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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
November—December 2018



GRATITUDE

By Tanni L. Anthony

When eating bamboo sprouts,
remember the man who planted them.


~ Chinese Proverb

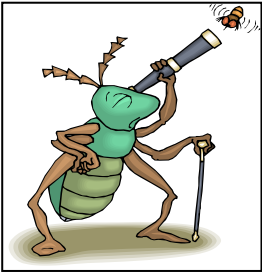
As the 2018 year comes to a close and with our national holiday dedicated to giving thanks just ahead of us, it seems right to express great gratitude for all we have been given and have to look forward to in the new year. I am continually reminded of the many good and important gifts we have in our state and country for children and youth with disabilities. While there is always room to grow, there is still much to celebrate and honor with our gratitude. The proverbial bamboo sprouts we eat today are, in so many ways, indeed from the plantings of yesterday.

Many of the original planters are long out of sight, their contributions made decades ago to ensure a free appropriate education to all students, parents as true partners, well developed early intervention services ... so many contributions of things that we now may take for granted. We say thanks to all the parents and professionals who came before us and brought positive change through their advocacy and actions. We can honor their work by expressing our thanks to those in our current everyday world. Take a moment to say "thank you" aloud to those around you who have continued to till the soil and nurture new growth. Drop a note of appreciation to a parent who helped solve a school challenge, say an extra kind word to the bus driver who ensures a child's safe journey from home and school each day, praise a teacher who made a difference in a child's life, or thank the school principal for exceptional leadership.

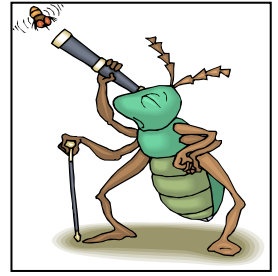
In gratitude - I remember each of you for all you have given and shared in 2018!

Table of Contents

Gratitude	1	Orientation and Mobility	29-32
Low Vision	2-4	Connecting the Dots	33-35
Behavior and MH Supports	5	Jobs in Colorado	35
Check It Out	6-8	Just for Parents	36-37
The Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant	9	Transition	38-39
Resources and Materials	10-17	Colorado Connections	40-55
Colorado AER Chapter	18	Back Page	56
CDE Happenings	19-24		
WREIC	25	Enjoy the Thanksgiving Holiday!	
Calendar of Events	26-28		



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Low Vision Evaluation Clinics for School year 2018-2019

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator
Metro Region	February 21-23, 2019. All paperwork due February 6th.	Nancy Knight
Southern Region	March 9, 2019. All paperwork due February 19th.	Debbie Haberkorn

Southern Region LVE Clinic

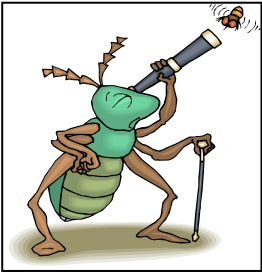
By Debbie Haberkorn

The Southern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held September 26, 2018 at CSDB in Colorado Springs. Five students from four Administrative Units (El Paso County District 20, El Paso County District 38, Mountain BOCES, and CSDB) received evaluations. Five parents and five TVIs (Judy Mumford, Deb Andrews, Stephanie Crosen, Melissa Shular and Lori Mattick) attended the evaluation with their students. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank CSDB for hosting the clinic. Thank you to all the TVIs who make time in their busy schedules to fill out paperwork, coordinate with parents, attend the evaluation, and follow through with any device recommendations made by the team. Without your commitment to your students and their families, the clinics would not be possible.

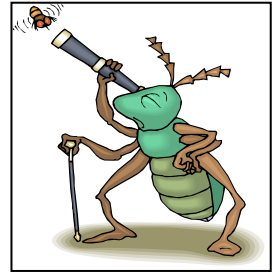
Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Rubric for Students

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

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



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Who Should Have a Low Vision Evaluation?

By Wendy Stoltman

How do you know which of your students would benefit from a low vision clinic evaluation?

- * You order large print books for your student.
- * You order large print tests for your student.
- * You are enlarging every worksheet for your student.
- * You gave the student a magnifier without a prescription.
- * Your student has a whole drawer of unused low vision devices.
- * Your student has devices that were prescribed by a doctor, dispensed by you, but is not using them.
- * Your student with low vision is transitioning to a different educational program or location.
- * You are not certain which device should be used for which activity.
- * You want to be sure that your student has the best lighting options available.
- * The tablet or computer used at home or at school is not accessible to your student.
- * Your student can't see the board or street signs very well.

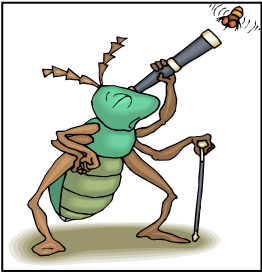
Please be aware that only Colorado public school students with a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) can participate in the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics, which are funded with federal IDEA funds.



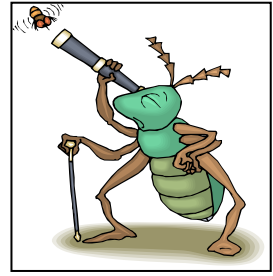
The goal of the Colorado Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics is to provide an examination that details whether your student / child will benefit from low vision devices that can be used in school, at home, and in the community. The student should be determined to have low vision ahead of the clinic based on a current eye care report. The other important consideration is that plans have been made ahead of the clinic to secure funding for prescribed devices.

First priority will be students who have not been evaluated in past years. With all of these considerations, we trust you are in good shape to determine if the student is definitely a candidate for a low vision evaluation during this school year!

If you should have a question about whether a child is appropriate to participate in the clinic, please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the Colorado Regional Low Vision Evaluation Team.



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Paperwork Matters:

Because THIS Paperwork Does Matter

By Tanni Anthony

Picture our Low Vision Evaluation Coordinator, Debbie Haberkorn, getting all of the paperwork organized per child in a timely manner ahead of the clinic. She is thrilled to have each folder ready to go for the team, knowing they will put the information to good use. She is pulling together massive information across a docket of students for each of the clinics and is grateful that she does not have to chase information when she has so many other tasks to complete to get ready for the clinic.

Now picture Dr. Tom Theune, our optometrist specializing in low vision examinations and devices, as he reads the completed Eye Doctor Form, that was submitted on a student who has been accepted in one of the Colorado Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics that will be held during this school year. He nods appreciatively, as he gleans important information that will help him understand and customize his evaluation of each student. He knows that he is not replacing the regular eye care specialist of the child, so this information is critical to his knowledge and understanding of the child's diagnosis, it's implications, the presence of refractive error, etc. Dr. Theune then checks the name of the TVI involved and thinks to himself, "Thank you, (insert maybe your name here!), for taking the time to provide me with this valuable information."

Finally picture our low vision therapists, Jim Olson and Wendy Stoltman, reading the submitted Parent and TVI Pre-Evaluation Form content detailing the history, abilities, and functional needs of each student. This information guides the game plan further for the upcoming low vision evaluation - what will be done specifically to learn about the student and his or her needs for magnification.

The LVE Clinic paperwork is a transfer of information from the people who know the child best to people who have a precious 90 minute session with the child. It takes a team to build a meaningful low vision evaluation. The paperwork for the clinic is the first step. Without it, the clinic appointment cannot happen for the student and the appointment will be need to cancelled. Due dates for the clinic paperwork to be in Debbie's hands are posted in each newsletter. Without paperwork being completed in a timely and quality manner, the low vision evaluation exam will be compromised.

Simply put, the clinic paperwork is about needed information and a courtesy to our LVE team who are dedicated to providing a thorough and meaningful evaluation of each child. If you plan on bringing a student to one of the regional clinics, please understand this expectation. Schedule time well ahead of the clinic to secure the needed information, including content on the form that requires both TVI and parent input. Be proactive, be timely, and be thorough.

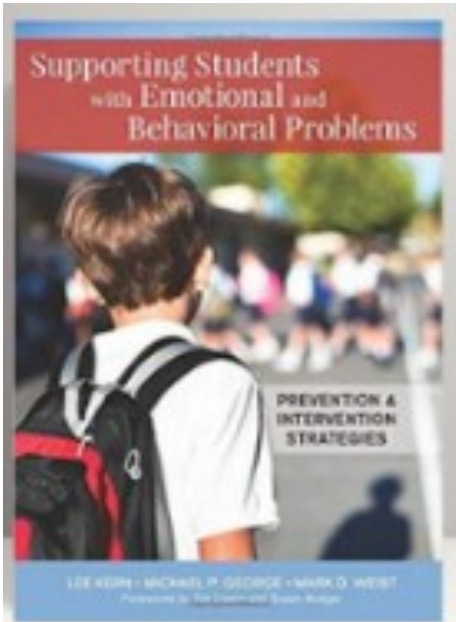
Your efforts are expected, needed, and appreciated!



Behavior and Mental Health Supports

This section will be featured during this school year to provide information and resources on how best to support students with behavioral and/ or mental health needs.

“Supporting Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems: Prevention and Intervention Strategies.”



This book is a guide to addressing serious problem behaviors in K–12 classrooms. Aligned with recommended practices for school-wide positive behavior supports, "*Supporting Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems*" presents a highly effective tiered approach that helps professionals to develop school- and class-wide interventions and match behavior interventions to each student’s needs. Developed by trusted PBIS experts and packed with concrete strategies, this essential resource will prepare teachers to prevent and reduce severe behavior problems, improve students’ social interactions, and increase academic engagement. For more information, please go to:

<http://pubs.cec.sped.org/bp203/>



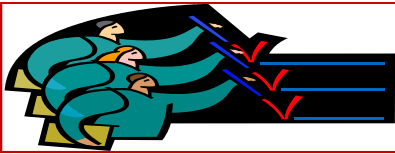
1-844-493-TALK (8255)

Website Link: <http://coloradocrisisservices.org>

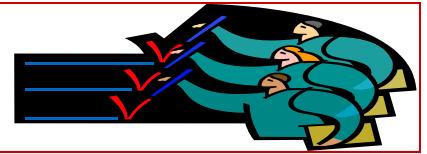
CRISIS LINE: 1-844-493-TALK (8255)

Colorado Crisis Services is a 24/7/365 support line for anyone affected by a mental health, substance use or emotional crisis. All calls are connected to a mental health professional, who will provide immediate support and connections to further resources. WALK-IN CRISIS SERVICES/ STABILIZATION UNITS: Our walk-in crisis services are open 24/7, and offer confidential, in-person crisis support, information and referrals to anyone in need.

If you need in-person assistance, or are helping others with a crisis, you can always visit a walk-in crisis services location near you. Some locations provide crisis beds for 1-5 days, for either voluntary or involuntary treatment. View the map on their website to find the locations nearest you.



CHECK IT OUT!



ANNOUNCING THE

State of the Science Conference

on Employment for Individuals with Blindness and Other Visual Impairments

To be held at the 2019 American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference

Sponsored by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
February 28th and March 1st 2019
blind.msstate.edu/training/state-of-the-science

The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC) will be hosting a State of the Science Conference on Employment at the 2019 American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference.

The conference will include research presentations and interactive sessions focused on improving employment for individuals with blindness and other visual impairments.

Visit the conference webpage <https://www.blind.msstate.edu/training/state-of-the-science/> or call (662) 325-2001 for more

Adapted Physical Education vs. School Based Physical Therapy

Please check out the following document to help clear up any misconceptions regarding Adapted PE Teachers and School Based Physical Therapy Providers. IEP teams should address whether Adapted Physical Education are needed for a student.

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbmxiYXNlZHVwYWdlYWYWRhcHRlZHBIfGd4OjlyODhmZWVmYTEyZjgwYjg>

Helping Teachers Manage the Weight of Trauma

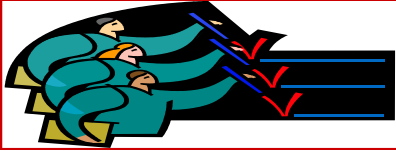
To learn about this important topic, please go to the link below to read the article on *Understanding and Mitigating the Effects of Secondary Traumatic Stress for Educators*. The link is:

https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/09/helping-teachers-manage-weight-trauma?=&utm_content=

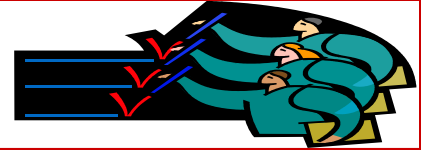
NICE Review Board Search for Reviewers

The National Intervener Certification E-portfolio (NICE) System is an assessment process in which interveners can use to show evidence of their knowledge and skills. The NICE Review Board is looking for reviewers to review these portfolios. If you are interested, please be aware that you need to be well prepared to evaluate content specific to needs of learners with deaf-blindness and an understanding of the role of an intervener. Contact Dr. Ritu Chopra (ritu.chopra@ucdenver.edu), Executive Director at the PAR2ACenter with any questions.

Go to <http://files.constantcontact.com/5d296d09001/afc42f22-96fb-4f91-b9f2-29e6069260f1.pdf> for more information.



CHECK IT OUT!



Social Media Spotlight: The Language of Alt Test in Social Media

This article was posted on the APH website: <https://www.aph.org/news/september-2018/>



It is important to understand how to use descriptive alt text to convey not only the factual information provided in an image, but also the emotion.

Consider the following example:

Scenario: Your nephew is playing in the championship game of his high school basketball career. You're proud and want to share an image of him making a slam dunk on Twitter. The content of the tweet describes his journey to get to this point, but what does the image say? In addition to the action happening in the image, what feelings are involved? Describing the expressions, emotions, or energy of the people in the image can help you capture the experience more vividly.

Simple Example: "Charlie makes a slam dunk playing against the Purple Devils as the crowd cheers."

Strong Example: "Charlie, with a sly grin, makes a slam dunk against the Purple Devils. The crowd in the stands goes wild."

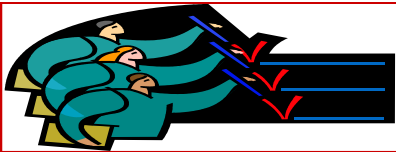
When writing the alt text for an image, you might ask yourself, "Why did I choose this particular image?" We often pick an image for its quality beyond the basic content. Try conveying that information through subtle word choice and rich description to enhance the reading experience of your social media followers who are visually impaired.

Update on the New English Learner Standards and Professional Development Requirements

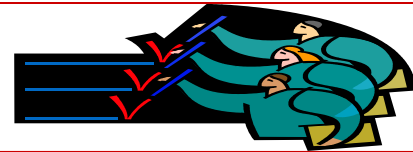
Updates have been made to CDE's website with information for educators, districts, BOCES, educator preparation programs and other interested organizations regarding the new English learner standards and professional development requirements. Educators will find information on what they need to do, how, and by when. Educator preparation programs will find information about the timeline and process for incorporating the new standards into initial licensure programs.

Additionally, all interested entities can find information regarding how to gain approval from CDE as an English Learner Professional Development Program.

For more information, visit the English Learner Educator Licensure Requirements webpage at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/elpdpathways>



CHECK IT OUT!



**PROJECT
P  EM**

Poem Study

**PROJECT
P  EM**

Dr. Sunggye Hong and Dr. Steve Kortenkamp are again recruiting students with visual impairments for the June 2019 Project POEM study! The purpose of the study is to expose students who are blind or have low vision to STEM careers through project based learning, mentorship and interaction with scientists who already are engaged in STEM careers, and university science students. This National Science Foundation sponsored study will help students explore the latest research on the planet Mars, scrutinizing findings from NASA spacecraft, learning about craters, comets, and meteorites and the largest volcanoes in the solar system, and investigating fossilized shorelines of ancient Martian oceans!

If you are currently teaching or know of a student who is blind or has low vision and meets the following criteria: a) be in grades 7-11; (b) have an IEP; (c) be independent in their self-care; (d) have academic skills within one year of grade level for reading and writing, and within two grade levels for mathematics; and (e) have an interest in STEM and/or in learning about STEM and potential STEM-related careers, please consider recruiting these students! Interviews will be conducted to recruit 25 students for the second year of the project from California, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona.

If you know a child who would be interested in participating in this study, we would like to talk to the parent of the child. There is no risk for participation in this study. Please send the parent's email address or phone number, with permission, to Dr. Irene Topor at ilt@email.arizona.edu or 520-626-3863 or Dr. Sunggye Hong at sghong@email.arizona.edu or 520-621-0945. Alternatively, please forward this contact information to the parent, so that an interview can be arranged.

Visit the Project POEM website, <http://poem.coe.arizona.edu/>, to read about the project and check out a video from last year's Sky School.

It is time to get creative! Submissions for our annual poetry contest are now open, and the theme for this year's contest is nature. The first 100 writers to submit a poem will receive a special braille edition of *100 Poems to Lift Your Spirits* by Leslie Pockel!

Whether it is a child or an adult braille writer, all are welcome to submit your original poetry. We'll select our favorite poems for each age group for grand prizes — and the first 100 writers to submit a poem will receive a special braille edition of *100 Poems to Lift Your Spirits* by Leslie Pockel.

HOW TO ENTER: Submit a poem focused on the theme "Nature" as a braille file (.brf format) to marketing@nbp.org OR mail a hard copy to Poetry Contest, National Braille Press, 88 Saint Stephen Street, Boston, MA 02115. The poem must be an original work fewer than 125 words, using English Braille American Edition or Unified English Braille. Please indicate the entry level of your submission: grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, or Adult. Please include name, address, and phone number with the submission.

See Guidelines at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aSRwtoafIkV12JS66IJRwbb1R9OcgQrg/view>



Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss AKA: The Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant



New Grant Award Announced

The Colorado Department of Education is pleased to announce that we have received confirmation that the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project) has been funded for the next five years. The new award officially started on October 15th. We are thrilled!

We are excited to have a great internal team with Rachel Williams (program support assistant), Shannon Cannizzaro (Family Engagement Coordinator), and Wendy Stoltman, Callie Robinson, and Kathryn Daniels (Technical Assistant Specialists) on board to support the goals and work of the project. Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are the Project Co-Directors.

Areas of key focus for this grant cycle will be to:

- ◆ Increase identification of school-age learners with combined vision and hearing loss.
- ◆ Continue to build and support a well-trained workforce to address the learning needs of children with deaf-blindness
- ◆ Provide resources and networking / training / leadership opportunities to support families of children with deaf-blindness
- ◆ Provide services and supports in all regions of Colorado with a particular focus on the western region.

The Colorado Project will focus on both in-person and online training options. A series of online modules will be created on topics specific to early identification of children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss and high quality intervention / instructional practices. We will continue with the annual summer institute and family workshop. The Technical Assistance Specialists will be available for onsite and Zoom consultation and training.

The project represents a small, but highly diverse group of learners. Its primary purpose is to ensure that children and youth with deaf-blindness are identified and free technical assistance is provided to their families and service providers. We are very proud that because this grant is housed in our State Education Agency, we have strong mechanisms in place to ensure that learners with combined vision and hearing loss are represented in our state and unit initiative work.

If you are working with a child who has combined vision and hearing loss, please be in touch to determine whether there is a need for free technical assistance.

Tanni Anthony

(303) 866-6681

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Gina Herrera

(303) 866-6605

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Resources and Materials

NEW! UEB Math Tutorial



D-30032-ED – Free of Charge Download

Recommended age: 5 years and up

APH's UEB Math Tutorial contains over 50 lessons broken up into ten chapters that cover the rules of UEB Mathematics. This web-based program runs on any modern computer platform, works well with refreshable braille displays, and is available free-of-charge!

Each lesson contains four sections, including an explanation, reading exercises, writing exercises, and proofreading exercises. Check out this tool to provide students the tools they need to successfully read and write mathematics with the UEB Math Tutorial.

Go to:

http://shop.aph.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_UEB%20Math%20Tutorial_39853804P_10001_11051

Usher Syndrome Coalition's Young Adult Corner

There is a new Usher Syndrome Coalition's Young Adult Corner. It can be found at:

https://www.usher-syndrome.org/our-story/just-for-young-adults/?blm_aid=3192837

This page was curated by Jessica Chaikof a senior at Wheaton College in Norton, MA who has Usher syndrome. As an intern with the Usher Syndrome Coalition, Jessica created this Young Adult section for high school students, college students and young adults in the Usher community, with information about college, career and self-advocacy. Jessica shared some of her experiences, as well as her sister Rachel's, who also has Usher. Jessica invited others in the community to add their perspective. Brendan Creemer graciously agreed to let them publish his heartfelt speech from the panel discussion at the USH2018 Symposium in Germany.

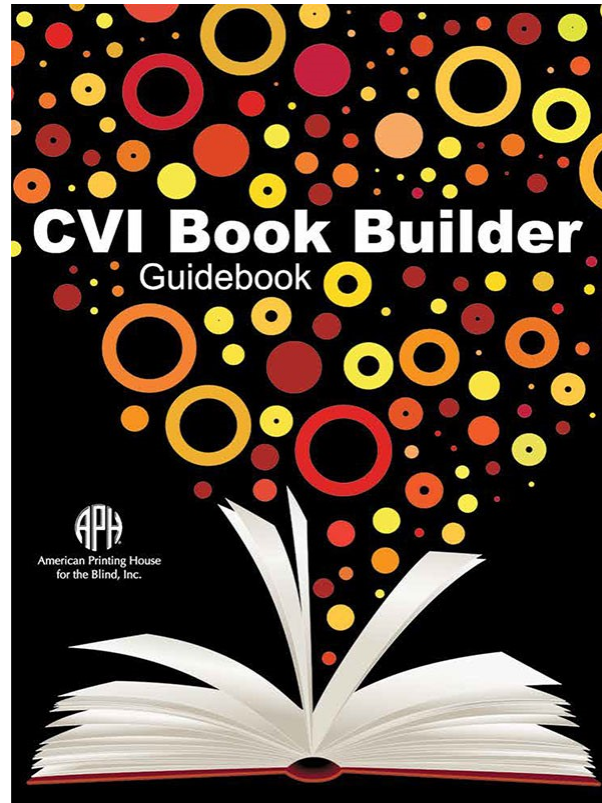
Find Brendan's speech at:

https://www.usher-syndrome.org/our-story/just-for-young-adults/self-advocacy/podium-speaker-brendan-creemer-ush2018-patient-symposium-21-2018.html?blm_aid=3192837

Selective Mutism

Check out this new resource on Selective Mutism - <https://www.selectivemutism.org/>

Resources and Materials



Children diagnosed with CVI frequently have difficulty understanding objects, pictures, and letters presented against a complex background. CVI Book Builder provides materials for parents and teachers to build books specifically for their reader. The American Printing House for the Blind now provides a kit with a variety of black pages and black binders to use as low complexity backgrounds against which to present familiar items, photos, and letters/words.

The CVI Book Builder is designed to:

- Build a connection between an actual object and a photo of that object, teaching that photos (symbols) have meaning.
- Take advantage of natural learning opportunities.
- Expand learning by exploring size, direction, colors, and other developmental concepts.

For more information, go to: http://shop.aph.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_CVI%20Book%20Builder%20Kit_39765617P_10001_11051

Resources and Materials

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE'S *THE LITTLEST PUMPKIN* JOINS THE NOVEL EFFECT PLATFORM

SEATTLE, WA — Novel Effect is pleased to announce a partnership with the American Printing House (APH) for the Blind that brings their classic tale, *The Littlest Pumpkin*, to life with voice-driven music, sound effects and the voice of the littlest pumpkin himself! Launching in the Novel Effect app this past month, *The Littlest Pumpkin* soundscape compliments the tactile features and teaching concepts within the book. Composers added enhancements to the story of a pumpkin that isn't chosen to become a jack-o-lantern that include:



- ◆ Environmental audio clues replicating sounds in an actual pumpkin patch
- ◆ Sound effects paired to accompanying tactile features like shapes and sizes
- ◆ Littlest pumpkin's reactions to the story as it is read aloud

This is the first book to be released in this partnership. The companies aim to release other titles in the future to further promote multi-sensory learning for early readers with visual impairment.

ABOUT NOVEL EFFECT

Seattle-based Novel Effect is voice-driven entertainment that brings stories to life through their platform. Using speech recognition, their flagship mobile app follows along synchronizing special effects, sounds, and music in real time with a storyteller's voice. Winner of Best Integrated Mobile Experience at the 22nd Annual Webby Awards, the app bridges the physical and digital worlds through the combination of technology and physical media. Founded in 2015 by husband and wife team Matt and Melissa Hammersley, Novel Effect has patent-pending technology that was featured on Shark Tank and integral in their participation in the inaugural Alexa Accelerator powered by Techstars. Learn more at www.noveleffect.com and download the app on iOS devices at <https://apple.co/2dsswGr>

ABOUT AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

The American Printing House for the Blind is a worldwide leader in designing innovative lifelong learning solutions for children and adults who are blind or visually impaired. In this fast-changing world, we believe in the power and necessity of learning to open the doors to educational success, satisfying employment, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal well-being. We level the learning playing field by providing specialized technology, materials, products, and services that are essential for education and life. The American Printing House for the blind is headquartered at 1839 Frankfort Avenue in Louisville, Kentucky. For more information, please visit www.aph.org.

Resources and Materials

Through the Tunnel: Becoming Deafblind By Angie C. Orlando



Using a mixture of prose and poetry, Angie C. Orlando shares indelible stories about growing up in a small Ohio town, complete with posing for family pictures, watching high school football games, playing a saxophone in a marching band. Yet she is equally funny and unflinchingly honest about how classmates, medical professionals, and others have viewed her multiple disabilities, all of which had gradually become apparent over time.

“Angie C. Orlando’s prose is poetic and plainspoken at the same time. It slips into your heart and settles there to tell an unforgettable tale. Through the Tunnel bears testimony to our capacity for coping with change and transcending trauma.”
—John Lee Clark, author of *Where I Stand: On the Signing Community and My DeafBlind Experience*

Angie C. Orlando lives in Kent, Ohio with her son and two cats. This is her first book.

Pre-Order by going to: <http://handtype.com/books/throughthetunnel/index.html>

Through the Tunnel: Becoming DeafBlind By: Angie C. Orlando

ISBN: 978-1-941960-11-0

\$14.00

Pub date: November 1, 2018

Resources and Materials

New School Year Brings New Coaching Tips

Last year the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) brought you advice on coaching swimming, cross country, and track & field. This year they have tips for coaching students with visual impairments who are interested in playing basketball and soccer.

Basketball – go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2oI-s45Dxs>

Soccer – go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QazSXM8ygz4>

For more exciting videos, check out the APH Physical Education, Recreation, and Health website's video page at <https://www.aph.org/physical-education/videos/>.

Braille Books with Blind Characters for Older Learners

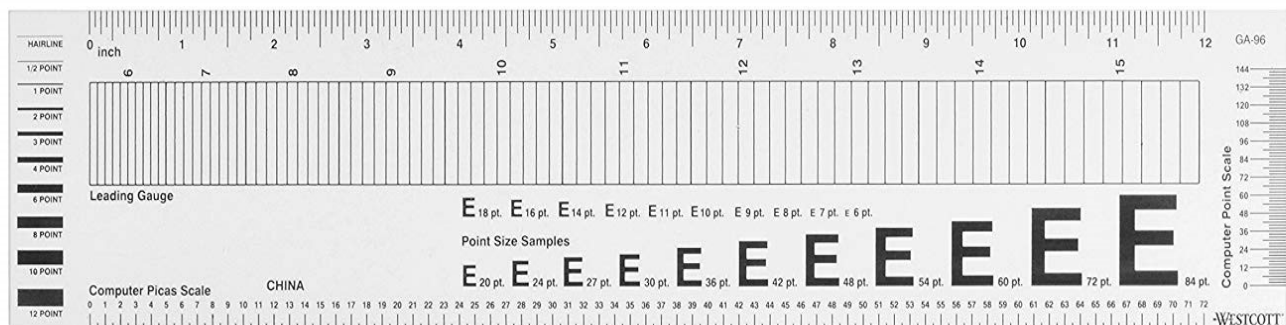
Mary Dingus, Librarian from the Missouri School for the Blind, has been kind enough to share a list of braille books with a character who is blind and/or deaf for middle and high school students. This list is now on the Paths to Literacy website.

<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/braille-books-character-blind-deaf-middle-high-school>

Graphic Arts Combo Ruler

How do you know what the size of large print is? Westcott has a graphic arts combo ruler – item GA-96. This is a plastic clear ruler that can be laid over paper with print on it to measure the font size. It looks to be a valuable tool for FVA and LMAs. It is also in the APH NEWT Kit. Amazon Prime has the Westcott 12 inch Graphic Arts Combo Ruler (GA-96) for sale.

https://www.amazon.com/Westcott-12-Inch-Graphic-Combo-GA-96/dp/B000KNPFKC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1541649985&sr=8-1&keywords=Westcott+12+inch+Graphic+Arts+Combo+Ruler+%28GA-96%29



Resources and Materials

New Program Lending Library Materials

We have new items in the Colorado Deaf-Blind Library! Check them out by contacting Rachel Williams at Williams_r@cde.state.co.us and making a request. Lending library information can be found on the CDE website at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db_resources

Teaching Life Differently: The Expanded Core Curriculum for Babies and Young Children with Visual Impairments: Teaching Life Differently is a resource for educators, therapists, and parents. It provides information about the importance of teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to young children with visual impairment. These are tried and true techniques, concepts, and activities that address the unique needs these children present.

Clean to the Touch - Housekeeping for Teenagers and Young Adults with Visual Impairments: Step-by-step techniques that enable people with visual impairments to undertake housecleaning tasks.

Drawing With Your Perkins Braille (braille version): Step-by-step directions show you how to create 36 different drawings including shapes, animals and subjects with holiday and transportation themes. Braille pictures show what completed drawings look like.

Getting Ready for Braille!: Pre-Braille Literacy is the early development of concepts and skills necessary for successful reading, acquired before a student begins to learn letters, sounds or words. These skills are a crucial foundation for the student's reading success. Braille readiness skills are developed during play and everyday experiences. This handbook provides skills checklists and activities to use when teaching pre-braille skills. The handbook is organized into three levels with level one being the introductory level, level two being the intermediate level and level three being the advanced level of pre-braille skill development.

School-to-Work: Developing Transitional Portfolios for Students with Significant Disabilities: Developing meaningful vocation activities & transition portfolios for students with significant disabilities. Sample forms serve as guides to developing work portfolios that focus on three areas: the Individual's Perspective, Personal Information and Vocational Experiences.

Total Life Learning: Preparing for Transition. A Curriculum for All Students with Sensory Impairments
The Total Life Learning curriculum was developed for students ages 3 to 22 who are blind, visually impaired including those students who have additional disabilities or are deaf blind. The focus is on the development of life and career goals that enable student to maximize independence, self-determination, employability, and participation in the community. The curriculum provides teachers with goals, objectives and activities in the following content areas: work skills, organizational skills, self-advocacy skills, personal care/daily living skills, employment, and secondary education. The curriculum articulates the importance of beginning instruction on foundation skills in these content areas at a young age for students with visual impairments to ensure that they develop the concepts necessary to navigate the world around them.

Resources and Materials

More New Program Lending Library Materials

Power at Your Fingertips Handbook: Besides spotlighting the problems involved in developing the ability to grasp, the booklet presents a number of methodological considerations and gives practical hints as to how material and surroundings can be adapted in general so children who are blind may be stimulated and encouraged in their development. The article is designed for teachers, psychologists, parents, pre-school teachers and others who in some way are involved in caring for children with visual impairments, with or without additional disabilities.

Space and Self: Lilli Nielsen deals with the development of spatial relations in early life, and how young learners with visual and other challenges can achieve spatial relations by using the Little Room.

Are you Blind? Addresses children with visual impairment, including those who have autism. The author characterizes these children as especially developmentally threatened and describes an educational method, which over a period of 30 years has shown to be of benefit to these children's emotional, motor, communicative and social development.

The Comprehending Hand: Besides spotlighting the problems involved in developing the ability to grasp, the book presents a number of methodological considerations and gives practical hints as to how material and surroundings can be adapted in general so children who are blind may be stimulated and encouraged in their development. The article is designed for teachers, psychologists, parents, pre-school teachers and others who in some way are involved in caring for children who are visually impaired with or without additional disabilities.

Educational Approaches for Visually Impaired Children: Altogether, the book tells a part of the story about how the author, over a quarter of a century, expanded the educational approaches for visually impaired infants and children. This book is designed for teachers, psychologists, parents, pre-school teachers and others who in some way are involved in caring for children who are visually impaired with or without additional disabilities.

Early Learning Step By Step: Early environmental intervention can facilitate children who are visually impaired with additional disabilities can access to achieve motor and other abilities through Active Learning. This book is designed for parents, teachers, psychologists and others who in some way are involved in caring for or children who are visually impaired with additional disabilities.

The FIELA Curriculum-730 Learning Environments: The FIELA Curriculum comprises a book, a catalogue and a velcro board, made to ensure that the child with one or several disabilities can access an individual learning program which will match his developmental level, his needs for learning and his interests, and so serve him in an ongoing dynamic learning circle.

Functional Scheme: Levels 0-48 Months: The Functional Scheme is a level appropriate assessment instrument applicable to any individual who, irrespective of age and possible disabilities functions at a level between 0 and 48 months.

Resources and Materials

More New Program Lending Library Materials

How We See It-A Basic Guide to Low Vision in Children-Second Edition: Learn about different types of vision loss, how they impact functioning and adaptations for learning and life skills. Understanding low vision in children, including different categories of vision loss and how they affect functioning.

Growing My Way: Part 2 - Can Do Video Library Series: The second, 3 part DVD in a video series for parents of children who are visually impaired and the professionals who work with them. Follow our original five children and their parents as we track their development at 6-month intervals, from 24 months to 36 months of age. These are the same children seen in Part 1, including a typically developing child, two children with low vision, and two children with significant visual impairments. The series highlights what adaptations the children and parent make to deal with the visual impairment and different ages and developmental stages.

Power At Your Fingertips - Can Do Video Library Series: The video features instruction in the Braille alphabet and numbers, an introduction to the use of contractions in Braille and training in the use of the slate and stylus and Braille writer for writing Braille, Using high-quality graphics to demonstrate Braille symbols, it is a great tutorial for parents and teachers to get started in using braille with their children who are blind and to pursue self-instruction at their own pace.

Every Child Can-The Expanded Core Curriculum—VIPS DVD: This video offers a preschool-level perspective on the Expand Core Curriculum for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (ECC) The ECC addresses nine critical skill areas these students must learn in order to find success in school and in life. However, they can be difficult to learn with limited or no vision. The objective of the video is to demystify the ECC for parents of young children who are visually impaired and for their general education teachers who may have limited expertise and experience teaching children with vision loss. The video also encourages parents and professionals to advocate for use of the ECC can to implement it at home, in the classroom, and in the community.

Todos Los Niños puede-El Plan de Estudios Principal Expandido—VIPS DVD: Este video ofrece una perspectiva de nivel preescolar sobre el plan de estudios principal expandido para estudiantes ciegos o con problemas de la vista (ECC). El ECC aborda nueve áreas de habilidades críticas que estos estudiantes deben aprender para encontrar el éxito en la escuela y en la vida. Sin embargo, pueden ser difíciles de aprender con una visión limitada o nula.

El objetivo del video es desmitificar el ECC para padres de niños pequeños con impedimentos visuales y para sus maestros de educación general que pueden tener experiencia limitada y experiencia enseñando a niños con pérdida de visión. El video también alienta a los padres y profesionales a abogar por el uso del ECC y a implementarlo en el hogar, en el aula y en la comunidad.

¿Cómo Ve y Escucha Marisa?

Información sobre la audición y la visión





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

CAER Webpage

The CAER webpage has been updated, Remember to look on the website for opportunities and new, updated information.

Find information at <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/>



Wreaths Across America!

An opportunity to place wreaths on graves of Veterans' & thank them for their service

Find information at <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/>

Fort Logan National Cemetery: 4000 S. Sheridan Blvd., Denver CO 80236, Saturday December 15, 2018

Ceremonies begin at 10:00 AM Sharp! At Committal Shelter 'A'-look for CAER Sign. Everyone WELCOME to participate! For information on how to volunteer visit the above website &/or contact Barb Galgano at 303-918-7123, Heather Solberg at 303-505-2758.

THIS IS AN OUTDOOR EVENT, PLEASE DRESS APPROPRIATELY.

Hope to see you there!



Licensure Requirements for TVIs and COMSs

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 O&M 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 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.

Braille Competency Testing Requirements

All licensed teachers endorsed in the area of visual impairment, including those individuals employed on a temporary status (Temporary Educator Eligibility-TEE) who are completing their university program in visual impairment), must have a valid CDE Certificate of Braille Competency or a CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency on file with their current administrative unit of employment.

The CDE Certificate of Braille Competency must be earned no later than the end of the first instructional year, but no later than May 31st of the first instructional year, with a Colorado administrative unit as a teacher of students who are blind/visually impaired. If a TVI moves from one Colorado administrative unit to another, the expectation of first-year braille competency demonstration does not “reactivate” from year-to-year. The testing clock begins with the first day of Colorado employment as a TVI.

For more information about Colorado's braille competency requirements, please go to:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

CDE Licensure Requirement for O&M Specialists

If you are working in a Colorado administrative unit as a School Orientation and Mobility Specialists, please know that you **MUST** have a current CDE license as a special services provider: School O&M Specialist. If you do not have this license, your scope of O and M services should be severely restricted to those skills that could already be taught by a TVI. Without this license, you are placing yourself and your AU at risk for O&M-related liability. There is no temporary or emergency licenses for School O&M Specialists.

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



Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Visual Impairment

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

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

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

Effective Educators for Every Student and
Effective Leaders for Every School

Educator Talent Website

Check out the 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>



EDUCATOR TALENT

Effective Educators for Every Student and
Effective Leaders for Every School

Colorado Academic Standards Online Tool Now Available

The 2020 CAS online standards tool is now available at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/standards/>

Through this online tool educators can explore the eight standards across every grade, as well as discover cross-content connections to support instructional integration of multiple subjects. In addition to the online tool, CDE will release the support plan for implementation of the standards. On Wednesday, Sep. 19, the first six in a series of online learning modules will be made available to support schools in their transition.

Districts will have two years to review and revise their local standards as needed with implementation scheduled for the 2020-21 school year.

Special Services Provides Rubric Revisions - Coming Soon

A similar review and revision process of all nine Special Services Providers (SSP) State Model Evaluation System Rubrics (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/specialservicesproviders>) will be conducted by the EE Office. This review process will include:

- A Steering Committee assembled over the summer/fall of 2018 to create a common set of Standards and Elements aligned to the educator
- Once a common set of Standards and Elements are created, work groups will realign or create professional practices under those Standards and Elements
- A statewide feedback period during the 2018-19 school year that will include focus groups
- Anticipated State Board of Education approval of rule revisions in the winter/spring 2019
- Anticipated statewide implementation of the revised SSP rubrics in the 2019-20 school year

For additional information and updates about the SSP rubric revision process, visit the State Model Evaluation System Revisions webpage:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-revisions#teacher-rev>

Educator Effectiveness Video Library Available

The EE Office has released a video library of Colorado educators teaching lessons to students throughout the state. The videos are intended to provide educators and evaluators with a way to view Colorado teachers in action and spark conversations to develop a deeper understanding of quality instructional practices and better collaboration of instructional expectations. A variety of content areas, grade levels and quality of instructional practices are available for viewing. To use the system, contact your district's local access manager (LAM). For more information, visit the EE Video Library webpage.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/eevideos/login>



Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Announces Change to Background Services

The CO Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is implementing a new process for fingerprinting called the Colorado Applicant Background Services (CABS) program in response to Senate Bill 17-189. This bill allows CBI to approve third parties to electronically print and submit non-criminal applicant fingerprints to the state. The program is expected to roll out in late fall, and CBI will stop accepting fingerprint cards taken by a law enforcement 30 days after the roll-out date.

Applicants may still have the option to be fingerprinted by their local law enforcement agency and mail their fingerprint card to the vendor. Approved vendor services will be located throughout the state with locations not to exceed 40 miles from any applicant. The new process and program is expected to increase applicants' ability to obtain fingerprints in a timely manner and streamline the CBI submission process.

State Assessment Score and Growth Results Released

Overall state, district, and school-level results from the 2018 administration of statewide assessments were released late summer along with academic growth summary information, showing areas of improvement throughout the state and increases in participation. Assessment results for all 178 districts and approximately 1,800 schools can be found on the CDE's Colorado Measures on Academic Success webpage, which is located at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cmas-dataandresults>

Summary growth results for schools and districts, including the growth of disaggregated groups of students, can be found on the Colorado Growth Model in SchoolView, that can be found at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/coloradogrowthmodel>

For more information, check out the CDE News Release that highlights the 2018 state assessment results at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/20180816stateassessmentrelease>

Spring 2019 Colorado State Assessment Windows

Colorado's state testing window for all spring 2019 CMAS and alternate assessments will be April 8th through April 26th. The three-week window will allow districts with the ability to have single groups for CMAS test units to complete all CMAS and alternate science, social studies, math, and English language arts (ELA) testing while also allowing schools to test as close to the end of the school year as possible. Schools administering only paper-based tests must complete testing during this three week window, with the exception of students taking the paper-based form as an accommodation in a school taking the assessments online.

All elementary and middle school science and social studies tests must be scheduled and completed between April 8th and April 26th. Districts may request an early window to administer the high school science and social studies tests as early as March 25th. Districts may also request an extended test window for math and ELA due to limited device availability. Be sure to confirm the assessment windows in your administrative unit with your District Assessment Coordinator. Colorado will continue to use a sampling approach for social studies. One-third of elementary, middle, and high schools will participate in spring 2019. To the extent possible, students taking the alternate assessment in a content area for which they are participating in a general education class should be assessed at the same time as their general education peers to avoid missed instruction. Schools must also ensure that students taking the alternate assessment do not miss instruction from their general education class(es) through other means.



Spring 2019 Colorado State Assessment Tentative Windows

Assessment	Content Area	Grades	Spring 2019 TENTATIVE Testing Windows
ACCESS for ELLs®	English Language Proficiency	K –12	January 14 – February 15, 2019
Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)	Mathematics	3 – 8	Official Window: April 8 – 26, 2019
	English Language Arts (including CSLA)	3 – 8	
	Science	5, 8 and 11	OR April 1 – April 19, 2019
	Social Studies**	4, 7 and 11	Extended Math/ELA/CSLA Window:
Colorado Alternate Assessment (CoAlt)	Mathematics (DLM)	3 –11	Official Window: April 8 – 26, 2019
	English Language Arts (DLM)	3 – 11	
	Science	5, 8 and 11	OR April 1 – April 19, 2019
	Social Studies**	4, 7 and 11	Extended Math/ELA/CSLA Window: Begin as early as March 18, 2019*
CO PSAT	English Language Arts and Mathematics	9 and 10	District choice for initial test date: April 9, 10, or 11, 2019 Accommodations window: April 9 – 16, 2019 Make-up testing window: April 10 – 19, 2019
CO SAT	College Entrance Exam	11	Initial test date: April 9, 2019 Accommodations window: April 9 – 12, 2019 Make-up test date: April 23, 2019



Using Accommodations on State Assessments

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access during instruction and assessment for students who have a documented need, including students with a disability and English learners. In order to use accommodations on state testing, accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP, 504, or EL plan. Only a very limited number of students who meet specific criteria may use certain accommodations on the CMAS math and English Language Arts assessments and receive a valid score. These accommodations include reading of the ELA (reading) test, scribing the constructed response portion of the ELA (writing) test, and using a calculator on non-calculator sections of the math assessment. **The DAC must securely submit Unique Accommodation Requests (UARs) to CDE through Syncplicity by December 15 for approval.** Supporting data from the current school year must accompany the UAR. Check out information is on the CDE website specific to:

- [Auditory Presentation Accommodation for ELA](#) (i.e., CBT Text-to-Speech or PBT Oral Script (Reader/Signer))
- [Auditory Presentation - Human Signer Accommodation for ELA](#)
- [Scribe Accommodation for ELA Constructed Response Items](#)
- [Calculator Accommodation on Non-calculator Sections](#)
- [Other Accommodations](#) (not included in the *CMAS and CoAlt Procedures Manual*)
- [District-approved Math Charts and Counters](#)

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



A Shared Vision
Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment

Congratulations to **A Shared Vision** on their second birthday! A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment is dedicated to serving Colorado's families with young children who are blind or visually impaired. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit was founded in 2016 to address the lack of statewide in-home vision services available to Colorado families who have children from birth to age three with blindness or visual impairments.

They've had a remarkable journey since then. The team has grown to 11 Early Intervention Teachers of Children with Visual Impairments (EI-TVIs). From January through September 2018, A Shared Vision has provided over 1,100 in-home visits to 144 children, up 32% and 44% respectively from last year. More information is in the 2018 Progress Report can be found at:

<https://www.asharedvision.org/2018-progress-report.html>

If you are a Colorado Teacher of Children with Visual Impairment and interested in learning more about Early Intervention opportunities, contact A Shared Vision at referrals@asharedvision.org



SAVE THE DATES

WESTERN REGION EARLY INTERVENTION CONFERENCE 2019

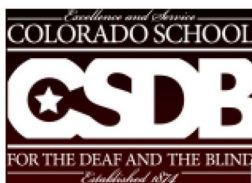
September 11-13, 2019

AIM HIGH: ELEVATING OUR EARLY INTERVENTION PRACTICES

The Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC) is designed to support professionals working with, and families of, children birth to five years old who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, or deafblind. WREIC has been in place for over 30 years, making it one of the longest ongoing early intervention conferences in the country.

DENVER, COLORADO

Hosted By:



HANDS & VOICES™



For More Information:


Contact Rachel Williams at

Williams_R@cde.state.co.us




Calendar of Events

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

November 15	Metro TVI / COMS Meeting in Cherry Creek Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org	
November 17	Community Volunteer Day at the History Colorado Museum Contact: Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 Michele.Reed@state.co.us	
December 11	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us	
December 12	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org	
December 15	CCB Youth Event: Christmas Party—CCB in Littleton Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org	
December 15	Wreaths Across America Event and Volunteer Opportunity—Fort Logan National Cemetery Event Contact: Barb Galgano at 303-918-7123 or Heather Solberg at 303-505-2758 Volunteer Contact: Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 Michele.Reed@state.co.us	

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

January 8	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us	
January 9	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org	
January 11	CCB Youth Event: Learn about Legislation Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org	
January 17	Braille Challenge Southern Region—CSDB Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org	
January 24	Braille Challenge Metro Location – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Diane Covington at dcovington@csdb.org	
January 24-26	Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference— Grand Junction Contact: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep	
January 29 to February 2	CEC 2019 Special Education Convention & Expo - Indianapolis, IN Contact: 888-232-7733 https://ceconvention.org/for-charters/	




Calendar of Events

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

February 7	Vision Coalition Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
February 7	Metro TVI / COMS Meeting in Denver Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
February 8	CCB Youth Event: Shark Dissection – CCB in Littleton Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org
February 13	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting —CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
February 28	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting —CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
February 21	State of the Science Conference on Employment of People with VI in Arlington, VA Contact: https://www.blind.msstate.edu/training/state-of-the-science/
February 28	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting —CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
March 1	Deadline for the See the Future Scholarship Applications To apply go to: https://www.seethefuture.org/efl-app-info.html
February 28	Science Conference on Employment for Individuals with BVIO Arlington, VA Contact: Amanda Kolling at akolling@afb.net
March 7-9	Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference —Colorado Springs Contact: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep
March 13	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting —CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
March 14	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
April 10	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting —CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org




Calendar of Events

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

April 18	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@ips.k12.co.us
April 25	Vision Coalition Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
April 25	Metro TVI / COMS Meeting - location to be determined Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
May 8	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting—CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
May 16 (Tentative Date)	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@ips.k12.co.us
June 16-20	The Advocate Camp—CSDB Campus (For middle school/ high school students focusing on the expanded core curriculum) Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
June 20	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@ips.k12.co.us
July 13	Usher Syndrome Connections Conference—Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, PA Contact: Krista Vasi K.vasi@usher-syndrome.org or (855) 99-USHER
September 11-13	Western Region Early Intervention Conference—Omni Hotel in Broomfield Contact: Rachel Williams at Williams_R@cde.state.co.us



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
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Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller



Orientation & Mobility

The Role of the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist in the Public Schools

Editor's Note: This key foundation of this document was prepared the late Everett Hill, Ed.D. The original can be found at: <https://www.tsbvi.edu/orientation-a-mobility/2110-the-role-of-the-orientation-and-mobility-teacher-in-the-public-schools>. Significant adaptations have been made to update information.

Orientation and mobility (O&M) is an important and integral part of the curriculum in the comprehensive delivery of services to children who are blind/visually impaired and deaf-blind in the public school settings. The O&M Specialist serves as a member of the multidisciplinary team in developing and implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind. This concept was reinforced with the enactment of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. O&M Specialists are also integral team members for infants and toddlers who are blindness/visually impaired or deaf-blind who are served in our birth to two early intervention services.

An O&M Specialist may also be a certified teacher of students who are blind/visually impaired (TVI). When this occurs, it is important to note that this individual has been trained in two distinct professions. One as a special education teacher and one as a related service provider. O&M instruction falls within the category of being a related services under the Individuals with Education Act (IDEA). Related services help children identified with disabilities benefit from their special education by providing extra help and support in needed areas, such as speaking or moving.

Orientation and mobility services (O&M) became part of IDEA's list of related services with IDEA '97. They are defined at §300.34(c)(7) where O&M services are noted as being intended for children who are blind or visually impaired, with the purpose of teaching them how to orient themselves in a range of environments (school, home, community) and to move safely within those environments.

(7) Orientation and mobility services—

- (8) (i) Means services provided to blind or visually impaired children by qualified personnel to enable those students to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and community; and (ii) Includes teaching children the following, as appropriate:
- (A) Spatial and environmental concepts and use of information received by the senses (such as sound, temperature and vibrations) to establish, maintain, or regain orientation and line of travel (e.g., using sound at a traffic light to cross the street);
 - (B) To use the long cane or a service animal to supplement visual travel skills or as a tool for safely negotiating the environment for children with no available travel vision;
 - (C) To understand and use remaining vision and distance low vision aids; and
 - (D) Other concepts, techniques, and tools. [§300.34(c)(7)]

O&M services are not intended for children with disabilities other than visual impairments. If such a child needs to learn how to safely navigate a variety of settings, that child would generally not receive O&M services but, rather, travel training. Travel training is included in the definition of special education and means providing instruction to children with significant cognitive disabilities, and any other children with disabilities who require this instruction, to enable them to develop an awareness of the environment in which they live and learn the skills necessary to move effectively and safely from place to place [§300.39(b)(4)].



Orientation & Mobility

The Role of the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist in the Public Schools (continued)

To better understand O&M instruction, it is helpful to tease apart each word in its title. Orientation is the process of using sensory and cognitive information to establish and maintain one's position in the environment and to understand how to get from one place to another. For young children, this may be as simple as understanding the location of a toy box, a book shelf, or the kitchen of the family home. For older students, orientation may involve knowing how to find a new location based on its address in the community. Mobility is the process of moving safely and efficiently within one's environment. This may include the use of a human guide and/or an adapted mobility device or a long cane. The ultimate goal is for the individual with blindness/visual impairment or deaf-blindness to be able to travel in any environment as independently as possible. Independence is a hallmark feature of O&M instruction. For some students with additional challenges, this may not mean full independence, but less dependence on others to complete the identified travel task. To reach this goal, O&M instruction should begin at the earliest possible age.

Orientation and mobility services in public school settings should be broadly conceived and involve a coordinated team approach in order to meet the needs of a diverse population of children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind. The scope, design, and delivery of O&M services are important for all children, regardless of age and/or presence of additional disabilities. Likewise, O&M instruction should not be taught in isolation, nor should it be limited to the teaching of only formal O&M skills and techniques. Sensory skills (e.g., use of low vision tools, listening skills), concept and motor development, and environmental and community awareness are all integral components of the orientation and mobility process.

The O&M Specialist is responsible for conducting an O&M assessment for all children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind in order to determine the nature and extent of services needed. An initial assessment is conducted to determine each child's present level of functioning. The O&M Specialist takes the lead role in assessing formal orientation and mobility skills and serves in a cooperative role with the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) in assessing the areas of sensory efficiency, concept, and motor development. Other professionals such as the general education teacher, physical education teacher, occupational therapist, and/or physical therapist should be consulted and involved in the assessment process when appropriate. Goals should be developed with input from the parents and other members of the multidisciplinary team for inclusion on the IFSP or IEP.

The role of the O&M Specialist is to teach formal orientation and mobility skills. Formal orientation instruction is highly dependent upon maximum development and use of sensory and cognitive information. It entails such skill areas as the following: (a) ability to identify and make use of landmarks and clues; (b) knowledge and use of compass directions; (c) knowledge and use of indoor and city numbering systems; (d) ability to align the body to objects and with sounds for the purpose of establishing and/or maintaining a straight line of travel; (e) use of systematic search patterns to explore novel objects and environments (self-familiarization); (f) recovery skills; and (g) knowledge and use of where, when, and how to solicit aid.

Formal mobility skills include such areas as: (a) skills in movement with a human guide; (b) protective techniques; (c) indoor cane skills; (d) outdoor cane skills; (e) street crossings, and (f) use of public transportation systems. These skills can be taught and reinforced in both familiar and unfamiliar travel environments. For learners with poor night vision, the O&M Specialist will want to provide instruction at night, so the use of O&M concepts and skills can be taught in an environmental setting that is difficult for the student.



Orientation & Mobility

The Role of the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist in the Public Schools (continued)

The O&M Specialist should serve as a team member and consultant to the parents, teacher of students with visual impairments, the general education teacher(s), other school personnel in the instruction and reinforcement of concept development, sensory skill development, and motor development. The development of efficient use of the senses gross and fine motor abilities, and spatial and environmental concepts are important prerequisites for formal O&M instruction. The O&M Specialist is responsible for advanced orientation and mobility skills training, such as cane instruction, street crossings, and travel using public transportation systems. It is also the responsibility of the O&M Specialist to provide students and their parents information about alternative systems (other than the cane) of independent travel such as dog guides and electronic travel aids (ETAs).

O&M instruction will have very little impact on children and youth, if parents and family members are not involved in the process. In addition to working cooperatively with family members in developing realistic goals, the O&M Specialist may develop specific activities that parents and family members can implement in the home setting in order for continuity of instruction to occur. O&M activities should be designed, so that parents and other family members can carry them out in the context of their daily routines, through daily living skill activities, recreational activities, and so forth. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's O&M program. It may be helpful for parents to observe O&M lessons.

Because a great deal of O&M instruction may take place in the community, it is the one aspect of the total curriculum that is most visible to the general public. Frequently, the O&M Specialist has the opportunity to educate the general public regarding the capabilities of individuals who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind. For students who require more advanced skill training, O&M lessons are more likely to occur outside of the typical school day in order to meet the time requirements of longer community lessons. A full proposed curriculum can be found in *Teaching Age-Appropriate Purposeful Skills (TAPs): An Orientation and Mobility Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairment* (Pogrud et al. 2012). TAPs is published by the Texas School for the Blind and is in its third edition. This resource is in the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project's lending library.

There are about 70 COMS working in Colorado early intervention and public schools. The vast majority of COMS are also TVIs. Because of the unique role of the O&M Specialist across the age span and diverse needs of learners with blindness/visual impairment or deaf-blindness, the Colorado Department of Education offers an annual training seminar that is exclusive to the professional learning needs of these professionals.

Examples of past trainings have included building expertise with young children, learners with deaf-blindness, balance strategies, self defense, and the use of GPS technology, and Ipad apps. It is anticipated that the focus for this year's conference will be on adapted mobility devices, cane repair, and updates on wheelchair travel.



Orientation & Mobility



Cane Songs

O&M Specialists often use songs as a way to teach their students how to use and care for their canes. Diane Brauner has a collection of such songs that can be found at:

Cane Songs

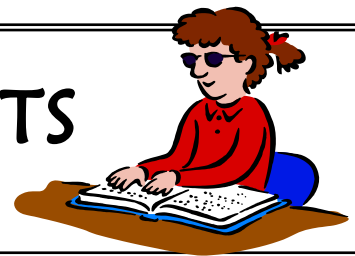
<http://perkinselearning.org/technology/blog/cane-songs>

Websites with O&M Content

- ◆ Ambutech (cane purchase): <https://ambutech.com/>
- ◆ Colorado Department of Education - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/rs-om>
- ◆ Dona Sauerburger website specific to O&M: <http://www.sauerburger.org/dona/>
- ◆ Michigan Department of Education:
<https://mdelio.org/blind-visually-impaired/expanded-core-curriculum/orientation-mobility>
- ◆ O&M Live Binder - http://www.livebinders.com/shelf/search_author?terms=christabb
- ◆ Paths to Literacy – <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/orientation-mobility/resources>
- ◆ Perkins School for the Blind – <http://www.perkinselearning.org/scout/topics/orientation-mobility>
- ◆ Texas School for the Blind - <https://www.tsbvi.edu/orientation-a-mobility>



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's 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:

Tanni Anthony	(303) 866-6681	anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
Nancy Cozart	(303) 905-4074	nkcozart@yahoo.com
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	christine.maynard3@gmail.com
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	brendashep@comcast.net
Sarah Sonnier	(970) 245-5228	sonnier.sarah5@gmail.com
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	jwetzstein22@gmail.com

As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor / mentor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor/mentor. 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 greater metro area.

The Practice Test items have been 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

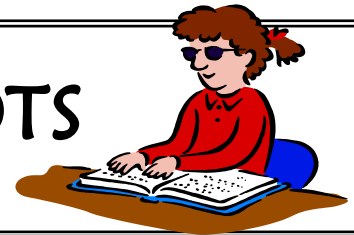
Braillewriter Repair

Mark Carpenter is available for braillewriter repair.
His contact information is: Phone: 719-634-8720 and
Email: carpdiane@yahoo.com





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille Readers Are Leaders

Calling all kids, teachers, and parents! The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, in partnership with the NFB Jernigan Institute and The American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults, announces the annual Nation-wide Braille Readers Are Leaders (BRAL) contest for kids. Entrants compete to read the most Braille pages, going against other students in similar grades across all participating states. The contest runs for seven weeks, encouraging students to be proud of their Braille reading ability and to work to improve their Braille skills while possibly winning prizes in the process.



For each student who enters, a certifying official (parent, teacher, etc.) must fill out and submit a registration form. This can be done as early as November 1, 2018 and as late as January 19, 2019.

<https://www.nfbfillinois.org/BrailleContest/NationwideBRALREGISTRATIONFORM2018-2019.rtf>

- Students enter in one of five grade categories: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, & 9-12. Participants record Braille pages read between December 1, 2018 and January 19, 2019 on a reading log.
<https://www.nfbfillinois.org/BrailleContest/NationwideBRALReadingLog2018-2019.rtf>
- The certifying official must submit the completed reading log form by February 2, 2019.
- Prizes in each grade category are: first, \$25; second, \$15; third, \$10.
- Every contestant, whether a winner or not, will receive a gift bag of Braille-related items at the end of the contest.

To get the complete contest rules, registration form, and the reading log form, visit the website, <http://www.nfbfillinois.org/nationwide-bral-contest>. Both the registration form and the reading log form can be submitted by email as attachments to Deborah Stein at dkent5817@att.net. Please put Nationwide BRAL plus the contestant's name in the subject line. Alternatively, you can mail to: Deborah Stein, 5817 N. Nina Ave., Chicago, IL 60631. In addition to awards in the five grade categories, Kelly Doty Awards of \$25 will be given to students who have met unusual challenges in order to learn and read Braille. Such challenges include, but are not limited to, having other disabilities in addition to blindness or being an English language learner.

For questions, feel free to get in touch with Kevan Worley, Director Project Literacy, National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, 719-527-0488, email kevan@wefitwellness.com

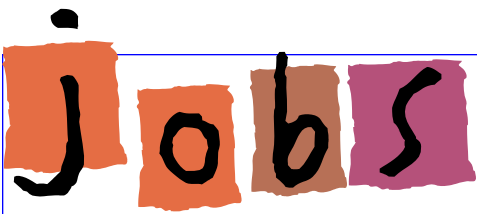
We know that blind people who use braille are much more likely to be employed, attain higher levels of education, and enjoy leadership positions in civic life.

Good luck and happy reading!

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Jernigan Institute Helps Santa Answer His Mail

Between November 12 and December 14, parents can go online at <https://nfb.org/santa-letters> and fill out a Santa Braille Letter request form. The form can also be printed and faxed to 410-685-2340. Beginning December 3, the Braille letters from Santa will start going out to boys and girls around the country.

The Braille letter will also be accompanied by a print copy (for mom and dad to read) as well as some other fun holiday activities. The deadline for letter requests is December 14 to ensure that a return letter in Braille is received before Christmas. For more information, please visit their website at <https://nfb.org>



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with current vacancies for the upcoming school year. 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 para-educator, 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:

We are in serious need of TVIs / COMSs in the northern region. Please work to encourage para-educators with a BA / other discipline colleague to join our field!

TVI/ COMS (2 FTE) for Greeley Schools. For more information, please contact Nyla Buffington at nbuffington@greeleyschools.org

- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (.5 FTE) for Weld County RE-FJ School District. For more information, please contact Rachael Browning at rachael.browning@weldre5j.org or (970) 587-6815

Southern Region – Jobs

- ✓ **CSDB** - Please be in touch with Chelle Lutz for CSDB Openings in the School for the Blind. She can be reached at (719) 578-2100 or clutz@csdb.org
- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (1 FTE) There is a new opening in District 49. The contact person is Nancy Lemmon at nlemmond@d49.org

Metro Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (2 FTE) openings in Denver Public Schools. For more information, please contact Julie Hemphill at (720) 595-6126 or julie_hemphill@dpsk12.org
- ✓ **TVI / COMS (1 FTE)** opening in Cherry Creek School District. For more information, please contact Frances Woolery Jones at 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/or support new personnel to the field, let your Vision Coalition representative know!

just for PARENTS



About the THRIVE Center

The THRIVE Center exists to provide parents with information and training about disabilities; parent and children's rights under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and other relevant laws; and resources in the Denver Metro area.

THRIVE Center staff:

- Provide information and skills by educating parents through advising calls, trainings, workshops, collaborating with other agencies, a comprehensive offering of resources through our website and bi-monthly e-blasts.
- Mentor parents to become independent advocates and increase their participation in school activities.
- Offer outreach to under-served groups to identify families that have children with disabilities that need information, support and services.

They also provide a variety of services: (a) parent advisement; (b) workshops; (c) IEP Volunteer Program, (d) leadership program, and (e) community and policy outreach.

For more information about the THRIVE Center and their services, please go to:

<http://www.thrivectr.org/community-parent-resource-center/>

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind

NFADB is the largest nonprofit organization serving families of individuals who are deaf-blind (combined vision and hearing loss). Their website can be found at: <https://nfadb.org/>

The organization provides information on deaf-blindness, hosts webinars on a variety of topics, and is very involved in national conferences to support families of children with deaf blindness.

Special Education Guide

This website has many resources for families who are looking to learn more about special education. There is a special education dictionary that defines many relevant terms in parent-friendly language. Additionally there are resources on early intervention, career path options, and informative disability profiles.

The web link is: <https://www.specialeducationguide.com>

just for PARENTS



Center for
Parent Information
& Resources

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/>

PEP Conferences

Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) conferences are designed to promote family and school partnerships that support students with disabilities and their families in schools and the community.

Conferences for 2018-19 are scheduled for the following:

- Jan. 24-26 – Grand Junction
- March 7-9 – Colorado Springs

For more information, visit the PEP website: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep>

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/>

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

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



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

National Federation of the Blind 2019 Scholarship Program

The National Federation of the Blind is pleased to announce their 2019 scholarship program! They offer thirty scholarships to blind students from across the United States and Puerto Rico who will be enrolled in full-time post-secondary degree programs during the 2019-2020 school year. These scholarships range in value from \$3,000 to \$12,000 and will be awarded at their 2019 national convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The application period begins November 1, 2018, and closes at midnight EST on March 31, 2019. Go to <https://nfb.org/scholarships>

To apply during the five-month open period, read the rules and the Submissions Checklist, complete the official 2019 Scholarship Application Form (online or in print), supply all required documents, and request and complete an interview by an NFB affiliate president. Remember, the only way to win is to apply!



A Guide to Visual Disabilities:

How Colleges Help People with Visually Impairment Succeed

Go to this webpage to learn more about a variety of resources for students who are college-bound. There is information about scholarships, technology resources, tips for effective and successful college learning.

The webpage is: <https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/colleges-helping-visually-impaired-students/>

KEEPING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER POSTED ELECTRONICALLY

Each edition of the *Keeping in Touch Newsletter* is posted on line at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities

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



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!



EVIDENCE-BASED TRANSITION PLANNING AND SERVICES

BRAND NEW!

Evidence-Based Transition Planning and Services CEM!

This **Evidence-Based Transition Planning and Services Course Enhancement Module (CEM)** is designed to build the knowledge and capacity of educators working with pre-service and/or in-service teachers who are teaching diverse students to read. The module can be adapted and is flexible to accommodate faculty and professional development (PD) provider needs. The anchor module and speaker notes can be used in their entirety to cover multiple courses or PD sessions. Alternatively, specific content, activities, and media can be excerpted as needed to enhance existing course and/or PD content.

The webpage is: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/transition/>

Back to School Is a Great Time to Check Out All of Our CEEDAR CEMs!

Our **Course Enhancement Modules (CEMs)** include usable resources for faculty and professional development (PD) providers to include in effective opportunities for teachers and leaders to learn about and use evidence-based practices (EBPs). Each CEM is designed to be used in whole or in part to support teacher and leader learning at the pre-service and in-service levels. Some of the CEMs include:

- Evidence-Based Reading Instruction
- Classroom and Behavior Management
- Universal Design for Learning
- Inclusive Education

The webpage is: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/>

VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

November 9, 2018 at the Colorado Talking Book Library

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Dan Burke, Nancy Cozart, Jayme Cusimano, Julie Hutchinson, Julie King, Jamie Lugo, Jim Olson, Michelle Reed, and Callie Robinson

Absent: Deb Andrew, Paula Landry, Tim Richard, Paula Conroy

Guests: Judy Mumford, Janet Anderson, Melinda Carter

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 Robinson

Colorado AER Chapter – Tim Richard

Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michelle Reed

Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jamie Lugo

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Jayme Cusimano

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS: We welcome new members Jayme Cusimano from the CSDB Outreach Program, Tim Richard from CAER, and Michelle Reed from DVR. Our thanks to past members in these roles: Sara Noel, Trina Boyd Pratt, and Dana McMullen.

NORMS OF THE VISION COALITION: Stay present. Verbally identify yourself before you speak. If we get into a serious discussion, please wait for your turn (we will assign someone to take stock of who is next in the discussion). Vision Coalition meetings are a confidential environment. We are here for the common good of students, families, and our profession. In the spirit of improvement, we will bring important issues to the table.

DECISION PROTOCOL: In instances where a vote may be taken to make a decision of the Vision Coalition membership, a fist of 5, 3, or 1 will be used. 5 = agreement / can live with the decision; 3 = need more information to make a decision; and 1 = cannot approve the decision. A majority vote of 5 will indicate that the decision will move forward.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

At our first meeting of the school year, the focus was to share how TVIs/districts were completing the learning media plan within the IEP. Denver TVIs shared a rubric that they have developed to assist in completing the Learning Media Plans efficiently. More questions arose from this discussion.

In addition, we revisited the idea of shadowing colleagues based on individual needs/skill sets. The plan is to get it going for 2nd semester. We also benefited from Jim Olson sharing written info from CIMC and the southern regional meeting about DVR information.

Next Metro Meeting: November 15th in Cherry Creek School District from 3:30-5:00 p.m. Anchor Center for Blind Children will be presenting on their services and talking about the Teller Cards. We will also discuss the updated Resource Allocations Document and other topics from Vision Coalition.

Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

Most Recent Meeting Date: October 19, 2018 Upcoming Meeting Date: Spring, 2019 (Date TBD)

Staff Updates in the North: Welcoming Vick Chinski, Pat Lewis, Sherry Bainbridge, Tara Brown-Ogilvie, Tina Martin, and Jennifer Caster to the Northern Region! We are so excited to have these wonderful, dedicated TVIs and COMS working in our region. Greeley Schools continues to look for two full-time TVIs. Johnstown/Milliken RE-5J (Weld County) is also looking for a part-time TVI/COMS at .5 FTE.

The Northern Region had our first meeting of the school year. The regional TVIs had some good discussion relating to CVI book adaptations (to catch up members who missed our make-and-take sessions from last year and discuss the possibility of completing another make-and-take), the possibility of creating a "uniform" method of completing the Learning Media Plan in an IEP, and TVI retention. Susan Chandler, lead Black Belt instructor with Denver Ki-Aikido, provided the group with a presentation/training on *Mindfulness in Balance and Mobility*. Her presentation brought a lot of questions and discussion from the group on incorporating mindfulness into movement activities; specifically O&M and the relevance for students to understand body image awareness while moving through space. It was an excellent presentation and the group was able to practice many exercises throughout the training. Susan was open to the idea of providing a training to our students, as there has been a lot of student interest. We will look more closely at how to fund a multi-regional student training workshop in the near future.

Discussion: Some TVIs reported a great deal of concern with regard to the current student-to-TVI ratio in the northern region. What can we do to seek out, employ and then retain TVIs in the state of Colorado? Recruitment and retention was a topic of the VC in the past school year. Several recommendations have been made to assist our efforts in the state. The biggest way to build our recruitment efforts is to identify Colorado individuals to bring into the field. We cannot depend on attracting sufficient numbers of TVIs / O&M Specialists from other states. A strategy is to look for someone who enjoys our students and has a BA degree. Sometimes this is current paraeducator or brailist. their recruitment efforts over last spring and summer had some positive success.

As people realize they will be leaving CO or retiring, it is important to work with school personnel to understand the need to (a) identify someone to home grow and/or (b) national recruitment efforts. The districts who were deliberate with their spring / summer recruitment efforts had some promising results.

Is there a possibility of the Deafblind grant funding future make-and-take opportunities? Tanni shared that a proposal for funding would be considered. A goal is to ensure we have statewide opportunity.

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

Jim from the CIMC showed us the following APH products at the September meeting: (a) Protein Synthesis Kit; (b) Tactile Graphic Line slate; (c) Rigby Platinum Edition; (d) Ezee Count Abacus; (e) Tactile Line Drawing Tools Kit; (f) Tactile Compass for Math and Art; (f) Read Write Mini; (g) Laptime & Lullabies; (h) Bright Shapes Knob Puzzle; and (i) Snap Circuits Jr. Access.

DVR hosted a Vision Resource Expo on October 4 in Colorado Springs. Transit Passenger Advisory Committee notes one new bus route coming – Rampart campus (PPCC) route. There will be more new routes coming. Envita rebranded and changed their name (used to be Amblicab). DVR staff shared that they really like the MOOVIT app, it is really good for route planning, accessible, gives real time live updates when the bus will be at a stop, stop notifications while riding.

There be several anticipated retirements this coming year in the southern region.

Drive Blind Day: CSDB Outreach (Diane Covington) would like to organize this event for the Southern region again if there is interest. Juniors and seniors. Would be a spring event.

Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic: First clinic day occurred. Next clinic date scheduled for Friday, March 8, 2019.

Dr. Theune was a guest speaker of the October meeting. He noted that the See the Future Fund is in its 23rd year of raising money. Education for Life – application deadline March 1, 2019. Tools for Life application deadline (2 per year) April 15th and October 15th. Teachers: please talk to your Juniors and Seniors. This is a merit based scholarship. Last year only one student applied. Dr. Theune showed attendees the IrisVision devise, designed for persons with end stage central vision loss who have good peripheral vision.

Future meeting dates for the Southern Region TVI/DVR meetings (put these in your calendar now please):

November 14, 2018	December 12, 2018	January 9, 2019	February 13, 2019
March 13, 2019	April 10, 2019	May 8, 2019	September 11, 2019
October 9, 2019	November 13, 2019	December 11, 2019	January 8, 2020
February 12, 2020	March 11, 2020	April 8, 2020	May 13, 2020

Western Region (Julie King)

Stephanie Crosen is new to Summit School District!

Some of the Western Slope VI providers got together on October 19th. We discussed the changes that will be made to eligibility. Overall, the team felt good about these changes and did not have any concerns at this time.

One area of discussion was regarding summer activities for students. Our students have a low turnout for these activities because it is difficult for families to arrange for lodging, food, etc. It can be an expense that families simply cannot do. The team thought it would be something to mention and if anyone had any suggestions. *Discussion: This is often an additional expense for families specific to transportation / lodging. It was recommended that a mini grant might be a good option for particular families to receive some funding support. The due date for this year's applications is November 1, so the deadline is past. Mini grants can be submitted any time over the course of the year. For these applications, it will be a reimbursed event. Jamie shared that if the event is hosted on the campus of CSDB, there are on-campus lodging opportunities. Tanni shared that if a child is deaf-blind, the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss might be a funding source. Jayme shared that CSDB has an application for regional student activity funds. This might also be another funding option. The Lions Club is also another potential source.*

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Michelle Reed)

Students ages 15-21 can be referred to DVR for Pre-Employment Transition Services. Students and family are advised to contact the counselor assigned to the area where they reside. The counselor will complete an intake and decide whether they are best served by the YP case type or need to open a full DVR case which will include more comprehensive paper work and an Individualized Plan for Employment.

On October 15, 2018 DVR's Blind and Low Vision Services and Colorado Center for the Blind collaborated to meet at Washington Park in Denver to acknowledge White Cane Day by a Brown Bag Speaker Dan Burke from the CCB, a walk around the park 2.5 miles, and a 1-Touch demonstration by Jim Pilkington. We had a great afternoon and look forward to planning a bigger and more attended event next year including TVIs, O&M Specialists, and their students.

The waitlist for Denver Metro center Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) program is around 2-3 months.

The Douglas County Job Club and the North Metro Job Club were initiated in October. Eight students attended the NM Job Club and two student (will be adding a third next meeting) attended the DC Job Club. We scheduled our next meeting on November 5 for NM and November 28 for DC. The agenda for November's meeting is: (a) Agenda Introduction Exercise "Would you rather..."; (b) Introduce and discuss HOSPITALITY career cluster; (c) Present and practice measuring skills both dry and liquid ingredients (making dough ornaments); (d) Review interests inventory and discuss work personalities; and (d) Updates on Volunteer Activities and Workshop; and Plan for next meeting. The agenda is a nice mix of career exploration and work-readiness practical skills.

Currently we have two volunteer activities available for Pre-Ets clients: Community Volunteer Day at the History Colorado Museum

Saturday, November 17, 2018 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Wreaths across America! at Fort Logan National Cemetery

Saturday, December 15, 2018 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Stay tuned for more Pre-Ets transition workshops and volunteer activities in the Denver Metro area for winter and spring school breaks

There are two new staff. One is Austin Kram, who is a new O&M Specialist. He is center-based. They also have a new Assistive Technology Instructor and her name is Connie Pearson.

Philanthropy Field trip organize field trips for small group of student. For more information, contact:

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

Hats off to the southern region DVR personnel who have excellent attendance at their southern region TVI/COMs meetings. There is great turn-out and information sharing in the northern region. The metro region is working together too to provide information and activities. The regional TVI/COMS meeting coordinators are encouraged to invite their DVR personnel or to solicit updates for these regional meetings. It was also suggested that we are sharing how DVR services have worked to benefit students across the state, as these examples may be helpful for others to learn from for their students' needs.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment celebrated their second anniversary on Friday, October 26, with a joyful gathering of their families, friends and team members. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit began just two years ago to address the lack of in-home vision services available to Colorado families who have children from birth to age three with blindness or visual impairments. They've had a remarkable journey since then.

The team has grown to 11 Early Intervention Teachers of Children with Visual Impairments (EI-TVIs). From January through September 2018, A Shared Vision has provided over 1,100 in-home visits to 144 children, up 32% and 44% respectively from last year. Their goal is that all families of children with visual impairments have access to and receive essential early intervention services from a community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals so that all children may discover their brightest future. More information is in the *2018 Progress Report*, which is on the ASV website.

A Shared Vision is continuing to expand their impact and outreach across Colorado through community events and trainings with Community Centered Boards, partnerships with Children’s Hospital KidStreet, Children’s Eye Physicians and Children’s Hospital Ophthalmology, and providing valuable resources for parents and other providers on their website (see Parent Resources).

ASV want to work closely with district personnel on Community Day events in their communities. This is a great way to support family involvement.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Callie Robinson)

For the 2018-2019 school year; Anchor has 27 preschool students and 37 infants and toddlers. Of the 63 currently enrolled, we have 12 children identified as deaf-blind. Out of the 27 preschoolers, 50% are diagnosed with CVI including additional disabilities. Because of our population, we have taken value in the INSITE trainings for children with visual impairments and additional disabilities including deaf-blindness as well as the CVI Perkins Endorsement. Our focus last year and this year has been to understand our population of who we serve through many professional development opportunities in order to provide high quality services.

Anchor Center is very excited to welcome several new hires this year to our team. Currently our team consist of 5 TSVIs, 5 Early Childhood Special Educators, and 5 different kinds of therapist (OT, SLP, PT, Music and Horticulture). Our multi-disciplinary approach allows our families and children optimal early intervention support for school readiness.

Anchor Center is delighted to announce Melinda Carter as Interim Director of Children’s Programs and Services. Melinda is a gifted teacher and a well-respected colleague. A graduate of UNC’s Special Education Graduate Program, Melinda has over 13 years of experience in the “vision” field as both a TSVI and a certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. When asked what she most appreciates about Anchor Center, Melinda responded: “There’s so much to like. I love the Anchor team. The fact that we are all professionals with different and important perspectives who come together to help children and families along their journey!”

Also new to Anchor Center is Jessica Meisel, an Early Childhood Special Educator who has a specialty in multiple disabilities, including deaf-blindness. She received her degree at City University of NY Hunter College where she did her practicum and worked at Hellen Keller Early Learning Center. Before that she was a nanny for 20 years and took care of a child who was deaf-blind for 7 years. Since being back to Colorado, she has worked in a preschool special education program, early intervention and now with Anchor Center. When asked what she likes about Anchor she said, “Other than the kids; the team, how dedicated everyone is to this very important work, and how we all learn from each other.”

Another exciting addition to the Anchor Center team is Leonor Rosser, an Early Childhood Special Educator who is in the TVI program at University of North Dakota. She comes with 15 years of diverse experience working alongside Dr. Joan Bornstein, a sensory integration specialist. She has spent several years in her career working with children who have multiple disabilities within home visit programs and center base programs in Florida. Interestingly enough, she has a T.V. series with PBS on Origami. Leonor is multi-lingual; as a Venezuelan-Italian she brings many talents and rich experiences to Anchor. She says it was a “coincidence” that she was able to get a position with Anchor. She describes the building and programs including staff as an “amazing place to be”.

Caroline Calabrese is in a new role but not so new to the Anchor Center. She has been a nanny for a child with deaf-blindness for several years now while working on her Master’s degree in Early Childhood Special Education from University of Colorado at Denver and is going to graduate this December. She first started in support services for an adult developmental disability group home. Her undergrad is in Psychology from Illinois State University. When asked what she likes most about Anchor, she says; “How we get to truly look at the whole child. There’s more that goes on than just the disability. Also, Anchor Center staff, we do an incredible job at teaming. Our willingness to listen and learn from each other is exceptional”.

Finally, we have an exciting new project we are working on with Dr. King performing CVI screenings on premature babies at Rocky Mountain Children's Hospital. We are using the Neonatal European Visual Grid (NAVEG) with premature babies to identify CVI. Since July 2018 when we began the project, we have identified five babies that fall into this category. We are also excited to announce the onboarding of Dr. Cathy Smyth as Director of Research who is going to help guide us in research based work for early intervention with children who have visual impairments.

Anchor Center is interested in pursuing hosting INSITE and/or VIISA training across the state. This inservice training model is designed to support early childhood skills of TVIs / COMSs and to provide VI information to early childhood personnel / related service providers. This is something for future discussion / planning. Stay tuned!

Thanks was given to Anchor Center for hosting CSDB TVIs to learn more about working with young children. It was a very helpful for these individuals!

Colorado Chapter of AER (Tim Richard)

Wreathes Across America! An amazing opportunity to place wreathes on graves of Veterans' & thank them for their service. For more information, go to: www.wreathesacrossamerica.org

It will be at Fort Logan National Cemetery on Saturday December 15, 2018. Ceremonies begin at 10:00 AM Sharp! At Committal Shelter 'A'-look for CAER Sign. Everyone is welcome to participate! For information on how to volunteer visit the above website and/or contact Barb Galgano at 303-918-7123 or Heather Solberg 303-505-2758

White Cane Day: Thank you to everyone who bought T-Shirts for White Cane Day! We sold approximately 100 shirts, which is a record for us! Please send us your good ideas and pictures of White Cane Day this year and we will be able to post these on the CAER website.

New AER Website: Please go to the following website for updated information regarding Colorado AER:
Go to: <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/>

Facebook Page: Did you know CAER has its own Face Book page? If you are on FB you might just be getting an invite to join the group. No one seems to post very often but with more members that might change. Tim posts equipment that can be given away and submitted a video of Pat Lewis earning the Lifetime Achievement Award from CAER.

Upcoming Trainings/Conferences: Thank you to all that attended *Beyond Access: Addressing the Needs of Individuals who are Blind and Have Challenging Behavior*. The certificates for CEUs will be sent out shortly. We have received many great suggestions and are working on getting those in place! Will be information posted and sent to everyone in an email when we have things finalized.

We still need more suggestions/ideas for trainings, nothing is out of the question so please submit ideas and the board can look at how to provide the training.

We have been approved for ACVREP accreditation! Good news, we will be able to offer our workshops and trainings with credit attached. Fees will vary per training, but CAER members will be getting a discount. REMINDER: Any function you attend, your name will be placed into the annual drawing for paid membership dues for the year.

Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Dan Burke)

Our summer programs this year were among our most dynamic ever! We had 24 students in our high school/college program, about five of whom were Colorado kids. What did they do all summer? Jobs, college visits, ran or walked in the NFB of Colorado's 6 Dot Dash 5K, had a Science Day, Archaeology at Morrison's Natural History Museum tried out blind ice hockey, martial arts, rock climbing, canoeing, and learned a lot of skills for independence and self-advocacy. We had one middle schooler for three weeks, and Confidence Camp for Kids had 10 kids this summer. All the Confidence Campers are Colorado learners. Jeannie Lei did a great job in her first year directing the program.

There has been some personnel changes that have affected their Youth Programs. They are working hard to keep things rolling! They are looking at summer programs and wondering about some design changes. One thought is to have shorter events with specific topics.

They are going to offer two scholarships for Colorado high school students to have the opportunity to go to Washington as a part of a NFB function. This is an opportunity to learn about national issues affecting people who are blind/visually impaired. This will be an application process that includes an essay. Be watching for details.

Fun Activities and Skills Training (FAST) started off with a family audio-described Movie Night. Martin showed his all-time favorite, "Toy Story". In October we made a trip to Maker Fair Denver at the National Western Complex. That was cool enough, but the real draw for our FAST program was Mission to Nocterra, an escape room built in the CCB gym this fall by a design team led by Matt Gesualdi. Matt has worked with CCB for a number of years, originally when he built a scale replica of the May D & F Tower. Escape rooms are the rage, but they aren't accessible to blind participants. Mission to Nocterra was designed to be equally accessible to blind and sighted participants alike. It was a big hit at Maker Fair Denver, and then it also came to the NFB of Colorado Convention in Lone Tree.

This Saturday is cooking a Thanksgiving meal, though we'll be carving chickens when all is said and done!

CSDB mentoring started last month focusing on NFB Newslines as a resource to read any of hundreds of newspapers and magazines quickly and easily. The afternoon included demonstrations of the service, which is free, and sending home materials for teachers and families to help students get signed up. It's a quick and accessible way to get current events and entertainment.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

Statewide Count: Based on guidance from the Vision Coalition membership, the CIMC once again distributed statewide student registration reports as attachments to encrypted emails to administrative units beginning September 21st. The end of October was the due date for edits to be returned to cimcregistrations@csdb.org. Participation has been excellent. Thank you everybody for your hard work in completing this task in a timely manner.

Federal Quota Census: The quota census will occur on the first Monday in January. Remember there was a new requirement for a signed Parent consent form that began with the January 2018 count. If you have questions, contact Lori Wilson in the CIMC at lwilson@csdb.org; (719) 578-2199.

CIMC updates: Book orders for next school year: APRIL 1, 2019. Start placing your orders NOW. The earlier the better.

BANA: The Braille Authority of North America met in Salt Lake City Nov. 1-3, 2018. Items on the Board's agenda included a review of formal reports from BANA's technical committees, general committees and task forces. The National Braille Association thanked Bonnie Read, who is the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Early Learning Materials Production for BANA for sharing her knowledge and expertise. BANA was supposed to vote on the "Early Learning Materials Production (ELMP)" guidance document – no results have been announced yet, but this should give braille transcribers and TVIs guidance related to how to format elementary level materials.

APH Annual Meeting: (October 4-6, 2018) Jim attended the 150th Annual Meeting, and 160th Celebration of APH as a company. Jim attended as the Ex Officio Trustee for the Department of Education accounts and the School for the Blind Account. APH has been working on a new website for the past year. It is about to go into final testing and should be released soon.

Key update include:

- New website and new shopping site about to go into final testing stage. Unless major programming is necessary, expect a December unveiling.
- Freedom Scientific will be discontinuing the support of MAGic Screen Magnification Software and will be supporting ZoomText (Magnifier/Reader) and ToomText Fusion Home in the future.

New APH Products: There are several new APH products. To learn more about individual products, please go to www.aph.org or talk to Jim directly.

New products include:

- **AnimalWatch Vi Suite**: D-30026-AP. An accessible math app for iPad®, developed specifically for students studying in the 5th-7th grade math level. Visit: <https://awvis.aphtech.org> to learn more.
- **Practice2Master Fractions**. This app is full accessible for all users, especially for students who are blind or visually impaired. Practice2Master Fractions is designed to help students become proficient in fraction calculations. Watch a short demonstration video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xxQr9YLECM>
Recommended ages: 9 years and up.
- **Math Flash™**: Math Flash will allow students to practice math facts on compatible devices. You may choose from three difficulty levels. In addition, you may select which math operations you would like to focus on (addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division).
- **ALEXA SKILL**: Search under Alexa Skills for APH Math Flash. Enable Math Flash and get ready to have some fun while brushing up on your math skills. Once enabled, say “Alexa, open Math Flash.” Go to <https://amzn.to/2uX0zQE>
- **Tactile World Globe**: This new and improved Tactile World Globe offers more tactile and braille information than previous APH tactile globes.. Recommended ages: 10 years and up.
- **Tactile Algebra Tiles**: An accessible version of traditional algebra tiles, specifically designed for students with blindness and low vision. Includes magnetic tiles that students can manipulate on a steel board and uses tactile symbols to help students differentiate between tiles. Recommended ages: 6 years and up.
- **Earth Science Tactile Graphics**: A collection of vacuum-formed, full-color raised-line tactile graphics related to Earth Science. Serves as a reference volume intended to supplement the graphics in a student’s classroom textbook. Visit www.aph.org/manuals/#alpha-e for a list of free downloadable brf files.
- **Keitzer Check-Writing Guide**: A flexible, durable, polyethylene guide that will hold any standard check.
- **Color-By-Texture Circus Coloring Pages**: These raised-line coloring pages facilitate a variety of art activities for young children and students who are visually impaired and blind, and complement APH’s Color-by-Texture Marking Mats. Recommended ages: 3 years and up. Free downloadable coloring pages can be located on APH’s Tactile Graphic Image Library (TGIL), visit: www.aph.org/tgil
- **Paint by Number Safari Series**: Learn about art, nature, and real world colors with Paint by Number Safari coloring series! Each series includes a set of custom-made drawings of real-world subjects that are printed and embossed on heavy paper, making it easier for beginning and intermediate artists to learn and improve their skills.. Recommended ages: 6 years and up.
- **Decision Making Guide**: Provides a parent, teacher, or other professional with an easy formula to help determine the correct print size for a student’s eye function.



Be in touch with the CIMC about new APH products.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Student Activities: Students and staff are embracing the revised school schedule. This year the school day is divided into five blocks, rather than seven periods. The extended time allows for more in-depth work and analysis of content, as well as opportunities for collaboration and connections between content areas. Students and staff are reporting they feel this structure is providing more focused learning time! The teaching staff focused their first unit of instruction on having a growth mindset. This involved the importance of teamwork, and learning how to think about circumstances in a more positive light. In preschool, students helped each other make kites and then they got to go outside and fly them. The elementary students created a What if Monster to eat their worries and learn how to turn their worries into positive thoughts. They visited different classrooms to do the same for other. Our secondary students created a hula hoop weavings. Students worked together to attach yarn to a hoola-hoop as the foundation of the weaving. Students in our Independent Living Skill class gathered apples from trees on campus to make applesauce from scratch. Our Personal and Career Readiness Class are learning about resolving conflict on the job, how to be team players, and keeping positive/professional attitudes during difficult situations.

Campus Activities: Three other Schools for the Blind (Nebraska, New Mexico, and California) played in our CSDB Homecoming Goalball Tournament on Saturday, September 29th. The visiting schools also attended our homecoming dance and had a blast visiting our campus. White Cane Day was celebrated with face painting, goalball, and archery in the CSDB gym due to cold weather on October 15th. Students danced to numbers from the PRIDE Band and Bulldog Bands. A student speaker and guest speaker also entertained the crowd during the official program. Parent Braille Class has begun. We have 5 parents signed up for the fall session. We will be offering our first advanced parent braille class in the Spring!

Lunch in the Dark at CSDB – December 5, 2018;

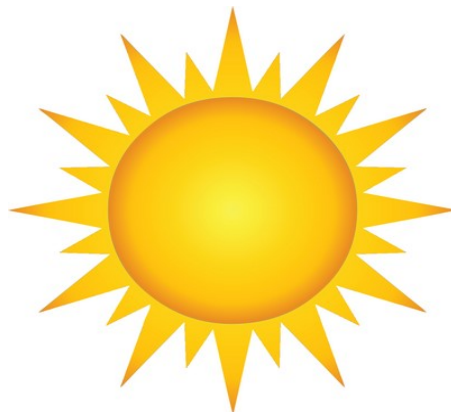
Important Dates to Hold: Braille Challenge: Thursday, January 17, 2019 *and* Cane Quest: Friday, May 3, 2019

Carol Hilty, the CSDB superintendent, is in a transition year. There is currently a Superintendent Search underway. There is a search agency in charge of the recruitment for candidates. The search firm is Ray and Associates.

CSDB Outreach Services (Jayme Cusimano)

Key Events:

- CSDB Outreach is working with a team of TVIs in the Metro area to plan an Orientation and Mobility event in the Denver area. There are several ideas that are being considered and as soon as one is chosen we will get the word out for people to attend. CSDB will be hosting a short course (Thursday – Saturday) this year; dates are still being discussed.
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- The iAdvocate Camp will take place June 16-20th 2019. This is for middle school/ high school students focusing on the expanded core curriculum.
- The Council of Schools for the Blind have a nationwide Outreach group and that they met recently as a related meeting in Louisville during APH's Annual Meeting. Colorado was represented. Jim can speak to this as needed.
- Braille Challenge: Diane Covington will be sending out Braille Challenge information via Constant Contact on November 12, 2018. If you are not signed up for Constant Contact email updates from CSDB you can sign up on the website (www.csdb.org).



- Laura Douglas sent a CSDB Regional Student Activity Funds form to Special Education Directors in the state. The purpose of Student Activity Mini-grant Funds is to support educational staff in offering activities that allow students who are DHH or BVI to come together to engage in educationally related activities. For the 2018-19 school year, the maximum funding for a regional activity will be \$400.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: this grant project has been funded for another five years! The grant is funded from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2023. The project's mission is free technical assistance to parents and services providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are deaf-blind 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. Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are the Project Co-Directors.

Project Staff: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera coordinate the grant project. We have three Technical Assistance Specialists. Callie Robinson is hired to do specific work on the topic of interveners. She is building networking opportunities for our existing interveners and information materials on the role of the interveners. Kathryn Daniels and Wendy Stoltman are Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists for the project. Kathryn and Wendy provide onsite 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

Annual Deaf-Blind Census: The December 1, 2018 Census registration packet will be sent out to administrative unit contacts in mid-November. If you have a new student with combined vision and hearing loss, please be in touch with Tanni or Gina. Please note that 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. This can be child-specific consultation and customized staff training.

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

Summer Institute / Trainings: The 2018 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs was on June 26-27, 2018. Mark Campano trained on *How We All Learn: The Brain, the Body, and Communication*. We had over 100 participants.

A second summer training occurred on August 3-4 on the topic of Get Ready - Get Set: Write – Read - Communicate - GO! Dr. Gretchen Hanser and Dr. Caroline Musselwhite were our presenters.

Our final training activity occurred in September with two separate trainings by Phil Schweigert on the *Communication Matrix*.

Western Region Early Intervention Conference: Colorado will be the host site of the WREIC on September 11-13, 2019. This conference is a long standing event sponsored by early childhood agencies / deaf-blind projects in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. There are strands specific to BVI, DHH, and DB.

CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment: This year's conference was sponsored with funds from the last cycle of the CO Deaf-Blind Grant. It was held in September with featured speakers Dr. MaryAnn Demchak and Chevonne Sutter. The topic was *Responding to Challenging Behaviors of Students w/ Disabilities, Including Sensory Impairments: A Function-Based Approach*. We had a great turn out for this training and got started on an important and complex topic.

Ongoing information about behavioral supports will be shared via the newsletter and listserv over the course of this school year. The goal is to equalize information on this topic across the state.

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: The 2018 CDE O&M Seminar was held on May 4-5, 2018 in the Denver area. The focus is on *Being Mindful, Working on Balance, and Addressing Needs of Learners with Additional Disabilities*. Susan Chandler trained on balance / body work on Friday, May 4th. Dr. Wendy Sapp trained on O&M for learners with deaf-blindness and other disabilities on Saturday, May 5th.

The dates, location, and topics of the 2019 O&M Seminar have yet to be determined. It is anticipated it will be held in late April 2019 with a focus on adapted mobility devices, cane repair, and possibly wheel chair travel.

CDE Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: Four Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have been planned / scheduled for this school year. Funding is both in the CDE BVI budget and the CDE funded activities through the CIMC. They have or will be held in the Northern, Metro, and Southern regions. We are taking the year off for the Western Region Clinic. The most recent clinics that have been done are in the southern and northern regions. We thank Debbie Haberkorn as the Southern LVE Clinic Coordinator and Carol Love and Liz Weider as the Northern LVE Clinic Coordinators. We thank our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Team of Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, Jim Olson, and Debbie Haberkorn.

Recruitment and Retention: We have filled several positions at the Adams 12 School District, Anchor Center for Blind Children, A Shared Vision, CSDB, Brighton School District, Summit School District, and Cherry Creek School District. We have openings in Denver Public School District, Weld 6 School District, and contract work up north. It is anticipated there will be an opening in Falcon School District in the next school year. CDE has an active job posting for Colorado TVI / COMS jobs with AERBVI and specific to COMS jobs with ACVREP.

Listserves: The CDE ESSU maintains three separate listservs specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMSs. The second one is specific to Colorado braillists. The third is specific to Colorado TVIs and braillists. It is important to remind all users of these listservs that personally identifiable information (PII) on students and parents should never be posted in any listserv messages. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.

Parent Database: We currently have about 226 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,214 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.

0-5 Vision Screening Committee: The CDE is updated its *0-5 Vision Screening Guidelines*. Committee members include Tanni Anthony, Paula Landry, and Wendy Stoltman from our TVI community. The work of this committee is ongoing.



Braille Competency: Tanni is working with a number of veteran and new TVIs to demonstrate initial braille competency. All TVIs who are new to the field are expected to demonstrate braille competency in their first year of employment in this role. If a TVI extends this date, the administrative unit of employment is at risk for a citation of noncompliance. A Practice Test is now posted on the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness website. It includes practice multiple choice items and braille samples.

BVI Coach/Mentor Project: We have three amazing veteran TVIs/O&M Specialists who can provide free technical assistance to school-based TVIs/Orientation and Mobility Specialists. They are Janet Anderson, Shelley Moats, and Wendy Stoltman. They are already working with three individuals in Colorado school districts. To request a coach / mentor, contact Tanni at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

O&M Service Provider Committee: All of the Service Support Providers who were involved in evaluation rubrics a few years back have been asked to update their materials. Tanni sent out an email to about 10 O&M Specialist in Colorado to be involved in this project and has heard back from two of them. Currently the plan is to work with these individuals on our next steps.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CDE BVI Budget for 2018-19: The budget was approved for its content and proposed costs. Funded activities included:

- Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- BVI Coach / Mentor Project
- CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment
- CDE O&M Seminar
- Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- Vision Coalition

Parent Need Survey: The survey results from the last year will be used to provide information to parents on key topics over the course of this school year. Key areas identified as (relative) high need by families for more information included: O&M, low vision, creating IEPs, friendships with other children daily care / independent living skills, career planning, secondary transition, and scholarships.

The respondents also indicated a need to have opportunities for their child to have social interactions with other children with visual impairment, including blindness. Another area of moderate to strong interest for family training events via face-to-face meetings or the use of distance technology included advocacy for their child, cooking and cleaning at home, O&M, and low vision devices.

Theme Trainings / Networking Opportunities

November / December 2018	Orientation and Mobility
January / February 2019	Individualized Education Program / Individual Family Services Plan
March 2019	Social Emotional Skills/ Developing Friendships
April / May 2019	Independent Living / Recreation

Each theme will be associated an identified period of time. During these time periods there will be content specific to that topic in the *Keeping in Touch* Newsletter. Also Tanni will open a listserv topic for the TVIs / Orientation and Mobility Specialists with an invitation for people to contribute articles, examples, and activities on that topic that can be shared across the field / specifically with parents. Anchor Center may have dedicated opportunities for these topics with parent groups. We also have the chance to identify / create materials on these topics for families of infants / toddlers. The goal is to provide information and materials for parents and caregivers.



Eye Report Form: The final version of the Example Template for Medical Eye Examination Report will be posted on the CDE webpages specific to Visual Impairment, Including Blindness.

Check it out at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

Paula Landry is working with our EIVI colleagues about the need to adapt this form for our infant/toddler population. Stay tuned!

Braille Math: There continues to be challenges with whether students are learning math in UEB and/or Nemeth. The challenges are tied to the lack of a UEB (math focus) transcriber course, readily available math textbooks in UEB, and State and College Board assessments in UEB. There is anecdotal information that new people to VI personnel prep programs are questioning why they have to learn both UEB and Nemeth. Our workforce who are well trained in Nemeth may be dwindling.

Jim Olson was just at the National Braille Association convention and this is a big topic across the country. There are concerns about the challenges of UEB having a well defined, multifaceted infrastructure of support after so many years after it was adopted as a braille code by the Braille Authority of North America. There was a discussion about reaching out to BANA with an appeal to support UEB with a transcriber course as a key first step. This may also be something for CAER to discuss and consider.

Learning Media Plan Form: There are concerns that Learning Media Plans are not being done in a comparable manner across Colorado. The Denver TVIs looked at the IEP drop down boxes to ask what information should be in each box. This was also a discussion in the northern region. The Vision Coalition discussed that the IEP is the document of a child's needs and programmatic goals – its content should be readily understood by the local team or a new team receiving the student. If the LMP is not readily understood as a child moves from one district to another, this is not for the common good of the child.

Assignment: Julie Hutchison will work with some of the northern TVIs to look at a template of the current elements of a LMP with examples of where the content can be found in the IEPs. This will get us started on a blueprint to assist with TVI consistency with the Learning Media Plan.

Eligibility for Visual impairment, Including Blindness: Tanni has sent information out to the field specific to the status of our proposed criteria language change. The proposed changes are currently being reviewed by special education directors. TVIs were asked for input based on the most current proposed language. To date, there are no recommended language changes, but a request for further discussion on assessments to determine eligibility and the definition of specially designed instruction.

The next discussion with the State Directors' Leadership Team (SDLT) will be at their January 25, 2019 meeting. Once the language is finalized, it will need to be determined when the ECEA Rules will be open for comment for this proposed language change.

There was considerable discussion on what is needed to be prepared for eligibility evaluations of students who may have other visual needs that what has been identified as Visual Impairment, including Blindness in the past. Of particular concern are learners with oculomotor challenges. The field of TVIs / O&M Specialist use Functional Vision protocols that do include observation of some oculomotor skills (fixation, tracking, shift of gaze, convergence, and divergence). There are, however, no standardized metrics for these observations. They are 'rough accounts' of what appears to be the child's ocular motility and quality of visual pursuits. There is no mechanism for quantifying saccades during reading tasks. The functional assessment of these skills has been traditionally done with learners with diminished acuity, field loss, and/or CVI. . Recommendations that have corresponded with such observations have classically involved the use of accommodations in the classroom. Current tools appear to be inadequate for students with convergence insufficiency or other binocular / eye teaming challenges.

Assignment: VC members will gather information from other fields to learn more about such metrics (occupational therapy / optometry) and whether they provide more confidence for school-based evaluation. This may well be a topic for our next meeting with invited guest speakers.

Resource Allocation Document: We are so grateful for the update of this tool. The current document has been field tested to some extent. It seems to be on track for most students, but may result in a higher service score for learners with visual impairment and additional disabilities. Tanni has some ideas about how to eliminate a tendency toward a higher service score. She will share this information with Amber, Nancy, and Julie as a next step. We will want to ensure this helps with a more accurate determination of service need.

CIMC Issues: There are a host of procedural topics with the registration of children and youth with visual impairment, as well as equipment dissemination. Quota money items should be checked out to students who are eligible for quota funds. The underlying goal is to support our students, as long as we follow the Quota / IDEA Federal Funding rules.

The Vision Coalition should be a response group for Jim to pose procedural questions to for more input. If something needs a vote, we will use our 5/3/1 voting mechanism. It was also thought that we may want to educate families on the “rules” and the procedures (specific to APH and the CIMC).

Assignment: Meeting with 0-2 EIVI providers and CIMC / CDE. Jim or Tanni will send out a doodle poll for this meeting. This is a target for the next quarter. In the interim, all EIVI entities should register kids. A goal is for registration by the first Monday of January. This is a registration of learners with legal blindness. The CIMC is working on a 0-2 tab on their website. This is a work in progress.

Assignment: Tanni and Jim will meet with appropriate personnel to discuss next step procedures specific to parent consent and privacy needs of the state count of all children and youth with blindness/visual impairment.

Braille Competency: There is a concern that some individuals are having difficulty demonstrating braille competency. There is a question as to whether Braille 1 is a first semester course in a university program. For individuals on a temporary authorization (they are in process with their teacher training program), they may not have the braille course in their first semester, which means it will not occur until to the first semester of their second year. This makes it hard for those individuals to demonstrate braille competency within their first year of employment, which is the current and longstanding expectation of the Colorado Department of Education.

Another concern, are candidates who are not able to demonstrate braille competency after taking and passing (with a letter grade of an A or a B) a university-level braille course. It is important to understand that a university braille course often has two key differences than our state test. Many university braille courses are taught on line with keyboard entry. The Colorado Braille Competency Test is completed with a braillewriter. It is probable that university students in a braille course may not have access to a braillewriter. A question is could we have a way to ensure that students in training have access to a braillewriter. It may be that we could figure out a loan system with the CIMC. Jim was amenable to this suggestion for those university students who are working in a Colorado TVI position on a temporary authorization.

The second key difference is that the Colorado braille competency test is designed to measure efficiency, as well as accuracy. As such, it is a timed test. While university braille courses have a set period for when assignments are submitted, the braille exercises are not completed under parallel time constraints. As such, it is important for candidates to have a steady diet of braille with the braillewriter under timed conditions as a way to prepare for their testing session with the CDE.

A final discussion item was how to support new personnel with experiences of inserting paper into the braillewriter, fixing a paper jam, making a clean erasure, etc. With personnel on TTEs, we can follow up with person in training / mentor support. This could be done in person or in zoom. If we have some existing videos on braillewriter use, these might be good additional to the CSDB video library. There may be a few existing videos that could assist with this goal from past trainings.

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. Tanni has asked everyone to let her know of expected vacancies for this next school year, in addition to the currently unfilled positions. At this point in time, it is expected that there may be up to 10 vacancies across our state.

A key strategy will be an organized recruitment effort. Key factors include:

- Proactive recruitment of personnel training programs in the winter/ spring of the school year
- Specific recruitment target of personnel with BA degrees
- Specific recruitment target of personnel who have had experiences with learners with blindness/visual impairment and/or significant support needs and/or the fields of TVI / O&M Specialists

Steps for Recruitment

- Anticipate vacancies – be in the know of expected retirements
- Develop recruitment materials such as a “recruitment module” to use for presentations
- Be deliberate with recruitment efforts of both undergraduate and MA level educators
 - * Provide experience with students with visual impairments, including learners with additional disabilities
 - * Provide experience with TVIs and/or O&M Specialists
- Deliberately appeal to undergraduates
 - * Community Colleges (with a prepared module)
 - * Extended Campus - UNC
 - * Career Center
 - * Finding undergrads to come to VI specific events
- Explore tuition reimbursement / incentive pay through CDE ESSU
- Explore funding sources such as the Lions Club to sponsor graduate training
- Work with HR to:
 - * Honor years of teaching experience – do not cap an expert teaching of veteran personnel
 - * Hire personnel on temporary authorizations
 - * Increase salary of personnel who are dual certified as TVIs / O&M Specialists
- Utilize mentor supports for newly hired personnel
- Be a host site for a practicum or intern student (both in and out of state)
- Contact university programs in January – detailing Colorado licensure requirements

Steps for Retention

- Work with Human Resources to:
 - * Honor years of teaching experience – do not cap an expert teaching of veteran personnel
 - * Increase salary of personnel who are dual certified as TVIs / O&M Specialists
- Define the role of the TVI for administrators
- Define the role of the Orientation and Mobility Specialists for administrators
- Identify reasonable caseload expectations
- Provide evaluation support documents to administrators
- 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 for the Vision Coalition:

February 7, 2019—location to be determined

April 25, 2019—location to be determined



colorado connections

- ◆ **Jennifer Holt** is a new TVI at the CSDB Employability Center. She works in the Bridges to Life Transition program working with students who are 18 to 21 years old; teaching them about how to live life independently after leaving the School for the Blind. She obtained her degree from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Jennifer holds a Bachelor's degree in Music Education and taught music for three years in Harrison School District #2 in Colorado Springs. Jennifer was born with congenital glaucoma and is legally blind herself, Jennifer decided to teach students who are blind and visually impaired, so that she could give guidance to students who are going through similar situations that she has gone through in her own life.
- ◆ Congratulations to **JC Greeley** and **Mindy McCall** on their publication of *Teaching Life Differently: The Expanded Core Curriculum for Babies and Young Children with Visual Impairment*, which is a resource for educators, therapists, and parents. It provides information about the importance of teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to young children with visual impairment. Most of you know JC, but if you do not, she is a world class early childhood expert in the field of blindness/visual impairment. JC was a founder of the Anchor Center for Blind Children. Mindy has been a physical therapist with the Anchor Center for 30 years. JC is now retired and Mindy is still working at the Anchor Center.

Other key contributing authors to the book are **Carol Benson Puchalski, Zoe Morgese, Paula Landry, Louanna Gerleman, Pat Lewis, Amanda Bryant, Erin Higgins, and Karen Roberts**. A real Colorado effort! This valuable resource has been sent to Colorado administrative units with employed TVIs for their use with young children. It was published by Perkins School for the Blind and Anchor Center for Blind Children.

- ◆ Congratulations to the NFB of Colorado for another successful Annual State Convention. This was their 64th Convention! The NFB message is: "The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacle between blind people and their dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what hold you back." Congrats to **Scott LeBarre**, President of NFBCO, and all of the people who worked so hard to host such a successful event.

CO TVIs were in also attendance of the conference. **Tanni Anthony** provided an update on Expecting and Ensuring the Highest Quality for Blind Children in Colorado. **Nancy Cozart** gave a speech on *Fighting for Blind Children in the Trenches: The Perspective of a TVI*. **Paula Conroy** and **Amber Rundle Kahn** provided a training on *Blindness and Behavior: A Case Study*. This training was sponsored by the CO AER Chapter. Other TVIs participating in the convention included: **Sally Burch, Barb Galgano, Jeannie Lei, Pat Lewis, Marty Rahn, Will Reynolds, and Trina Boyd Pratt**.

- ◆ Congratulations to **Jill Bookwalter** of DPS for earning her CDE Certificate of Braille Competency!
- ◆ **Tanni Anthony** traveled to the Southwest O&M Conference in Austin, Texas in early November as an attendee and a presenter. She came back with some great next step ideas for our CDE O&M Seminar. Stay tuned as it gets organized!

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