access continuing education, network with peers and learn to serve the needs of our clients and students more effectively. We take pride that CAER is comprised of members from school district administration units, the Department Veterans' Affairs, CO Center for the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation and community members with an interest in vision loss.

### **Benefits of Membership:**

- Professional Development & Support (Colorado members receive reduced rates to CAER sponsored events!)
- Financial support (See Mini-grants and ACVREP reimbursements)
- CAER Newsletters
- Adaptive donations to us – and then returned to the community through you
- Advocacy at local and national levels

### **2017-18 Board Members:**

- **President:** Brent Batron
- **President:** Elect: Nancy Cozart Past-President: David Gooldy
- **Treasurer:** Trina Boyd-Pratt
- **Secretary:** Nancy Cozart
- **At Large Members:** Ann Cunningham, Sally Burch, Michelle Robinson, Amber Rundle-Kahn, Heather Solberg

Website: <http://co.aerbvi.org/>

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



# TRANSITION INFORMATION

## How to Get your Student Signed up for Services with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Services

1. First, answer the following questions:

1. Is your student age 15 – 21 and currently enrolled in school?
2. Can your student succeed independently in an integrated setting?
3. Is your student and their family willing to participate in training outside of school hours?
4. Could your student benefit from one of the following 5 services?
  - job exploration counseling
  - work-based learning experiences
  - counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
  - workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills (this includes AT instruction, O&M, daily living skills...)
  - instruction in self-advocacy
  - If the answer to the above questions is “yes”, move on to step 2.

2. Contact your local Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind (RCB). Each case will be handled on an individual basis. Follow RCB guidance on how to proceed

### Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCB) Contact List

- Alamosa - Estevan Lujan 710-589-5158
- Aurora: LaVerne Dell - 303-866-3168
- Boulder: Joe Fiorini - 303-866-4210
- Colorado Springs: Josie Shea - 719-482-7982
- Denver Metro: Anmol Bhatia - 303-866-3366
- Durango: Carolina Perky - 970-247-2349
- Fort Collins/ Greeley: Linda Stoval - 970-207-6464
- Golden: Joe Fiorini - 303-866-4210
- Grand Junction: Barbara Kiefer - 970-248-7107
- Greenwood Village: LaVerne Dell - 303-866-3168
- Longmont/ Northglenn: LaVerne Dell - 303-866-3168
- Pueblo: Samantha Widdowson - 719-544-1406
- All other areas not otherwise specified: LaVerne Dell - 303-866-3168



## TRANSITION INFORMATION

### Succeeding on the Job: Using Technology to Boost the Skills Employers Want

This webinar of the Center on Technology and Disability and the PACER Center presents tools and strategies to support essential work performance, such as being on time, communicating, following directions, staying organized, and completing tasks. A wide range of technology is explored, including smartphone apps, wearable devices, a smart pen, and alternative computer access. To watch the webinar, go to:

### ***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](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.

**just for PARENTS**

**Family Connect** is a website created by the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) to give parents of visually impaired children a place to support each other, share stories and concerns, and find resources on raising their children from birth to adulthood.

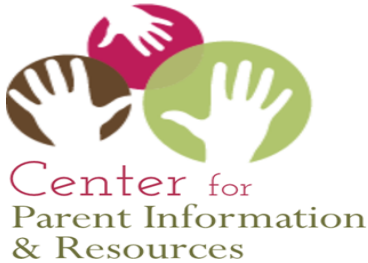
#### *Vital Links to Families*

- Talk to other parents on message boards where you can share your stories, questions, concerns, and triumphs.
- Read parents' blog posts and personal stories written by parents about their own experiences raising children who are blind or have multiple disabilities.
- See hopeful and insightful videos featuring kids with visual impairments and their families.

Family Connect from AFB <http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsitetime.aspx>



# just for PARENTS



## Center for Parent Information and Resources

This website was produced under U.S. Department of Education,  
Office of Special Education Programs No. H328R130014.

It has links to Resources and Parent TA Centers.

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

There is a specific webpage for Visual Impairment, Including Blindness.  
Go to: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/visualimpairment/>

## 2017 - 2018 Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences

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

### 2017 - 2018 PEP Dates:

February 22 - 24, 2018 - Colorado Springs, CO

April 26 - 28, 2018 - Mt. Crested Butte, CO

To learn more about PEP Conferences and to register, please visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>

The [National Organization of Parents of Blind Children](#) (NOPBC) 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.

For more information about NOPBC, please go to:

<https://nfb.org/Parents-and-Teachers-of-Blind-Children>

## Supporting Children by Improving Family Outcomes

This 13-minute video describes the importance of supporting families, collecting data on family outcomes, and using the data to improve the program.

The video highlights how three families who received early intervention benefited from support to their family.  
From the DaSy Center, the ECTA Center, and collaborating partners.

To watch the video, go to: <http://dasycenter.org/supporting-children-by-improving-family-outcomes/>

# VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

**September 21, 2017**

**Persons in Attendance:** Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Julie Hutchinson, Julie King, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Judy Mumford, Sara Noel, and Jim Olson,

**Absent:** Deb Andrews, Dan Burke, Lori Mattick, Dana McMullen, and Trina Boyd Pratt

**Guests:** Amber Rundle Kahn, Brent Batron, and Judy Mumford

## **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/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/TSVI	=	Teacher of students with visual impairments



## **MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR**

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Callie Spotted Elk
- Colorado AER Chapter – Trina Boyd Pratt
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Dana McMullen
- 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 Hutchinson
- Southern TVI / COMS – Deb Andrews
- University of Northern Colorado VI Program – Paula Conroy
- Western TVI / COMS - Julie King

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome Julie King as our new representative for the Western Region. We thank Judy Mumford and Brent Batron for coming as alternate representatives for the Southern Region and the Colorado Center for the Blind.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our first meeting of the school year was on Monday September 18<sup>th</sup>. JeffCo TVIs hosted the meeting and it included some new faces in Colorado! WELCOME!!! Donna Keale, from CSDB Outreach shared information with us, including The David Michael Witter Camp/Activity Scholarship opportunity, Let's Go Play Fall Festival for children birth to age 8 with their families being held October 19 at CSDB Lions Building from 4:30-6:30, as well as input given from TVIs on what is needed from outreach in the future. Nancy Cozart encouraged TVIs to review the updated draft of the Resource Allocations Document for discussion on Thursday evening at the state conference. Barb Galgano shared that the Denver Tattered Cover has meeting space that we may want to use in the future. They also have middle/high school age book clubs. This could be a nice social opportunity for some of our kids. We talked about checking in with other Tattered Cover locations for other possible options.

The majority of this meeting was focused on discussion on FVAs & LMAs. Everyone's input was truly appreciated! TVIs offered to share some of their templates/sample documents via email. Key points discussed included:

- CVI Template covering the 10 areas (in conjunction with C. Roman's materials)
- Some TVIs have taken pieces from documents in other states and personalize them for individual and/or district use.
- Many TVIs often combine FVAs and LMAs reports unless a new dual learner or other complex situation
- FVAs and LMAs generally do not include all 9 ECC areas; usually academic, sensory efficiency, technology, and O&M. Others can be included in other areas of assessment/IEP sections.
- There was some discussion that one of the formal reading inventories often used can score students differently than informal reading materials from the classroom.
- Triennial FVAs/LMAs may be more in depth than annuals IF there are not significant changes.

### Discussion Items:

**Doctors are writing in specific educational recommendations, including service hours and literacy modes. This should be resolved, or at least improved, when we have new eye doc forms.** *There was a discussion about seeing medical reports with educational recommendations. Some of the language is very specific to eligibility, needed equipment, and needed services. It was suggested that it might be helpful to connect to the medical community to have further discussions. It was also suggested that we work with Dr. King and Dr. Theune to see what they might recommend as an appropriate follow-up with the medical community.*

**ASSIGNMENT:** *Julie H., Nancy, and Jim design a draft universal eye report form and an accompanied letter that can detail what would be appreciated from the medical report and the next step role of the IFSP / IEP team to determine eligibility, services, and equipment. Once the form is designed for school age learners, Paula and Callie will assist with a 0-2 version*

**Concerns are coming up again regarding the transition of services from the private preschool setting and public schools.** There may need to be clarity of roles and understanding for parents. There is acknowledgement that the family-centered focus on 0-2 services are very different than the child-centered focus that begins in preschool. There are differing eligibility criteria across 0-2 and 3-21, as well as how services are determined. Both ASV and Anchor Center for Blind Children are very aware of the distinctions and the importance of how best to support families in the transitions.

It may be helpful to have some conversations with sending / receiving parties. This could happen in regional meetings or something deliberately scheduled for this topic. It was also mentioned that our upcoming conversation about eligibility for visual impairment, including blindness may also better inform both EI and school-based TVIs. It is suggested that a sending agency does not suggest either informally or formally whether a child will be eligible for school district special education services and/or an estimation of services that will be provided. The latter is an IEP decision.

Please note: The staff of ASV would like to start a conversation with representatives from different school districts about "optimal Part B to Part C transition." Interested? Please contact Paula Landry at [plandry@ASharedVision.org](mailto:plandry@ASharedVision.org)

#### Future Meetings:

- ✓ Thursday November 16, 2017 3:30-5:00 in Cherry Creek
- ✓ Monday February 12, 2018 3:30-5:00 in Aurora
- ✓ Thursday April 12, 2018 3:30-5:00 in Denver

#### Southern Region (Deb Andrews / Judy Mumford)

Southern Region is up and running! Jim Olson has taken the lead and emailed out the next two years of Southern Region meeting dates. Meetings take place the second Wednesday of the month at CSDB/CIMC Jones Hall 2nd floor conference room from 12:30-3:00 followed by a COMS meeting from 3-4. Please contact Jim Olson ([jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)<<mailto:jolson@csdb.org>>) 719-578-2195. The first two meeting dates are September 13 and October 11.

The Southern Region's Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Date are November 30 and December 1st. Paperwork is due to Debbie Haberkorn by November 15, 2017! [dhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org)<<mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org>> 719-578-2197.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is hosting a Resource Expo on October 5th at the Library 21C on 1175 Chapel Hills Drive from 10:00- 2:00. Topics include resources for individuals with vision loss, Vendors range from Assistive Technology, Rehabilitation Services, Guide Dogs, Daily Living Skills, and more! Have questions? Contact the Colorado Springs DVR at 719-635-3585 ask for Liz Robertson, Megann Karch or Tim Richard.

Diane Fitzkee will be setting up social groups again this year for both the elementary students and the middle/high school students. Dates to be determined. Diane's email is: [dfitzkee@d49.org](mailto:dfitzkee@d49.org)

#### Discussion Items:

**Can we educate ophthalmologists and neurologists regarding terminology used in their reports and have a discussion with them about resisting including terminology that parents request?** See discussion notes under the metro region discussion points.



***There is a concern about the number of eye reports and demands for vision disability for ocular motor, convergence etc. What is the national position and what is the state doing? Are districts able to say we are required to follow current CDE rules? Tanni will provide an update on eligibility information at the state conference. Stay tuned for more information about this topic.***

***Do we need parent permission to register students with the CIMC? APH quota funds? What about attaching the eye report to the registration form if they are quota eligible. Parent permission is now required annually for the APH Quota Count. DECISION: It was recommended that parent permission be sought each year for the state VI Count. Jim Olson will keep us apprised on the design of the permission page, but it was suggested that one document house permission language for both the APH Count for learners who are legally blind and the Annual Count (if a child is eligible for both counts). This will save on duplication of paperwork.***

### **Western Region (Julie King)**

Mountain BOCES is making some changes. Mountain BOCES now covers Lake, Park, Buena Vista and Salida. Colorado River BOCES covers Roaring Fork, Garfield RE2 and Garfield RE16.

Mesa Valley School District now has a new TVI in their district and they couldn't be happier! Erin Noe comes to them from the Front Range with a wide range of experience. She has been working hard to learn all about her new students and loving it!

Mesa Valley School District also gives a big shout out to their amazing braillist Lesli Tigert. She has demonstrated braille competency in UEB by passing the exam and completing the required modules. They feel very fortunate to have her in their district and appreciate her willingness to go above and beyond for both staff and students. Thank you Lesli!

Mesa will once again host the Low Vision Clinic in late September. They currently have families coming from the Durango area and Grand Junction. Everyone really appreciate families' willingness to take the time from their busy days to make these appointments happen for their children.

### **Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)**

The most recent date of the Northern region's TVIs/COMSs was on April 21, 2017

*Staff Updates in the North:* Welcoming Melissa French and Sarah Goodfellow, who are now working in Poudre School District, as well as Pat Lewis and Tara Brown-Ogilvie, who are providing O&M instruction in Poudre School District. Lori Petrick is no longer the DVR contact for our region; Kylene Lima is the primary contact for referrals at this time. Greeley Schools (District 6) is looking for a full-time TVI for the 2017-2018 school year. Thompson School District and Poudre Schools are each looking to hire a part-time TVI. Liz Wieder (Saint Vrain Valley Schools) has passed her ACVREP COMS certification exam and is officially providing O&M instruction for the district - yay!

At our last meeting, Becky Porter and Lori Petrick (DVR) shared information with the group regarding DVR and school partnerships – the referral process for the PreEmployment Transition Services (PreETS) and Workshop Series were discussed at length. We were encouraged to have students apply as soon as possible, and were reminded that our students don't necessarily need to have a job goal in mind to work with DVR under their new YP case type; this makes the process a little easier for those younger students who don't know what type of work they are interested in yet.

Lorraine Chevarria shared assessment ideas for evaluating children ages 0-3; it was a wonderful workshop in which many ideas and resources were shared. Lorraine specifically addressed the website of the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBI) – it is full of checklists, inventories and other resources that are extremely easy to access and use.



Sally Burch and Teresa O'Brien both attended a class which addressed "Accessible Literacy for Early Readers for Students who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Deaf-Blind;" and we are all very excited to hear about what they learned at the upcoming conference and/or at our next regional meeting!

Upcoming Meeting Date: October 6, 2017

Discussion Item:

***Is the state leaning toward hiring generalists in light of the issues of shortages of TVIs in Colorado? If so, will there be any legal issues related to this? If we are considering this (as a state) how would it look, etc. There are four broad special education teacher licensure endorsements in Colorado: Early Childhood Special Education Ages 0-8; Early Childhood Special Education Specialist Ages 0-8; Special Educational Generalist Ages 5-21; Special Education Specialist Ages 5-21; Special Education Specialist: Deaf and Hard of hearing Ages Birth -21; and Special Education Specialist Visually Impaired Ages Birth – 21.***

*Specialist Education Generalists are not specifically trained in ECSE, deafness/ or blindness disciplines. Someone who is licensed and endorsed as a Special Education Generalist may be a great candidate to seek an additional masters in the field of educating children who are blind/visually impaired. Once enrolled in an approved VI training program, this individual could be hired on a temporary authorization to work as a TVI-in-training. Our state rules dictate that each special education teacher will serve, at a minimum, a majority of special education students with the same identified area of need as that teacher's special education license or endorsement. ECEA 3.04(1)(a)(i) Personnel Qualifications*

**Colorado AER (Nancy Cozart / Brent Batron)**

Contact Information: Website: <http://co.aerbvi.org/>

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](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com) or individually as listed below.

**CAER BOARD CONTACTS:**

President: Brent Batron: [bbatron@cocenter.org](mailto:bbatron@cocenter.org)

President-Elect & Current Secretary: Nancy Cozart: [ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)

Treasurer: Trina Boyd-Pratt: [trinaboyd@comcast.net](mailto:trinaboyd@comcast.net)

**Board Members At-Large:**

Heather Solberg: [hwparrsons@hotmail.com](mailto:hwparrsons@hotmail.com) [heather.solberg@va.gov](mailto:heather.solberg@va.gov)

Sally Burch: [Sally.burch@bvsd.org](mailto:Sally.burch@bvsd.org)

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Amber Rundle Kahn: [amber\\_rundlekahn@engschools.net](mailto:amber_rundlekahn@engschools.net)



We have been approved for ACVREP approval! CAER is offering workshops and trainings with credit attached. Fees will vary per training, but CAER members will receive a discount. Upcoming Trainings include: O&M skills (for families and COMS) as a strand during part of the Saturday events of the NFB CO State Chapter Conference in Fort Collins on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Other topics include specific training on JAWS and other technology programs, cooking skills, etc.

Upcoming Fundraisers include the Brewery Fundraiser coming in January or February 2018

*In-Kind Donation Committee:* Did you know that CAER has a wish list and equipment giveaway program? We have asked therapists to turn in items that are no longer used or needed and give them to people who can use them. Think of your students who need a device for home or someone who can't quite afford an item. In August, we distributed two desk top CCTVs, a portable CCTV, a handheld magnifier and two floor lamps. If you know of someone in need please call 559-907-8177 and let Michelle Robinson know what item is requested and she will see if we have it in inventory and if not. Put their name on a wait list.

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/>

Don't forget...WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY is October 15<sup>TH</sup>. You are encouraged to participate in an organized event or create your own!

FYI...We need pictures of CAER events, ANY events! Please email them to [michelle.robinson5@va.gov](mailto:michelle.robinson5@va.gov)

They may be put on the website and used for CAER educational purposes,

Discussion Item:

**Who can help with updating the CAER Website?** *The CAER Website needs updating and as one of the board members assisting with it being up-to-date, they could use some support. If someone has a skill set to help, please contact Nancy Cozart.*

**Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Dana McMullen)**

Pre-ETS summer workshop updates: 4 (2 day) workshops

- Career Exploration      Orientation and Mobility
- College                      Daily Living Skills

Three students attended. Get your students signed up for DVR! – More info about 2017 summer workshops to come at TVI state conference.

Disability Awareness Day (Denver) will be held at 2211 W Evans Ave. Denver, CO 80223 from 9 am – 12 pm. Please bring your students!

Vision Expo (Colorado Springs) Library 21c Pikes Peak Library District at 1175 Chapel Hills Drive in Colorado Springs, CO 80920 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

There is a waitlist for Denver Metro center Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) program is around 3 months. As of October 10<sup>th</sup>, the Blind and Low Vision Services (BLVS) counselor unit will be fully staffed around the entire state.

Discussion Item:

**How do we work together across agencies specific to transition and global services for individuals who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind?** *There was a discussion about the need to gather the key agency / school district providers to determine service options for students who are secondary-age.*

**A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)**

A Shared Vision (ASV) is thrilled to welcome new team members, Kerry Auld and Tina Martin! We couldn't be happier to have such kind-hearted, talented TVIs to support and guide families of our littlest ones across the state.

We have been busy submitting grants for a variety of projects. In September our team was joined by 30 volunteers through Xcel Energy's Day of Service project, to build equipment. With their help, in a few short hours we were able to make 16 resonance boards, 10 tactile vests, 24 story bags and 20 sensory hula-hoops! Additionally, the framing and painting for 20 collapsible/portable Little Rooms was completed. These materials will be available to families through ASV's lending library.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> rural outreach trip on the Western Slope is scheduled for October. In addition to these trips, our telehealth practice is in full swing. Families in rural areas now have the option of receiving consultative services from a TVI on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis. The ability to join families and other providers via telehealth for co-visits has been a wonderful opportunity for ASV's teachers to stay connected with several families around the state. They are also working to organize parent groups for families to connect with one another.

Sarah Vallese is working with a research group in Illinois on Family-Centered Practice. Paula is a member of a group of EI personnel working together to address the content of a 0-3 version of the CVI Questionnaire that Dr. Gordon Dutton has designed.

Our TVIs would like to start a conversation with representatives from different school districts about "optimal Part B to Part C transition." Interested? Please contact Paula Landry at [plandry@ASharedVision.org](mailto:plandry@ASharedVision.org)

### **Anchor Center for Blind Children (Callie Spotted Elk)**

Anchor Center for Blind Children is starting the 2017-18 school year with 5 full preschool classes including a growing wait list for next year. We continue to see thriving attendance in both our Infant and Toddler programing with especially strong attendance for our Toddler program. Anchor Center is happy to welcome Melinda Carter, a new TVI to our program and Laura Moran, an Early Childhood Special Educator who is currently in the TVI program at UNC. Elise Darrow, a student teacher at Anchor Center, will also have her TVI license by December 2017.

We held our first Biannual Community Resource Fair in August that was very successful. There were several families and parents in attendance receiving information and support from local resources and agencies. We continue to work with those resources and agencies on collaborating more regularly and as relevant to the needs of our families. Our monthly book club guided by Dr. King, a metro area pediatric ophthalmologist, continues to meet regularly and right now as a group we are studying a few chapters at a time from the book *Vision and the Brain*.

We were recently awarded a large technology grant through Comcast that will continue to support our early literacy and technology efforts for our students, as well as provide specific teacher training opportunities. Finally, our largest fundraising event, Sunset in the Country, is coming up September 30th at the J-5 Equestrian Center. We are looking forward to a great year!

#### **Discussion Items:**

***Is it possible to share out information about the book club sessions with Dr. King? ASSIGNMENT: Callie will see if there is a way to open it to others / share out the information (notes) from these sessions.***

***Will there continue to be scheduled brown-bags lunch or morning tea meetings with experts that have happened in the past? ASSIGNMENT: Callie will check on whether this particular parent-networking / discussion venue will continue to happen.***

### **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. There is no report on POBC activities for this meeting.

Brent shared that families who have been involved in the past have children who have aged-out of public school services. There has been some recent interest with new families. Come the end of October, after the State NFB Convention, there may be news to share.

### Discussion Items:

**What are other available family activities in the state?** *There are good things happening with parent meetings / support groups with our A Shared Vision, Anchor Center for Blind Children, and CSDB Early Education program services. Tanni shared that the CDE hosted a very successful January 2017 Parent Workshop for families of children with deaf-blindness. The Colorado Deaf-Blind grant has a Family Specialist who is frequently in touch with families of children with combined vision and hearing loss about family-focused trainings or networking opportunities. . Jamie shared that CSDB Outreach and CSDB Early Education Program do offer events for families. Most are often in Colorado Springs area, but they are working to offer parent events in other locations of the state.*

*Tanni asked whether it would be helpful to send out a statewide service to learn more about family needs. The Vision Coalition sponsored such a survey in 2008. The goal was to learn about training topic needs, as well as preferences for how best to receive information. It may well be worth completing another survey. Assignment: Bring back the Parent Survey notion at the next meeting.*

### **Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Dan Burke / Brent Batron)**

Wow, what a fun summer! Early June was the start of Confidence Camp (12-15 campers), our Middle School Program and our high school programs. Confidence Camp always ratchets up the energy levels in our building two or three notches. It seems there was a lot of swimming, but also paddle sports and rock climbing.

The middle-schoolers come for three weeks also, but while Confidence Camp is a day program, our other summer programs are residential. The middle-schoolers stayed in our apartments with a counselor and other students. We had three middle-schoolers, from Colorado, Kansas and Illinois. It was a very motivated group.

The high school programs include *Earn and Learn* students who get the chance to work for 40 hours over a two-week period and get a paycheck. We have had long-standing partnerships for summer jobs with Arapahoe Community College, The Right Step Therapeutic Riding Program, Angel Care, Auraria Preschool, Audio Information Network of Colorado and others. Students went to work with a counselor until they got the route and the job tasks down at their job. These experiences with expectations and tangible rewards can be critical as our students grow and mature into adults.

The other students, six of them this summer, are in my college prep class. I hammer them with a lot of info about the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 as it applies in higher education (not K-12). They all must sign up for a [bookshare.org](http://bookshare.org) account and download a book I assign and complete the readings. The book is "What the Best College Students Do," by Ken Bain. Highly recommended. We also visit a couple of Disability access offices in the area to learn about the way that school approaches providing a level playing field to blind students. I also put a lot of emphasis on the necessity to use and know a number of accessibility tools - JAWS and NVDA, Firefox and Chrome, Microsoft and Google Apps, because they are likely to encounter any and all of these in college.

Other highlights of the summer program included our annual trip to the NFB Convention in Orlando, an Olympiad Day, which was covered by the Denver Post, and our Science Saturday in July with robots, simulated tornadoes and the Talking Lab Quest in Chemistry.

Friday night, September 15, we kicked off the school year with Family Game Night. The whole family was invited and though we had a number of games indoors, the beautiful evening and string ball won out for almost all of the 30 or so in attendance. Kids got to play and parents were given the opportunity to try out sleepshades and learn a few cane techniques or learn some grilling techniques from a volunteer member of our staff. After burgers and dogs there were more games indoors. The sun was down and it was getting a little chilly.

Our first FAST Saturday (Fun Activities and Skills Training) will be October 14 and will kick off the year with a Sports Day featuring goal ball, fitness, more string ball for the kids, while the parents will learn tips on teaching daily living skills to their kids and make our lunch! In November we'll be whipping up a mini-Thanksgiving dinner with the students. The full year's activities and dates will be posted before the end of the month.

There is also a mentoring program at CSDB sponsored by staff of the Colorado Center of the Blind.

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

The CIMC has two new staff! Lori Wilson and Teresa Kilbury are on board! This is wonderful news. The CIMC is still in transition to their new site, which is a remodeled building on campus. But the move date close and it will be wonderful to be in new, customized, updated space!

- 1) Notification of Procedure Change: Book Order deadline for 2018-19 school year; April 1 is the new due date for book orders for the next school year.
- 2) Notification of Procedure Change: Federal Quota Census; Parent permission will be required as part of the Federal Quota Registration to begin in January 2018

APH will be rolling out a fully revised online database used for the registration of students and adults in the Federal Quota Census

At last year's Annual Meeting, APH and Ex Officio Trustees of the Federal Quota accounts talked about potential issues around the Family Educational Rights and privacy Act (FERPA) in response to questions being raised in various states. As you are aware, federal quota information is collected to meet the reporting obligations to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and other entities as required by law.

In response to those issues, APH President Craig Meador posed specific questions to OSEP around our registration process and recently received guidance for EOTs. OSEP was definitive that FERPA requires consent to release personally identifiable information (PII) for quota registration purposes.

To clarify:

- According to OSEP's guidance, APH requires that EOTs secure parent and guardian signatures allowing the information required to complete quota registration to be shared with APH.
- APH will not collect these signatures, but instead ask that EOTs establish their own procedures to collect and store permissions obtained.
- This procedure change will take effect for the January 2018 Federal Quota Registration.

### **(2) Software Update Brings UEB to the APH SMART Braille by Perkins!**

APH is now shipping SMART Braille with major software and design updates! Starting on September 5, 2017, APH began shipping SMART Braille with the following improvements:

- Unified English Braille (UEB) now available in the Language Settings
- Increased strength and durability of plastic exterior
- Easier paper loading and decreased paper jamming

Any SMART Braille you already have can be updated with the latest software free-of-charge. Download the instructions and latest software to update your SMART Braille by going to this link: <http://www.perkins.org/solutions/featured-products/smart-braille/update>

Please note the following:

- The download link above will take you to a [www.perkins.org](http://www.perkins.org) webpage.
- The software update zip folder is large (over 600 MB) and may take several minutes to download.
- You will need a blank USB drive to perform the update.



## Directions to Change the Braille Code Used for Translation to UEB

1. Turn power switch on the right side of the machine to the ON position.
2. Wait approximately 35 seconds until the “Welcome” menu shows on the screen.
3. Go to the “Main Menu” screen by pressing the menu button twice. (Note: The menu button is the circular green button with a raised dot in the center, located on the right side of the braille’s screen. Press it once, wait a second for the “braille entry” screen, and then press it again.)
4. Scroll down to “Settings” and press the select button (the green diamond-shaped button to the right of the screen).
5. Scroll down to “Language” and press the select button.
6. Scroll down to “English-U.E.B.” and press the select button.
7. The braille will prompt you to press the select button again and then to reboot.

UEB will be the braille code used for translation when the braille powers back up.

About the APH SMART Braille by Perkins: The [APH SMART Braille by Perkins](#) is an updated [Perkins Braille](#) that displays, vocalizes, and produces embossed braille based on what a student types. With the built-in app “Building on Patterns: Kindergarten,” early braille students can have continual access and opportunity to practice braille outside of traditional braille lesson plans with TVIs. Additionally, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and peers who may not know braille can engage with children through the visual and audio output features.

### Discussion Item:

***How do we work toward an equitable distribution of APH materials is an ongoing CIMC need and challenge. There are procedures in place to ensure that high-cost items are provided across the state with great care. For example, there may be ONE high-cost item per AU. There could also be a follow-up with TVIs to determine the use of the equipment.***

*Also there are consumables that add up to deplete the APH funds available for learners across the state. Each child generates a quota fund amount. It is understandable that it does not work to strictly allocate that fund amount per child. It is important that we work to share in the quota funds and also obligate agencies and districts for assistive technology costs of supporting their students.*

## CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Students and staff have returned full of energy. They have jumped back into school and are enjoying being back in the school routine. A new Expanded Core Curriculum class is being offered this year in the School for the Blind. All secondary students report to their advocates during 7<sup>th</sup> period for Compensatory Skills. This class focuses on organization, study skills, sensory efficiency, concept development, and spatial understanding.

Accessible activities were offered during the Solar Eclipse on August 21. These activities included a pinhole projector, a soundscape application on apple devices, audio described footage, and tactile graphics. The students were impressed and very engaged in the events on and virtually off campus.

3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students are becoming more familiar with Canvas as teachers transition and begin posting assignments, discussion boards, and videos on their classroom web pages.

The Goalball team is traveling to Phoenix Arizona to participate in their homecoming weekend game and festivities, September 29<sup>th</sup>-October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our annual White Cane Day Celebration will take place at Acacia Park on October 13<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome to join in on the fun. Student speeches, performances, yard games, face painting, and live music are just a few of the activities to enjoy while spending the day with us!

### Discussion Items:

CSDB is in complete support of the braille competency exam and we know how important it is for TVIs to be able to pass the test. **What coursework is provided to ensure students are prepared and able to pass the Colorado Braille Competency test? How can we improve in this area?** Braille skills need time and attention. There are several good resources online. The two big differences between taking a braille course online and the Colorado Braille Competency Test are the use of the braillewriter and the timed aspect of the test. It is a good idea to encourage candidates to work ahead of the test by using the braillewriter. Whether or not the braillewriter becomes obsolete in the future, it is the current requirement. It is also important for candidates to braille under timed circumstances. Practice is essential and the NLS course / NFB Transcriber course is an excellent means of self-study.

Tanni shared that the CDE Braille Committee just met to review the items of the multiple-choice section of the current UEB test that had a higher level of error frequency. All questions were determined to be well-constructed. Two slight changes were made to reduce possible confusion on which answer was the clear correct answer

There was a discussion about whether to delay the expectation of TVIs-in-training (enrolled in an approved university program) to demonstrate braille competency. This came after Paula Conroy shared that students may take first braille course in the second year of their program. It can be taken the first semester or even ahead of being accepted into the program also. **ASSIGNMENT:** Tanni will discuss this issue with the CDE Braille Competency Committee and determine next approval steps.

**What has been your experience with the DIBELS Next Assessment? How are you using DIBELS to determine if the student has an SRD? How are READ plans going in your schools? Is anyone else using another assessment besides DIBELS? If so, what are you using?** There was discussion about how to ensure there is team discussion to inform the interpretation of the screening tools. The TVI is key to the discussion, as is someone with solid training in early reading instruction. There are 7 approved screening tools for the READ Act. Information about the READ Act can be found at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy> There is further information specific to learners with visual impairment at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readanddisabilities>

Tanni is available for further consultation / discussion.

**What assessment (DLM or CELS) are you using with your students who have cognitive disabilities and utilize the Colorado Extended Evidence Outcomes? What were your experiences with this assessment?** All students who are at grade level for a state assessment and who are eligible for instruction of alternate achievement standards (Extended Evidence Outcomes) will take an alternate assessment. The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) is our current English Language Arts and Math state alternate assessment. There are a series of excellent training modules specific to teaching ELA and Math content to this small population of children with significant cognitive disabilities. These models can be found at: <http://dlmpd.com/>

For learners K-3 who have significant cognitive disabilities, school personnel should use the Colorado Emergent Literacy Scales as a tool for the READ Act. The blueprint for the DLM Aligned K-3 Literacy Alternate Assessment was developed based upon the blueprint for DLM Year End Alternate Assessment System in grades 3-5. This approach allows teachers of primary grade students with significant cognitive disabilities to monitor progress toward the skills and understandings that will be required for success in third grade and beyond. The CELS is comprised of six scales that capture development from early foundational skills through target skills at the kindergarten, first, second, and third grade level. For information can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/cels\\_intro](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/cels_intro)

### **CSDB Outreach Services (Sara Noel)**

**New Staff Member:** CSDB Outreach is thrilled to have a third TVI/COMS join our team! Jayme Cusimano comes to us from Northern Virginia and we are excited to have her on board.

**Braille Challenge-Denver Metro:** Colorado Braille Challenge-Denver Metro will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind on January 25, 2018

*Visual Impairment, Including Blindness 101:* CSDB Outreach held the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness 101 workshop on September 11, 2017. This workshop addressed interventions for instruction of children who have a visual impairment, including blindness. Twenty-one attendees, from seven districts/agencies, listened to three presenters discuss instructional strategies and accommodations. They also participated in hands-on simulation activities while blindfolded.

*Fall Festival:* The Fall Festival will be held at CSDB on October 19, 2017 from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. This program is open to all students in the state, 0-8 years, who have a visual impairment, including blindness. There will be art, music, and movement activities available. This is a great opportunity for families who have children who are visually impaired to connect with each other.

*Scholarships Available:* The Michael Witter Memorial Scholarship fund has money that can help support any student in CO to attend a camp/ program. Applications are available from the director of Outreach, Kristy Murdock or from Donna Keale. Michael believed that no child should miss an opportunity due to financial needs.

*CSDB Student Activity Mini-grant Funds:* The purpose of Student Activity Mini-grant Funds is to support educational staff in offering activities that allow students who are Deaf/HH or Blind/VI to come together to engage in educationally related activities. Many students are the only students in their schools who are Deaf/HH or Blind/VI. These activities can allow students to learn from each other and interact with peers who have similar experiences.

To request funding for student activities which include students from your region, please complete this form. Funds will not be provided to cover costs that exceed the approved amount for the event. The request for reimbursement for approved costs must be submitted within a month after the event and before the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2017. The approved funds will be reimbursed to your district/BOCES after original receipts documenting the costs of the activity have been received at CSDB. Events must be open to students within your region(s) of the state.

For the 2017-18 school year, the maximum funding for a regional activity will be \$300. This application must be submitted at least 30 days before the activity. These funds may be used for sign language interpreters, presenter/role model honorariums, venue costs and disability specific materials. The funds may not be used for staff time, transportation costs, lodging or promotional materials including t-shirts, hats or awards.

If you have questions, please contact: Kristy Murdock, Director of Outreach Programs, Work: (719) 578-2110; Email: [kmurdock@csdb.org](mailto:kmurdock@csdb.org)

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

It is a busy time. There are about 40 active students! About a third are Colorado students. The doctoral students are very busy. Paula, Silvia, and the doctoral students will head to the National Leadership Consortium on Sensory Disabilities meeting that will be held in Washington DC next week.

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

***Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project:*** We are in the final 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 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 FREE technical assistance, please contact Gina Herrera at (303) 866-6681 or [Herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)

*Annual Deaf-Blind Census:* The December 1, 2017 Census forms will be mailed to agency and school district contract personnel by mid-October and are due back into CDE by January 15, 2018. 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 was held on June 20-21, 2017. The featured speakers were Dr. Julie Durando and Ira Padhye. Their topic was Making It Routine. About 100 service providers attended the training. Tanni and Gina are working on the topics for the 2018 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness.

*Annual CDE O&M Seminar:* The 2017 CDE O&M Seminar was held on May 4-6, 2017. Plans are underway for the late April 2018 seminar.

*Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:* We are once again funded for regional clinics. Grand Junction will be the site of the first clinic of the year. Angela Sims will host. It is important for all clinics to fill their slots.

*Recruitment and Retention:* It was a wild summer of expected and unexpected vacancies. We fared fairly well across the state, but still have openings. Anchor Center for Blind Children hired Melinda Carter, Laura Mauro, and Else Darrow. Jefferson County School District hired Kari Finholt. Douglas County hired Karin Hensel and Brenna Moser. Carol Jordan and Bryan Kruger are new in Cherry Creek School District. Wendy Unwin Watson and Erin Kerr are on board in Aurora School District. CSDB Outreach now has Jayme Cusimano on board. Eva Gonzales is new to the School for the Blind at CSDB. Ann Marie Jansen, Caitlin Bleything, and Mike Pillow are working with Adams 12 School District. Erin Noe was hired to work in Mesa Valley School District. Julie King is working for Mountain BOCES. Sarah Goodfellow and Melissa French are working in Poudre School District. Natalie Palmer is on board with Denver Public Schools. Karen Pacheco is working with San Juan BOCES.

We still have a .5 FTE opening in Thompson School District, a full-time TVI opening in Poudre School District, a full time TVI/COMS opening in Greeley, and full time TVI/COMS opening in Pikes Peak BOCES. We continue have work to do to be proactive with existing and anticipated openings across the state.

*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 brailists. The third is specific to Colorado TVIs and brailists. 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

### Eligibility for Visual impairment, Including Blindness

Tanni reviewed information from the OSEP November 2014 letter to Kotler and the May 2017 Memo to State Directors of Special Education. These documents provided clarification for eligibility criteria for a student with visual impairment, including blindness. The expectation of OSEP is that states do not restrict the federal definition. The OSEP definition of visual impairment, including blindness means “an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance.” Tanni will share an update on the OSEP guidance at the State Night of the CDE State Conference

## **Funded CDE Funded Projects for School Year 2017-18**

### **CDE ESSU**

- ◇ State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment
- ◇ Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- ◇ CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar
- ◇ Braille Competency Testing and Mentor Support
- ◇ Keeping in Touch Newsletter
- ◇ Vision Coalition
- ◇ Technology Regional Training Support

### **CSDB – Blindness**

- ◇ CIMC
- ◇ Low Vision Clinics

## **Braille Competency in UEB**

To date 107 Colorado TVIs and braillists have demonstrated competency in UEB per the CDE UEB Refresher Courses and the updated Colorado Braille Competency Test. This is a major accomplishment in our state. Currently there are only a handful of veteran TVIs who have not demonstrated UEB competency, though all are in process. The new-to-the-field TVIs are expected to demonstrate UEB competency within this next instructional year (at this time).

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 October 15, 2017. As such, these materials are now 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 a sequence 15 renewal modules in UEB. As noted, there are no braille competency materials remaining in EBAE format.

## **Resource Allocation Document (Amber Rundle Kahn)**

Amber has been working with Nancy Cozart and Julie Hutchison (and others) on revising the Resource Allocations document. The group has reframed the document to align with the ECC. This document is used AFTER a child has been determined to be eligible for special education services from a TVI. It will be important for TVIs to have reasonable reliability on how to utilize this tool. We know that there is discrepancy in services for children with visual impairment and additional disabilities. The team will share the proposed revisions at the state conference.

## **Retention and Recruitment**

It is critical that Colorado develop a strong strategic plan for retention and recruitment of its VI-specific trained workforce. We are entering a phase ahead of significant retirements as many TVIs and COMSs prepare to leave the field after a career of service. We also need to be ready for unexpected vacancies as personnel leave the state or even the field.

A review of new personnel to the field indicated that many individuals were recruited either by the opportunity of working with a student with blindness/visual impairment and/or other TVIs / COMSs working with students. This is an important insight into our recruitment efforts.

It is suggested that Vision Coalition spent this year creating support tools for districts in need of both retention and recruitment efforts. First round discussion included the following ideas:

### ***Steps for Recruitment***

- Anticipate vacancies – be in the know of expected retirements
- Be deliberate with recruitment efforts of both undergraduate and MA level educators
  - ◇ Provide experience with kids
  - ◇ Provide experience with TVIs and/or COMS
- Deliberately appeal to undergraduates
  - ◇ Career Center
  - ◇ Extended Campus - UNC
  - ◇ Finding undergrads to come to VI specific events
- Explore tuition reimbursement / incentive pay
- Explore funding sources such as the Lions Club to sponsor graduate training
- Honor years of teaching experience – do not cap an expert teaching coming into our state
- Hire personnel on temporary authorizations
- Utilize mentor supports.
- Be a host site for a practicum or intern student

### ***Steps for Retention***

- Define the role of the TVI for administrators
- Define the role of the COMS for administrators
- Identify reasonable caseload expectations
- Hire braillists to support the braille production needs of the students.
- Understand the abilities and limitations of the role of a braillist and a VI paraprofessional
- Allow opportunities for field-specific training, networking, and support
- Consider stipends to support personnel to have an addition credential such as COMS
- Utilize mentor support for new personnel.

### **Next Meeting Dates:**

Thursday, December 14, 2017

- ⇒ Eye report / memo
- ⇒ Parent survey
- ⇒ Recruitment ideas (focusing on a diverse workforce)
- ⇒ Retention support ideas for administrators / field colleagues

Thursday, April 5, 2018





# colorado connections

## colorado connections

- ◆ **Dr. Paul Foster** has joined CDE to serve as the executive director of Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU). Dr. Foster brings to CDE deep experience in school and district leadership serving students with disabilities and their families. Specifically, Dr. Foster has 20 years of experience as a director of special education in rural, urban and suburban Texas school districts as well as 11 years as a classroom teacher garnering a wealth of knowledge that will serve Colorado's diverse settings well. Dr. Foster earned his bachelor's degree in special education, master's degree in educational psychology and doctoral degree in educational administration and leadership from Baylor University where he has also served as adjunct professor in the School of Education. Dr. Foster joins a team of established leaders in the ESSU to provide continued support and service to Administrative Units, district leaders and families as we all serve Colorado's students with exceptionalities and their families
- ◆ Baby blessings to **Lorraine and Nick Chevarria**. Baby Jacob was born on 10/21/17 at 5:50 p.m.! He was 8 pounds and 6 ounces and 21 and 3/4 inches. Lorraine is a TVI / COMS with Developmental Pathways. We wish all the best to the Chevarria family.
- ◆ More baby blessings! Congratulations to **Brooke and Chris Miller** on the birth of their fourth child, a little girl. Addallee Marigold Miller, was born on October 22, on her due date at 11:26 a.m. She was 7 pounds, 7 ounces, 19 inches long. This little one was welcomed into the fold by her three older siblings. Brooke is a TVI and COMS with Colorado River BOCES.
- ◆ Hats off also to **Lorraine Chevarria** who recently passed the ACVREP O&M exam!
- ◆ Thank you to so many people who came together to make the 2017 Conference on Blindness / Visual Impairment, held on September 21-23 in Aurora.
- ◆ Thanks to **LaVerne Dell, Dana McMullen, Michelle Reed, and Hanna Waldman** for the DVR Update. So grateful to **Sally Burch** for sharing the good information she learned about literacy ideas for learners with deaf-blindness. Hats off to **Nancy Cozart, Julie Hutchinson, and Amber Rundle Kahn** for the important update of the Resource Allocation document revision.



And thanks so much to our amazing Friday and Saturday presenter **Diane Sheline**. We so appreciated Diane's expertise and generosity with sharing her ideas and materials. Finally thanks to all of the TVIs who attended, participated, and learned!! We will have follow-up activities with Diane Sheline over the course of the school year to ensure that Colorado TVIs are well prepared to address the assessment and specially designed instruction needs of learners with cortical visual impairment.

Finally thanks to all of the regional folks who have already hosted Make-and-Take sessions to create books and materials specifically for learners with CVI. Thank you! It is wonderful to see the commitment to implementing the content of our September training. Be watching for our follow-up opportunities with Diane Sheline in the months to come.

- ◆ **A big shout out to CAER!** At the recent Colorado NFB Convention, CAER sponsored an orientation & mobility training. Certified orientation & mobility specialists, parents and students participated in this special event. Mobility instructors from the Colorado Center for the Blind shared their skills specific to discovery learning with the participants. While under blindfold, participants explored parts of a hotel through use of auditory & tactual cues and directed questioning from the instructors. The instructors each had only 2-3 students so everyone was able to gain a lot of knowledge in this session. The training ended with valuable dialogue about the experience and how this method of mobility training can be shared with others in the future.



# colorado connections

- ◆ A HUGE Shout out to **Dr. Paula Conroy** from the University of Northern Colorado on the recent federal grant award from the Office of Special Education Programs. The name of the project is *Bridging Blindness and Behavior: Applied Behavior Analysis for Preservice Teachers of Children with Visual Impairments and O&M Specialists*. This five year award will provide interdisciplinary training in special education and behavior. ABA procedures will be the focus in educating scholars to meet the high intensity needs of children with visual impairments who have additional disabilities, including autism. The TVI and O&M; programs will take 2.5 years combined. The Behavior Certificate will take two summers to complete. This project proposes to support 44 teachers in VI, O&M; and Behavior. Scholars will earn a MA in Special Education with an Emphasis in Visual Impairment and be eligible to become nationally certified in Orientation and Mobility. They will also earn a Behavior Certificate. So proud of Paula for her grant writing skills. This is good for Colorado and for our field!
- ◆ **Saying Thank You and Farewell!** This is a note from **Mimi Schaper** in Cherry Creek School District: *After 26 years working as a TVI/COMS, I am moving to Texas because Texas has offered me the opportunity to specialize. My son also lives in Texas. During the 11 years tenure at Cherry Creek School District (CCSD), I became involved with a few special projects like Medicaid purchasing, Deaf-Blind census, keeping equipment inventory and trying to increase the Metro TVI meeting attendance. Before moving to Colorado, I worked in Iowa and New Mexico. I am a Western Michigan graduate and was born and raised in Colorado, but I hate driving in snow and ice. The opportunity to specialize was not offered at CCSD and I wanted to simplify my job responsibilities. The vast number of skills that the typical TVI/COMS must be an expert in has moved me away from vision field positions that do not specialize. I will miss you all. Mimi Schaper, TVI, COMS*
- ◆ Congratulations to **Cathy Smyth** for her successful defense of her dissertation! Her dissertation topic was *A Validation of the Tactile Edition of the Boehm-3 Preschool*. This culminates an extensive research study that is an important contribution to our field. We are proud of you, Cathy!
- ◆ We say a (we hope) temporary farewell to **Whitney Sandoval** from CSDB. We hope to see her come back to us from a recent move out of state.
- ◆ Colorado has two new TVIs! Welcome to **Julie Swegle**, a new TVI with the School for the Blind at CSDB. She is a wife of nearly 34 years; a mom of six grown children; and Gigi to six lovely grand-babies (the newest grandchild is due any day now). She loves to read, create art, and write stories & poems. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English, a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction (with a specialization in Teaching English as a Second Language) and is currently completing a Master of Arts Degree in Special Education with a specialization in Visual Impairment, and O&M Certification.
- ◆ Also **Vicki Chinski** is new on board with Poudre School District! She recently moved from Illinois to Colorado with her family. She studied Special Education, specifically Visually Impaired at Northern Illinois University. Vicki taught children with visual impairments for a special education cooperative for eight years. She took time off after her daughters' birth then she began doing early intervention with visually impaired children a few years ago. Since moving to Colorado one of her favorite things to do is to go on day trips with her husband and daughters who are now 9 and 4 years old.
- ◆ Hats off to **Rebeca Plooster** (brailist in DPS) and **Whitney Sandoval** (former CSDB TVI) for earning a CDE Certificate of Braille Competency. Also hats off to **Sherry Bainbridge** for earning renewal clock hours.

***Wishing everyone a restful and memorable Thanksgiving Holiday.  
I give thanks for each of you!***

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**25-43E-3401**

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