

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

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

(303) 866-6681 (voice)
(303) 866-6918 (fax)
E-mail: anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
January—February 2019

SPECIAL OPHELIA


By Tanni L. Anthony

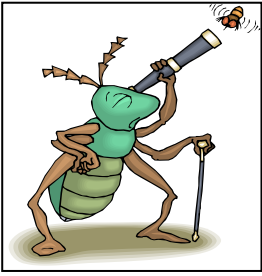
On one of our trips to Kauai a few years back, my husband and I went to a favorite outdoor restaurant called the Fish Hut. This is a delightful place where you order your food as a take away. There are picnic tables in front of the Fish Hut where most of their customers take a moment to eat right there in the sun and under the palm trees. Depending on the local crowd, it is likely you might share a table with other people. We found a space at a table and soon a family of four joined the table at the other end.

As I waited for our lunch, it was impossible not to listen to their family conversation. The mom was talking about that it would soon be time to start school again. The oldest sister, about 8, was a voice of experience to her younger brother, who seemed to be about six and new to the school experience. Somehow the conversation turned to kids with disabilities who also went to their school. The daughter made a comment about those kids being stupid. I tensed up and had a 10 second debate about whether sharing a picnic table was license for comment / advocacy / information. Fortunately, the mother was quick to prevail and educate her daughter that the kids were not stupid, but that they needed help and that is why they were in special ed. Then the young boy, said, "Why do they call it special Ed? Aren't there other kids who need it besides Ed?" Luckily, they called my food order and I could turn away before my chuckle came forth.

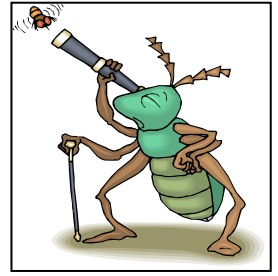
What a concept! Special Ophelia, Special Sam, Special Andrew, Special Maria! I like that idea. We want every child's education to be special with a focus on attending to their unique abilities and needs ... not just for those kids who happen to be named Ed! Not for just kids who are eligible for special education services and supports. Every Child. Getting an Education that Meets Their Own Special Needs. That is Special Education at its Best!

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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

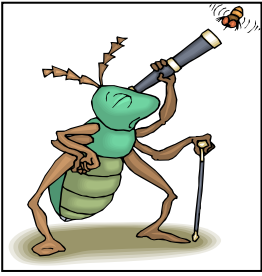
Northern LVE Clinic

By Debbie Haberkorn

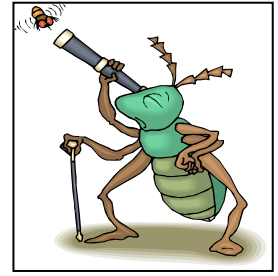
The Northern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held Thursday, November 8th at the Ensign Skills Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Five students from four Administrative Units (Boulder County St. Vrain Valley RE-1J, Boulder County Boulder Valley RE-2, Larimer County Poudre R-1, and Larimer County Thompson R2-J) received evaluations. Five parents and five TVIs (Sally Burch, Vicki Chinski, Sarah Goodfellow, Julia Hutchinson, and Teresa O'Brien) attended the evaluation with their students. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank the staff of the Ensign Skills Center for their willingness to host the clinic. The team would like to express our sincere appreciation to Carol Love and Liz Weider. The clinic ran very smoothly thanks to their hard work. Thank you to all the TVIs and parents who brought students!

Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Rubric for Students

	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.

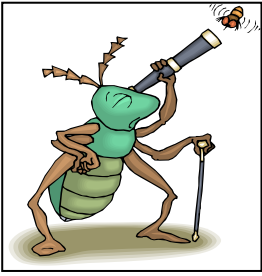
Please be aware that only Colorado public school students with a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) can participate in the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics, which are funded with federal IDEA funds.



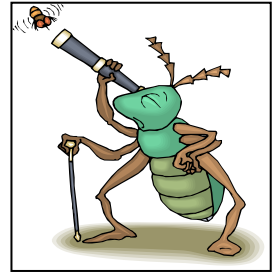
The goal of the Colorado Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics is to provide an examination that details whether your student / child will benefit from low vision devices that can be used in school, at home, and in the community. The student should be determined to have low vision ahead of the clinic 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."

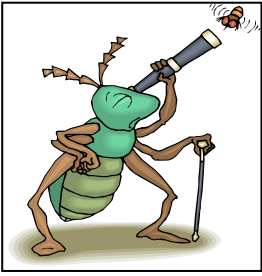
Finally picture our low vision therapists, Jim Olson and Wendy Stoltman, reading the submitted Parent and TVI Pre-Evaluation Form content detailing the history, abilities, and functional needs of each student. This information guides the game plan further for the upcoming low vision evaluation - what 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.

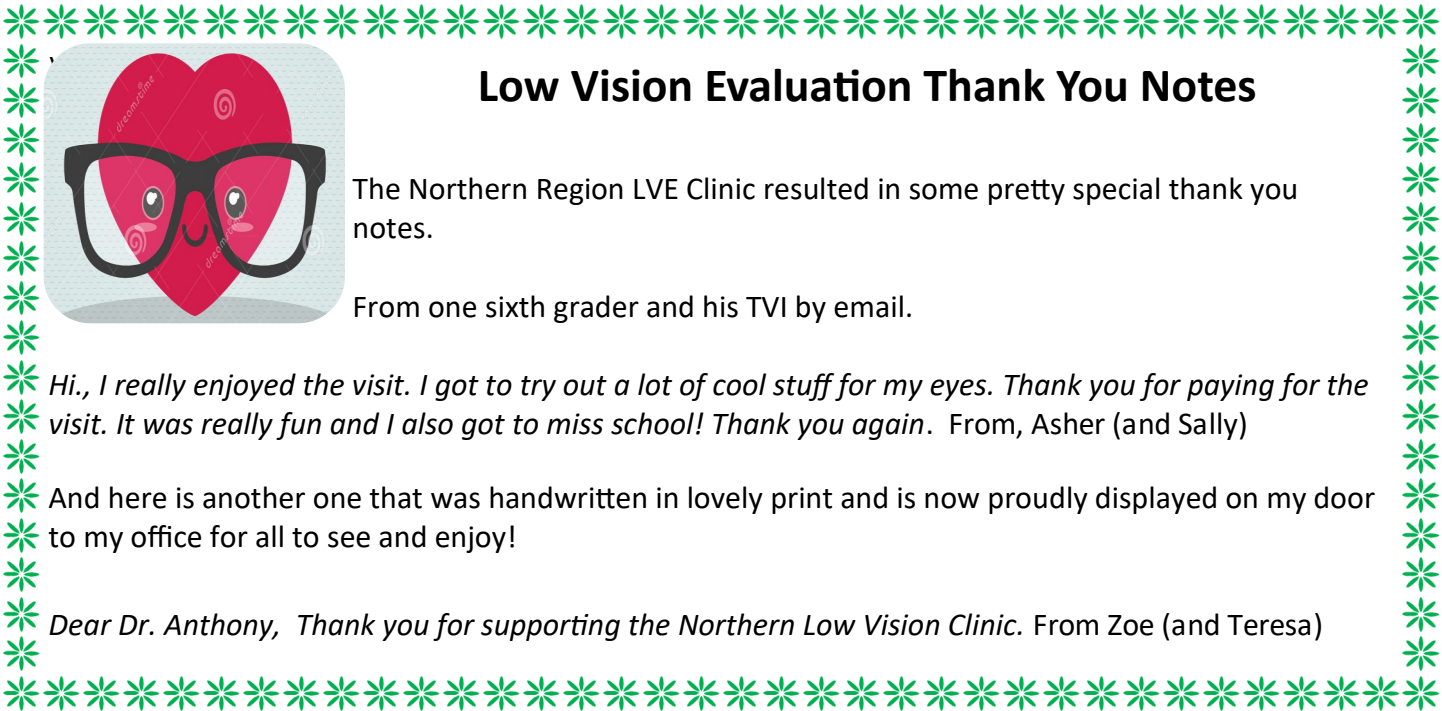
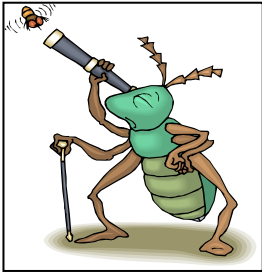
Simply put, the clinic paperwork is about needed information and a courtesy to our LVE team who are dedicated to providing a thorough and meaningful evaluation of each child. If you plan on bringing a student to one of the regional clinics, please understand this expectation. Schedule time well ahead 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!





LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Low Vision Evaluation Thank You Notes

The Northern Region LVE Clinic resulted in some pretty special thank you notes.

From one sixth grader and his TVI by email.

Hi., I really enjoyed the visit. I got to try out a lot of cool stuff for my eyes. Thank you for paying for the visit. It was really fun and I also got to miss school! Thank you again. From, Asher (and Sally)

And here is another one that was handwritten in lovely print and is now proudly displayed on my door to my office for all to see and enjoy!

Dear Dr. Anthony, Thank you for supporting the Northern Low Vision Clinic. From Zoe (and Teresa)

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

Addressing Young Children's Challenging Behaviors includes discussions of developmentally appropriate innovations in addressing needs of children with challenging behaviors. Practitioner and family-friendly, evidence-based articles include topics such as tiered models of support, peer environments, visual supports, family-centered interventions and partnerships, coaching, culturally responsive methods, and implementation practices.

SNEAK PEEK

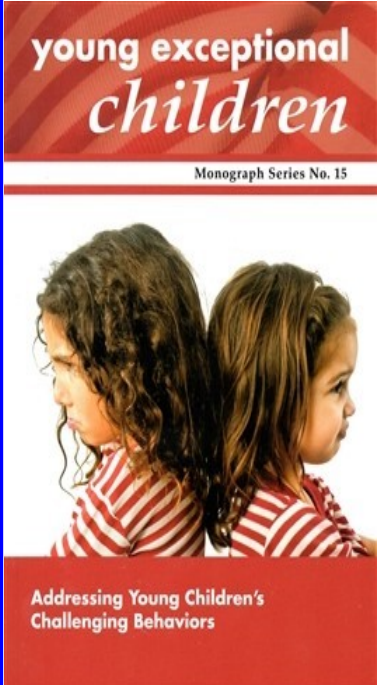
Get a FREE download: Read the first 5 pages of YEC 15!

http://media.wix.com/ugd/e37417_8808e98e1abe47e9a6511305722ab2d2.pdf

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To order your copy, follow the link below:

<http://www.dec-sped.org/product-page/young-exceptional-children-monograph-no-15-addressing-young-children-s>



Behavior and Mental Health Supports

Schools and Districts can Receive Training on Positive Behavior Supports

One of the strongest refrains from 35,000 Colorado teachers who participated in the 2018 Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado survey was a call for more training and time to deal with students' social and emotional learning. Social and emotional learning, or SEL, is defined as the process through which people learn the skills necessary to understand and manage emotions. It incorporates setting and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing empathy for others and knowing how to effectively establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

Roughly half of the teachers who responded to the statewide survey earlier this year said they don't have adequate time to support their students' social and emotional learning. And a third of the teachers said they haven't received adequate professional development in social and emotional learning.

"It is important," said Lynne DeSousa, Colorado's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) state-wide coordinator. "The number one reason students are excluded from school is because of their behaviors – disruption and not being compliant. In addition, many teachers who leave the profession cite student behavior, more specifically a lack of respect, as one of the top reasons for their change of jobs, DeSousa said. These behaviors could be addressed through social and emotional learning. The Colorado Academic Standards include emotional and social wellness in the Comprehensive Health & Physical Education content area. The Emotional and Social Wellness Standard includes mental, emotional and social health skills that enable a student to:

- Recognize and manage emotions, develop care and concern for others; establish positive relationships; make responsible decisions; handle challenging situations constructively; resolve conflicts respectfully; manage stress; and make ethical and safe choices.
- Examine internal and external influences on mental and social health
- Identify common mental and emotional health problems and their effect on physical health.

CDE has developed a framework that can help connect students to effective behavioral supports to enhance social emotional learning. The PBIS webpage features ideas for teaching expectations, lesson plan templates and a schoolwide behavior/teaching matrix.

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

Schools and districts that wish to receive training and technical assistance on PBIS from CDE can reach out to Dr. Scott Ross, director of CDE's Office of Learning Supports at 303-866-6853 or ross_s@cde.state.co.us

Individual Education Programs (IEP)

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

By Tanni Anthony

Author's Note: The basic content of this article can be found on the website of Parent Information and Resources at <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/iep-overview/>. Additional content has been added to each section to provide more detail and customize to learners who have visual impairment. The Questions and Answers (Q&A) on U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1 document and the ECEA Rules were used as resources.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet the individual needs of a child who is eligible for special education services and supports. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), our federal special education law, every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. This is why the process of developing this vital document is of great interest and importance to educators, administrators, and families alike. The IEP is for learners who are public school age. In Colorado, this is age three up to age 21 years for students with disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements for special education services and supports.

What's the IEP's Purpose? The IEP has two general purposes: (1) to set learning goals for a child that are appropriately ambitious and (2) to describe the services that the school district will provide for the child.

Who Develops the IEP? The IEP is developed by a team of individuals that includes key school staff, the child's parents, and as appropriate, the student. Students are encouraged to attend their IEP meetings and contribute to the development of the IEP. Many districts are working on a process of student-led IEPs, which is a wonderful way for the student to self advocate. The team meets, reviews the assessment information available about the child, and designs an educational program to address the child's educational needs that result from his or her disability. For children with visual impairment, including blindness, the IEP team will most often include a teacher certified in the area of visual impairment and an orientation and mobility specialist. Sometimes this is the same person who has gone to school for both credentials.

When is the IEP Developed? The initial IEP must be developed within 90 calendar days of written parental consent for a child's full and individual evaluation. It is through this evaluation, that a child may be identified as having one of the disabilities listed in IDEA and will benefit from special education and, as appropriate, related services. Most often students who are blind/visually impaired fall into one of three eligibility categories. If the primary disability is blindness/visual impairment, the eligibility category may be "visual impairment, including blindness." If the child has additional disabilities, the eligibility category may be "multiple disabilities." If the child is also deaf/hard of hearing, the eligibility category may be "deaf-blindness." These are three of 13 eligibility categories for special education services.

A child's IEP must also be reviewed at least annually to determine whether the student has achieved the annual goals set by the IEP Team and to revise the IEP, as appropriate, to meet the student's unique needs. The IEP Team may meet more often than once a year, if circumstances warrant it.

What's in an IEP? Each child's IEP must contain specific information. This includes (but is not limited to):

- ◆ **The child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).** The PLAAFP describes how the child is currently doing in school and how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

Individual Education Programs (IEP)

The general education curriculum is for all students and is aligned to the State's grade level academic standards (Colorado Academic Standards / Extended Evidence Outcomes) in key subject areas. This section describes the child's strengths and disability-related needs to demonstrate how the child's disability impacts learning. This section of the IEP is very important because it sets the stage for the annual goals.

- ◆ **Annual goals for the child, meaning what parents and the school team think the child can reasonably accomplish in a year.** The IEP must include annual goals that aim to improve educational results and functional performance for each child with a disability. The goals should be appropriately ambitious in light of the child's circumstances. The goals must also be measurable. A measurable goal is one that describes: (a) the target behavior wanted for the child to learn, increase, and/or master; (b) what level of performance is expected for the child's success, (c) the condition under which data can be collected, and (d) the frequency of the data collection.

SMART goals are often recommended as a way to ensure the goal is specific to the child and measurable. Each letter in SMART offers guidance to how best to write a meaningful IEP goal for each child.

Stands For	What Each Word Means	Example of a Non-SMART IEP Goal	Example of a SMART IEP Goal
S pecific	The goal is specific in naming the skill or subject area and the targeted result.	Diana will improve her braille reading skills.	By November 2019, when given a 2nd grade reading leveled passage, Diana will be orally read the passage, 70– 75 words per minute, with no more than four errors in 4 of 5 consecutive trials.
M easure-able	The goal is stated in a way that the child's progress can be measured.	With the aid of a talking calculator, Oliva will be able to solve math problems.	By November 2019, when given a talking calculator, Oliva will accurately solve 8 out of 10, double digit, addition and subtraction problems.
A ttainable	The goal represents progress that is realistic for the child.	Stephen will accurately write at grade level using correct spelling and punctuation.	By November 2019, when given a writing prompt, Stephen will write a five sentence paragraph, each sentence greater than eight words, with no more than two braille contraction errors in spelling and punctuation in 3 out of 4 trials.
R ealistic R elevant R esults- O riented	The goal clearly lays out what your child will do to accomplish it.	Anthony David will demonstrate appropriate size, spacing, and/or letter formation using bold markers and bold line paper.	By November 2019, when given writing activity instructions, Anthony David will demonstrate appropriate size, spacing, and letter formation in a full page of written content using bold line markers and paper with no more than five errors, on 4 out of 5 opportunities.
T ime B ound	The goal includes a time frame in which the child will achieve it with the right supports and services. It also states when and how often progress will be measured.	Mikala will count by tens, hundreds, and thousands using the abacus.	By November 2019, Mikala will count by tens, hundreds, and thousands using the abacus, with 90 percent accuracy, on 8 out of 10 trials.

Individual Education Programs (IEP)

- ◆ **The special education and related services to be provided to the child.** This includes supplementary aids and services (such as a communication or magnification device) and changes to the program or supports for school personnel. Once a child is eligible for special education services, the IEP team will determine the need for related services.

Related services is the term for those services a child with a disability needs in order to benefit from special education. Children with blindness/visual impairment may be candidates for a variety of related services such as orientation and mobility, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. If the child is deaf-blind, he or she may also receive audiology services and/or educational interpreter services. Every child is unique and, as such, special education and related services must be customized to the needs of each individual child.

A special consideration for all students with blindness/visual impairment is the need for a Learning Media Plan. The Learning Media Plan is a Colorado State requirement. The written IEP for each child with a visual impairment, including blindness shall include a Learning Media Plan as developed by the IEP team based on comprehensive assessment of the student's learning and literacy modalities by a licensed teacher endorsed in the area of visual impairment. Braille shall be the literacy medium selected unless the IEP team determines, based on the comprehensive literacy learning media assessment that instruction in braille is not appropriate.

The Learning Media Plan shall include the following: (a) a statement of how the selected learning and literacy mode or modes will be implemented as the student's primary or secondary mode for achieving literacy and why such mode or modes have been selected, (b) a statement of how the student's instruction in the selected learning and literacy mode or modes will be integrated into educational activities; (c) the date on which the student's instruction in the selected mode or modes shall commence, the amount of instructional time to be dedicated to each learning and literacy mode, and the service provider responsible for each area of instruction, and (d) a statement of the level of competency in each selected learning and literacy mode or modes which the student should achieve by the end of the period covered by the IEP. Further, the Learning Media Plan has a section to confirm that the Colorado teacher licensed and endorsed in the area of Visual Impairment working in public schools has demonstrated competency in reading and writing literary braille per the guidelines developed by the Colorado Department of Education.

- ◆ **How much of the school day the child will be educated separately from nondisabled children or not participate in extracurricular or other nonacademic activities such as lunch or clubs.** Some students will spend their full school days in the general education classroom with mostly nondisabled peers. Other children may receive most of their daily instruction in a classroom for children with disabilities. Others may attend a day or residential school, such as the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB). Each placement decision is unique to each child and must be based on his or her needs detailed in the IEP.
- ◆ **How (and if) the child is to participate in state and district-wide assessments.** If a district has an assessment for all children in a particular grade(s), then it is required that children with disabilities participate in those assessments. In Colorado, state assessments begin in the third grade in the subjects of English Language Arts and Mathematics. All students in the grades of state assessments should participate in either in the general or alternate assessments.

Individual Education Programs (IEP)

There are two different types of state assessments across grades and subject areas. One is the general assessment and one is alternate assessment. The general assessment is for the majority of all school children in each grade level of a state assessment. This assessment is tied to grade level academic standards. In Colorado, they are called the Colorado Academic Standards. The state assessments are tied to the Colorado Academic Standards in the subjects of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

The general state assessments can be taken with or without accommodations. Assessment accommodations are based on instructional accommodations. This means the child is using the accommodation during his or her routine instruction. For example, braille is an accommodation. Braille is a code of embossed symbols that convey a written message. If a child is a braille reader and writer, his or her textbooks and instructional materials are provided in braille. As such, the child has continual practice in the use of braille and it will not be new to the child on the day of assessment. It should be a practiced accommodation.

Accommodations change how information is presented or demonstrated, but not the content of this information. For example, the braille test has the same information that the print test has. For both instructional and state assessment purposes, braille does not change the content of what the child learns and is being tested upon through an assessment. It simply reflects the way the child reads and writes. This accommodation is allowed on state assessments for that very reason, it does not change what is being measured by the test. The same is true for large print or the use of magnification.

The second type of state assessment is the alternate assessment. Children who participate in alternate assessments are learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Some children with blindness /visual impairment will be eligible to participate in an alternate assessment because of their additional disabilities. If a child qualifies to take a state alternate assessment, it means he or she will have instruction based on alternate achievement standards. These standards are modified, which means they have different content expectations. Modifications change what is learned. In Colorado, we call our alternate achievement standards the Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEO). Alternate assessments also have approved accommodations that should be noted in the IEP.

Instructional accommodations, the type of state test the child will take (if there are state assessments in the child's identified grade), and allowable assessment accommodations should be documented in the IEP.

When services and modifications will begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last. Special education services involve specially designed instruction, which is adapting, as appropriate, to the needs of the child, the content, the methodology, or delivery of instruction to ensure access of the child to the general education curriculum. Specially designed instruction is individualized to each child. The IEP will identify who will provide specially designed instruction, as well as identify any related services, including the amount of time allocated for each related service.

For learners with blindness/visual impairment, specially designed instruction may also include content from the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). The ECC provides a framework for instruction in a specialized set of skills for students who are blind or visually impaired. It addresses certain areas in which they need specific instruction because of their vision loss. These areas are referred to as the Expanded Core

Individual Education Programs (IEP)

Curriculum: Compensatory Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Social Interaction, Independent Living, Recreation and Leisure, Sensory Efficiency, Assistive Technology, Career Education, and Self-Determination. A teacher certified in the area of visual impairment and, as appropriate, the Orientation and Mobility Specialist will be key providers of content tied to the ECC.

- ◆ **How school personnel will measure the child's progress toward the annual goals.** Determining an appropriate and challenging level of progress is an individualized determination that is unique to each child. When making this determination, the IEP Team must factor the child's present level of performance and other considerations, such as the child's previous rate of growth and other information provided by the child's parents. The child's educational team must offer an IEP that is reasonably calculated to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances. Each goal should be written with appropriate specificity to measure the child's progress. The IEP Team may meet periodically through the course of a school year, if circumstances warrant the need to examine why a child is not making expected progress on annual IEP goals.

In summary, an important purpose in writing the IEP is sometimes called the golden thread. The golden thread tells a connected story by linking one IEP section to another; providing an interwoven start, middle, and end to the document. The IEP begins with a comprehensive evaluation of the child that confirms the presence of an educational disability and identifies the child's educational needs. These evaluation results, which include testing and observation of the child, provide information that are then reflected in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). The PLAAFP must give sufficient detail on how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, as well as the strengths and needs of the child. The PLAAFP should also examine the child's progress on previous IEP goals. Someone who does not know the child should be able to draw a basic and meaningful understanding of why the child needs and will benefit from special education simply by reading the PLAAFP. The information provided in the PLAAFP is critical to the development of appropriate and measurable goals. Specially designed instruction, instructional accommodations and modifications should be designed to support the child in reaching their annual goals and documented with sufficient specificity in the IEP. The IEP team will use the identified methods and criteria for measuring a child's expected progress on the goals. The child's progress on IEP goals will be examined as part of the review and revision of the IEP during the child's next annual review, or earlier if the progress expected is not achieved. Remember that the IEP is a working document and can be revisited between annual reviews at the request of a team member.

Important IEP Resources

For parents.

Take a look at Developing Your Child's IEP and learn how to effectively work with schools to meet the needs of your child. <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/pa12/>

For students.

Part of their Transition Suite, this collection of resources speaks directly to students in transition. <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/student-involvement/>

Individual Education Programs (IEP) Resources

The following are IEP Resources on the Colorado Department of Education webpage.

Colorado IEP Forms

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/iep_forms

- Procedural Safeguards
- IEP Review
- Eligibility
- Disability Categories and Eligibility Criteria
- Supporting Documents

IEP Facilitation

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/fiep>

- Frequently asked questions regarding IEP facilitation

IEP Facilitation Trainings

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/fieptrain>

- Training information and events

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/iep>

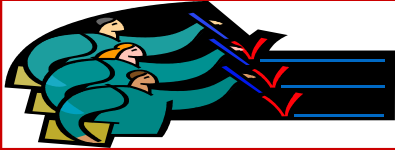
- Parent Resources: Parent-specific information regarding the IEP process.
- Additional Information: Scheduling Training about the IEP or Special Education Processes
- Additional Information: Colorado Recommended Special Education Forms or the IEP and Data Management System (Enrich)

Resources - Individualized Education Program (IEP)

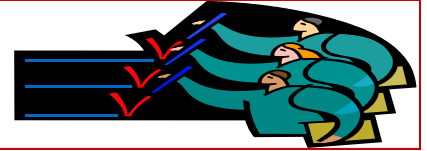
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/iep_resources

- IEP Process Procedural Guidance
- Writing Standards-Aligned ALPs and IEPs: A Supplemental Guidance Document
- Extended School Year Determination Webinar
- YODeL (Your On-Demand eLearning Library)
- Additional IEP Resources





CHECK IT OUT!



U.S. Department of Education Seeks Comments on New Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Website

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is seeking input from users of the IDEA.ed.gov website as part of their effort to provide updated, easy-to-navigate IDEA resources to children with disabilities and their families, teachers, administrators, advocates, and other stakeholders.

To help facilitate this effort, OSERS has posted a blog for users of the IDEA website to provide comments. OSERS continue efforts to improve their online resources as part of their commitment to ensure that infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families have the supports and services they are entitled to under the IDEA.

https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2017/03/departments-of-education-seeks-comments-on-new-idea-website/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

Save the Date!

SUMMER CONFERENCE

June 10



June 11

The Colorado Department of Education's SWAAAC program and Assistive Technology Partners are proud to announce the 2019 SWAAAC Summer Conference

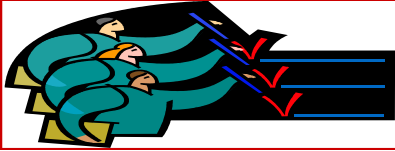
ADAMS 12 CONFERENCE CENTER—1500 E. 128th Avenue, Thornton, CO 80241

This two-day conference features workshops and break-out sessions with internationally renowned trainers. In addition to the sessions, participants will enjoy an awards ceremony, professional networking, and an opportunity to earn graduate credit through Adams State College.

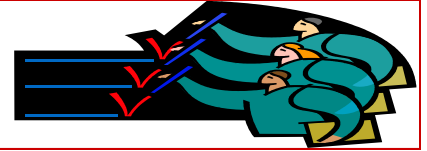
Outreach Space Camp Scholarship Applications now available

Space Camp for Interested students with visual impairments is just 8 months away. It will be held on September 29 to October 3, 2019. Applications are available for Northrop-Grumman, Delta Gamma, and Lighthouse Visions Scholarships at <http://www.scivis.org>. Please pay attention to the specifications for each scholarship and do not apply if the student does not qualify.

Please use this email for all future correspondence: scivis@atlanticbb.net



CHECK IT OUT!



iCanConnect

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

iCanConnect

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), also known as iCanConnect (ICC) is a federal grant that provides free telecommunications equipment and training to those who qualify. There is no minimum or maximum age requirement, just that the person can benefit from this technology that allows for sending an email, texting, chatting on the phone, communicating through online tools, such as Facetime, Skype, Facebook, etc.

iCanConnect provides free equipment including smartphones, tablets, computers, screen readers, braille displays, and more to individuals who meet federal disability and income guidelines.

Each person receives an individual assessment to determine the best equipment solutions.

For more information or to receive an application, please contact JoAnne Hirsch, Communications Technology Program Manager, at (303) 866-2097 (voice), (720) 949-7457 (VP) or joanne.hirsch@state.co.us. Or go to the website of the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind (CCDHHDB) at <https://ccdhhdb.com/index.php/ctprogram/>.

Heather's Camp

Join us at this outdoor weekend adventure where youth who are blind or visually impaired can learn new skills, create friendships and build confidence with support and encouragement from mentors. Ages 7 to high school. Rookie Day for youth 6 and under accompanied by guardian 18 years or older children as desired.

Location: Estes Park – YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado

Check In: Friday, May 31, 9 am Administration Building

Camp Concludes: Sunday, June 2, Noon Twin Sisters Cabin

Register at www.heatherscamp.org

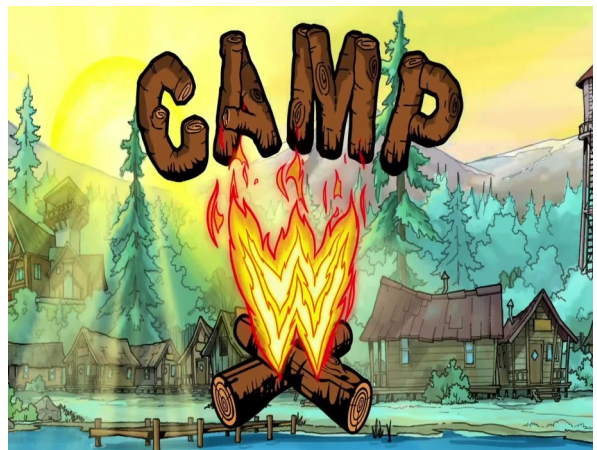
Registration opens January 1, 2019

Cost: Early Bird - \$75 (Before April 2) Full Price - \$125
(April 2 - May 2)

For more information please email

admin@heatherscamp.org

Lyndsey Metzen: (316) 737-2661 or Krista St-Germain



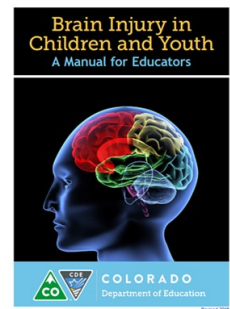
Resources and Materials

Brain Injury in Children and Youth: A Manual for Educators

The Colorado Department of Education is pleased to announce the 2018 edition of the [*Brain injury in Children and Youth: A Manual for Educators*](#) now available.

A copy of the manual can be downloaded here:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/tbi_manual_braininjury2018



Exciting news!

A new 211 for Children/Youth with Special Needs webpage has launched here: <https://211colorado.communityos.org/cms/node/369> . It is available in English and Spanish.

Get connected, Get Answers.

Live Chat available through website Monday—Friday, 8:00am—5:00pm

TEXT “myhealth” to 898-211

Call 2 - 1 - 1



Video on Person First Language

The Arc of Weld County is working with Sam Lawrence, the owner and producer of Visualize Results, a local multi-media communications production company. Sam is a local filmmaker from Fort Collins with autism. He created the film for The Arc of Weld County as his senior project for his visual arts degree.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWnMp07BqUQ>

Usher Syndrome Educational Videos

The Usher Syndrome Coalition is proud to present the "first ever" series of educational videos about Usher syndrome in American Sign Language (ASL). These videos will provide you with answers to the most commonly asked questions about Usher syndrome. For more information, please go to:

<http://www.usher-syndrome.org/what-is-usher-syndrome/about-usher-syndrome-in-asl.html>

Resources and Materials



High-Leverage Practices

In partnership with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR), the Council for Exceptional Children has developed and published a set of High Leverage Practice (HLPs) for special educators and teacher candidates. The HLPs are organized around four aspects of practice:

- ◆ Collaboration
- ◆ Assessment
- ◆ Social / Emotional / Behavioral
- ◆ Instruction

From these four aspects of practice, there are 22 practices intended to address the more critical practices that every K-12 special education teacher should master and be able to demonstrate. The selected practices are used frequently in classrooms and have been shown to improve student outcomes, if successfully implemented.

To download the document on *High Leverage Practices*, go to:

https://highleveragepractices.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Preface.Intro1_.pdf

For more details, go to this website to check out corresponding videos:

<https://highleveragepractices.org/>





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/>



On Saturday December 15th, 12 CAER members and family members, representing the various organizations serving the blind and visually impaired around Metro Denver came together to participate in our 3rd Annual Wreaths Across America Day.

Thank you Barb Galgano, Trina Boyd-Pratt, Kaitlin Lombardi, Heather Solberg, Mike Plansker, Sydney Plansker, Joe Darrow, Elise Darrow & Vincent Galgano.



Sydney Plansker placing wreaths



Joe Darrow saluting his Grandfather



Sydney Plansker and Vincent Galgano



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>



SAVE THE DATES

WESTERN REGION EARLY INTERVENTION CONFERENCE 2019

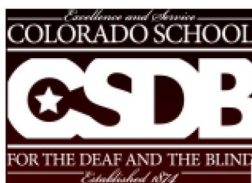
September 11-13, 2019

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:



For More Information
Contact Tanni Anthony at
Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



Calendar of Events

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

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 and COMS Meeting—CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
February 28	Science Conference on Employment for Individuals with BVIO Arlington, VA Contact: Amanda Kolling at akolling@afb.net
March 1	Deadline for the See the Future Scholarship Applications To apply go to: https://www.seethefuture.org/efl-app-info.html
March 2	National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and National Federation of the Blind scholarships Contact: jessica@nfbco.org (RSVP by February 27, 2019)
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 and 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
March 30	Spero Winery CAER Fund Raiser—Italian Dinner and Wine Tasting Contact: Barb Galgano bgalgano@cherrycreekschools.org
April 10	Southern Region TVI/DVR and COMS Meeting—CSDB Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
April 1	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
April 13	Mealtime Routines—CSDB Outreach Training Contact: Laura Douglas at ldouglas@csdb.org
April 25	Vision Coalition - Anchor Center for Blind Children Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us




Calendar of Events

2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019 2019

April 25	Metro TVI / COMS Meeting - location to be determined <u>Contact:</u> Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
May 8	Southern Region TVI/DVR & COMS Meeting —CSDB <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
May 16	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind (Tentative Date) <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
May 31- June 2	Heather’s Camp – Estes Park - YMCA of the Rockies , Estes Park, CO <u>Contact:</u> admin@heatherscamp.org
June 7,14, 21 & 28	Transitioning to Higher Education – Auraria Campus <u>Contact:</u> Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us
June 10-11	2019 SWAAAC Summer Conference – Adams 12 Conference Center Thornton, CO <u>Contact:</u> Christina Perkins at christina.perkins@ucdenver.edu
June 11	DVR Denver Metro Bake Off – DVR Denver Metro Office, Denver, CO <u>Contact:</u> Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us
June 16-20	The Advocate Camp —CSDB Campus (For middle school/ high school students focusing on the expanded core curriculum) <u>Contact:</u> Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
June 18	Fix it Academy – DVR Denver Metro Office, Denver, CO <u>Contact:</u> Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us
June 20	CAER Board Meeting – Colorado Center for the Blind <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
June 25	S.O.S: Strong Organizational Skills – Colorado Center for the Blind <u>Contact:</u> Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us
July 13	Usher Syndrome Connections Conference —Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, PA <u>Contact:</u> Krista Vasi K.vasi@usher-syndrome.org or (855) 99-USHER




Calendar of Events

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

- July 15-19 & July 22-26** **Earn your CRED Career Readiness Education and Discovery**—DVR Metro Office, Denver, CO
 Contact: Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us
- August 1** **Amazing RTD Race**—DVR Denver Metro Office, Denver, CO
 Contact: Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us
- September 11-13** **Western Region Early Intervention Conference**—Omni Hotel in Broomfield
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- September 29 - October 3** **Space Camp for Visually Impaired Students (SCIVIS)**
 Contact: Dan Oates scivis@atlanticbb.net; <http://www.scivis.org>; 304-851-5680

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>





Orientation & Mobility

Seeking feedback on revised Special Services Provider Rubric drafts

As part of the rubric revision process, significant changes have been made to all nine State Model Evaluation System Special Services Providers (SSP) rubrics at the standard, element and professional practice levels. This includes the rubric for School Orientation and Mobility Instructor. As a result, CDE is seeking feedback from educators on these rubric changes. Educators can provide feedback in one of two ways: in-person by attending a regional focus group or remotely via an online feedback form. All feedback must be provided by March 31. For more information, visit the State Model Evaluation System Revision webpage at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-revisions#ssp-rev>

NEW! O&M Trivia – available through Amazon Alexa® and the Google Assistant™

D-03480-AS: O&M Trivia (Amazon Skill) – Free

D-03480-GA: O&M Trivia (Google Action) – Free

O&M Trivia is a fun way to learn and reinforce orientation and mobility knowledge for people of all ages! Utilizing virtual assistant platforms, such as Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa, allows for easy access to this game in the home, the classroom, or on the go!

Cardinal directions, cane techniques, and landmarks are just a few of the topics covered within the game. Users can play alone, or with up to three additional players. Scores are calculated automatically for friendly competition. Game settings also allow users to select appropriate difficulty levels.

For **Google Assistant users**, invoke the game by saying: “Ok Google, talk to Orientation and Mobility Trivia.”

For **Amazon Alexa users**, invoke the game by saying: “Alexa, open O M Trivia.”

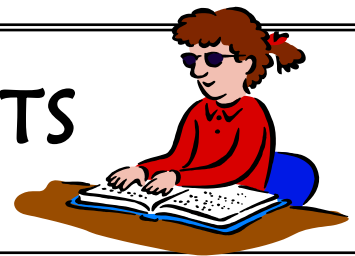
Note: Amazon does not allow the word “and” to be used when invoking a skill. Skill will need to be enabled on Amazon account.

New National O&M Association

There is a new Orientation and Mobility Specialists Association (OMSA). Here’s a link to a summary of their founding and some FAQs. <http://www.usomsa.org/live-stream-announcement-and-faqs/>



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

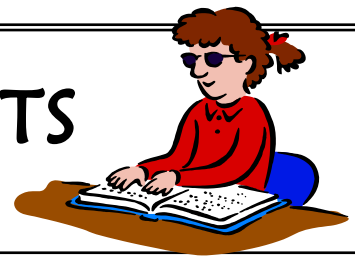
Braillewriter Repair

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





CONNECTING THE DOTS



REVISED! Illinois Braille Series

The Illinois Braille Series now addresses Unified English Braille (UEB) code. The Illinois Braille Series, a classic program for teaching literary braille to former print readers, now teaches UEB code, and is also now a two-volume set instead of three.

Designed to introduce braille code to adult individuals transitioning from print to braille literacy, the Illinois Braille Series continues to include raised print letters, braille, tracking guidelines, practice activities, writing drills, and an interesting variety of reading selections. The two-volume set progresses from uncontracted to contracted braille.

5-17230-02 Illinois Braille Series, Book I, Uncontracted Braille – \$ 39.00

7-17230-01 Illinois Braille Series, Book I, Print Version – \$ 19.00

Note: Instructors will need to need to purchase the print version (7-17230-01) separately.

Illinois Braille Series, Book II, Contracted Braille (5-17240-02) and its printed instructor's book (7-17240-01), will be available for order soon – stay tuned to APH News for forthcoming details. Note: Book II now combines lessons from both books II and III from the previous series. The Revised Illinois Braille Series is not yet available for purchase online. Please call APH Customer Service at (800) 223-1839 to place your order. Also please talk to Jim Olson at the CIMC about availability through the Colorado inventory of APH materials.

NEW! BUILDING ON PATTERNS (BOP) SECOND EDITION: PREKINDERGARTEN

[6-78530-00: Student Kit \\$859.00](#)

[8-78534-00: Teacher Kit \(Print\) \\$265.00](#)

[6-78534-00: Teacher Kit \(Braille\) \\$469.00](#)

BOP is a systematic, comprehensive, and balanced literacy program designed to teach young children (through second grade) with visual impairments to read and write using braille.

BOP Prekindergarten is the first level of the second edition of BOP. This curriculum reflects best practices in braille literacy instruction and includes lessons designed to build literacy skills related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing in preparation for kindergarten.

BOP Pre-K may be used as a stand-alone program, or can also supplement regular preschool curriculum. It includes 28 instructional lessons, each paired with a children's book and a tactile storybook that supports lesson concepts through activities that involve tracking, simple reading, and understanding tactile graphics.

More information and resources for all levels of BOP can be found at www.aphbop.org.



just for PARENTS

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>

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.

We have one remaining PEP Conference remaining for this school year. If you have not been to a PEP Conference, please consider attending the one that is scheduled for Colorado Springs.

Conferences for 2018-19 are scheduled for the following:

- March 7-9, 2019 – Colorado Springs

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

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/>

Family Connect

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

Vital Links to Families Just Like Yours

- ◆ Talk to other parents on message boards where you can share your stories, questions, concerns, and triumphs.
- ◆ Read parents' blog posts and personal stories written by parents about their own experiences raising children who are blind or have multiple disabilities.

Check it out at: <https://www.familyconnect.org/parentsitehome.aspx>

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.

- ◆ If you have had a colleague leave your VI district program or agency, please let Tanni know to remove this individual from our mailing list.
- ◆ If you are a parent and your child has graduated or there is any other reason that you do not want to continue to receive this newsletter by mail, please let Tanni know to remove your family from our mailing list.

Contact information for Tanni is 303 866-6681 or Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Evidence-Based Transition Planning and Services Course Enhancement Module (CEM)

In the newly published Transition CEM, you will learn about the essential components of effective transition planning and services for students with disabilities. The CEM provides pre-service candidates and in-service teachers with the framework necessary for designing effective transition programs and services to improve graduation and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

This 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.

A growing body of evidence indicates that effective transition planning is essential for improved graduation and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. The importance of transition planning is illustrated by its increasing focus in the several reauthorizations of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004; Pub. L. 94-142, §§ A–D). Despite progressively greater legislative emphasis on effective transition planning, however, students with disabilities continue to graduate at significantly lower rates than do their peers without disabilities—64.6% compared to 83.2%, respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In addition, individuals with disabilities experience significantly higher rates of unemployment and significantly lower rates of employment in comparison to peers without disabilities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

To assist pre-service and professional-learning educators in closing the graduation and post-school outcomes gaps, the Transition Planning CEM is organized by the five areas outlined in *Taxonomy of Transition Planning*: student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family engagement, and program structure (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016).

Objectives

1. After completing this CEM, users will be able to:
2. Describe the components of an effective transition plan.
3. Articulate the major elements of effective transition planning.
4. Write postsecondary measurable goals for individualized education programs (IEPs).
5. Explain the differences between evidence-based practices (EBPs) and predictors of post-school outcomes.
6. Identify essential characteristics of effective transition program structures.
7. Demonstrate the importance of building self-determination in students with disabilities.
8. Present strategies for involving secondary students with disabilities with individualized planning, including the transition IEP.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

9. Discuss the importance of including families of students with disabilities in the self-determination process.
10. Explain the importance of providing transition-related activities within a general education setting.
11. Demonstrate how to embed transition-related activities within the general education curriculum and coursework.
12. Identify academic EBPs to support students with disabilities.
13. Review the law on family engagement in transition planning.
14. Learn how family involvement in transition planning predicts positive post-school outcomes.
15. Identify EBPs for facilitating family involvement and engagement in transition planning.
16. Demonstrate the importance of cross-disciplinary planning (i.e., intra-agency and interagency).
17. Understand the critical elements of interagency collaboration.
18. Identify actions that schools can take to increase interagency collaboration and expectations for post-school employment and postsecondary education.

For more information, go to: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/transition/>

Microsoft – disAbility Scholarship

The [disAbility Scholarship](#) which was created in 2013 to enable high school students with disabilities to go to college and target a career in the technology industry. Each year this scholarship is awarded to promising high school seniors who plan to attend a vocational or academic college in the US (or a school with a US affiliate) and have a financial need.

Scholarship requirements and application materials can be found on their website

Applications are due by March 1, 2019. Questions regarding the scholarship can be directed to scholarships@seattlefoundation.org

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/programs/microsoftdisabilityscholarship.aspx>



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!



Maybe you are already familiar with several scholarship options but want to know how to make yourself stand out in huge pool of applicants. Join us at the Colorado Center for the Blind (2233 W Shepperd Ave. Littleton, CO) on Saturday March 2nd from 12:00PM to 4:00PM for **FREE FOOD** and lots of great information.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS ASSISTING WITH THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

- Hear from blind college students who have earned thousands of dollars in scholarships.
- Dive into the scholarship search process.
- Learn about scholarship opportunities for students who are blind and low vision.
- Gain tips and tricks for making YOUR scholarship application stand out.
- Take a deep dive into the application process for the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and National Federation of the Blind scholarship scholarships.
- Learn about other great upcoming seminars and experienced offered by the Colorado Association of Blind Students.

This is a great opportunity to learn and network. Please let us know that you are planning to attend by emailing Jessica Beecham at jessica@nfbco.org or by calling 615-497-0435. RSVP by Wednesday, February 27th.



COLORADO

Department of
Labor and Employment

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) - 2019 Summer Workshops

EARN YOUR C.R.E.D. - Career Readiness Education and Discovery

July 15-19, 2019 and July 22-26 9am-4pm Two-Week Program

Location: DVR Denver Metro Office 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80223

Blind and Low Vision Services' Personal Adjustment Training Unit is offering a two-week transition-focused experience for students who are blind or visually impaired. This program will equip students with life skills training and community opportunities to achieve their full potential. The C.R.E.D program will include:

Career and Vocational Education	Independent Living and Personal Management
Self-Advocacy	Orientation & Mobility
Assistive Technology	1 Touch Self-Defense
Team Work Skills	Community Volunteer Activities

TRANSITIONING TO HIGHER EDUCATION:

Metropolitan State University and Community College of Denver

Location: Auraria Campus

Dates: June 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2019 **Time:** 9:00 am to 12:00pm

The Transitioning to Higher Education workshop is a collaborative effort between Metro State's Access Center, Community College of Denver Accessibility Center, and DVR's Blind and Low Vision Services. This 4-day workshop is designed to improve self-advocacy skills as they transition from high school to post-secondary education. The curriculum is designed to empower students who are blind and low vision to know their disability, identify what helps them learn, and which accommodations will assist them to succeed in a college setting.

ONE DAY WORKSHOPS:

DVR DENVER METRO BAKE OFF

June 11, 2019 8:30am-3:30pm

Location: DVR Denver Metro Office 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80223

Work readiness skills including daily living skills (cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping), orientation and mobility, teamwork, initiative, and advocacy will be emphasized in this workshop.



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ONE DAY WORKSHOPS CONTINUED

FIX-IT ACADEMY

June 18, 2019 from 9a.m.-3p.m

Location: DVR Denver Metro Office 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233

This manual arts workshop will include visit to Home Depot, hands-on activities working with various tools to complete basic household tasks, and a “take home” project.

S.O.S: STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

June 25, 2019 10am-2pm

Location: DVR Denver Metro Office 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233

This workshop will include discussion, hands-on activities, and a brainstorming “Label Challenge” that will enable participants to explore the low, medium and high tech strategies to improve their organization. Whether at home, school, or work, students will be more successful if they have strong organizational skills.

AMAZING RTD RACE - DENVER

August 1, 2019 8:30am - 3:30pm

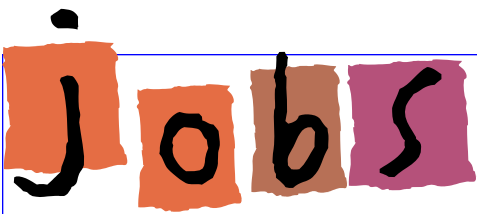
Location: DVR Denver Metro Office 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233

This workshop will include discussion, hands-on activities, and a competitive community experience that will enable participants to explore the various transportation services available to pursue post-secondary and employment opportunities.

Workshops are free to students ages 15-21 who have been referred to DVR and have been determined eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services.

To register, ask questions regarding this summer activities, information on how to complete referral for a student with a visual impairment to DVR, or other Pre-Employment Transition Services offered, please feel free to contact Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or email at michele.reed@state.co.us





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:

- ✓ **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 Falcon District 49 for the next school year. The contact person is Nancy Lemmon at nlemond@d49.org
- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (1 FTE) opening in Pikes Peak BOCES. For more information, please contact Deirdre Shearer at dshearer@ppboces.org

Metro Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (2 FTE) opening 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 at Anchor Center. For more information, please contact Melinda Carter at mcarter@anchorcenter.org or apply at <https://anchorcenter.org/>

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

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!

VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

February 7, 2019 via Zoom

Persons in Attendance: Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Melinda Carter, Dan Burke, Nancy Cozart, Jayme Cusimano, Julie Hutchinson, Julie King, Jim Olson, and Michelle Reed

Absent: Paula Conroy, Paula Landry and Jamie Lugo

Guest: Kyle Berns

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 – Melinda Carter
- Colorado AER Chapter – Nancy Cozart
- 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
- Western TVI / COMS - Julie King



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)

The Metro Region TVIs / COMSs meeting on February 7th was cancelled due to weather and will be rescheduled. The focus of the meeting, which hopefully can be rescheduled for a new date was to explore and discuss various ideas that have worked well for our students. TVIs will be asked to bring some learning materials they've made or used, such as books, games, or other adapted materials, so that we can learn from each other! Dr. Leanna Dudley from Denver Vision Therapy will hopefully be able to reschedule to present information about her role, how she assesses vision, and the common conditions she sees. Stay tuned for a new date for this meeting.

We had the Denver Metro Regional Braille Challenge on January 24th. TVIs were able to meet with CIMC staff to review new/updated paperwork, have a Q&A, etc. Those who were in attendance really appreciated the time, especially with their slick drive up from Colorado Springs!

Cherry Creek School District hosted the Metro Meeting in November. Anchor Center presented on some of their services and talking about the Teller Cards. We touched on the newly updated Resource Allocation Document. More time is needed.

Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

Most Recent Meeting Date: October 19, 2018

Staff Updates in the North: We welcome Vick Chinski, Pat Lewis, Sherry Bainbridge, Tara Brown-Ogilvie, 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. St. Vrain will be hiring for a full FTE in the next year school.

The Northern region just 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.

Upcoming Meeting Date: Spring, 2019 (Date TBD)

Discussion: Is there a possibility of the Deafblind grant funding future make-and-take opportunities?

The answer is YES! Just submit a proposal on what the group wants to make, proposed costs, contact person, and expected benefit to learners with deaf-blindness.

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

The Southern Region had a wonderful make and take with the CVI Book Builder Kit from APH organized by Jim Olson and the CIMC. In the January meeting, we got to check out the *See Like Me Low Vision Simulators*. The CIMC has a couple of sets that can be checked out for a short period of time by TVIs.

The next Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting will be on February 13 at 12:30 – 3:00 p.m. with topics about the use of tinted lenses and Leader Dog and Guide Dogs for the Blind Camps. March 13 will be the following meeting. Location: CSDB Campus, Lions Conference Center. Contact: Jim Olson, jolson@csdb.org, (719) 578-2195

The next Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic is scheduled for Wednesday, February 13, 2019. Contact Debbie Haberkorn for more information, dhaberkorn@csdb.org or 719-578-2195/

Expected vacancies for this next school year include one FTE in Pikes Peak BOCES and one FTE in El Paso 49 Falcon.

Discussion: Can we get the local pediatric ophthalmologists and/or the local Vision Therapists to attend a Southern Region meeting to improve communication and promote an understanding of what we do. Yes, work as a region to bring in these specialists.

Western Region (Julie King)

The Western slope team is going to try and meet this spring. The fall get together was beneficial for those who attended. It was nice to meet, brainstorm and support each other.

Key Western Region commentary from area TVIs / COMSs:

- A handful of students from the western region participated in the Braille Challenge.
- One district confirmed CMAS large print and braille tests will be administered at the same time as print tests. This was good news for students, as they will not be missing out on regular classroom instruction with a different testing schedule.
- TVIs in one district noted continue to teach Nemeth because there has not been a specific decision made and tests are still in Nemeth. They introduce students to the UEB math symbols so they are aware of them but do not use them in their day to day classes.
- One TVI needs information or ideas about how districts should provide an interpreter for a child receiving O&M services. *Discussion: The translation on the instructor's phone is not meeting the student's needs. This would be a good topic for the listserv and Tanni will post the question.*
- One TVI has begun ACCESS testing for an ELL student and is excited that the student will be taking it in braille rather than large print with enlargement this year. Quickly glancing through the braille version, it appears it will be a great way to assess his language skills.
- Skiing in Telluride is in full swing. The majority of one TVI's caseload skis three times each and her students with CVI LOVE the wind in their faces in the sit skis. It is a blast to go with each school group when she can.
- One district purchased a brand new reading curriculum this year and the CIMC has done an incredible job supplying them with the first braille edition. Her braille student loves the tactile graphics and reading aloud with the class. Thank you to the CIMC!!!!
- Another TVI is working with a student studying the work from Chuck Huss from West Virginia who specializes in driving with bioptics.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Michelle Reed)

Staffing update: New BLVS Unit Manager Krista Hedlund started her position at the first of the year. New Rehabilitation Counselor, Charles Kransberger, hired in the Denver Metro Office. One vacancy for a Rehabilitation Counselor remains in the Northglenn Office. Sue Williams, Supervisor for the Field Instructors statewide, retired February 1, 2019. Her position is vacant presently.

The waitlist for Denver Metro Center Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) program is around 2-3 months. In addition to the Douglas County Job Club and the North Metro Job Club that were initiated in October, we launched a third job club in JeffCo last month.

Currently we have three volunteer activities available for Pre-Ets clients: The Urban Farm on February 18, 2019 from 10:00-12:00 p.m. Project Angel Heart on March 20, 2019 from 9:00-12:00 and Metro Caring on March 28, 2019 10:30-4:00 p.m. A goal is to develop a Pre-Employment Transition Service Workgroup. Stay tuned!

We are planning our Spring and Summer Programs for students. We have a two-week C.R.E.D. (Career Readiness Education and Discovery) Program planned for July 15-19 and July 22-26 from 9:00-4:30 p.m. (Flyer attached) In addition to the two week program, we plan four one-day workshops: Daily Living Skills - Brownie Bake-Off June 11, 2019, O&M - Public Transportation August 1, 2019, Fix It Academy Manual Skills June 18, 2019 and S.O.S Strong Organization Skills June 25, 2019. Michelle will be sending flyers out to the field.

Michelle Reed and LaVerne Dell recently met with the CAER Board to provide information. This was very helpful to the persons in attendance. The goal is to equalize DVR information across the state.

There is one vacancy in the North Glenn office for a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Assignment: Michelle will put together some information and send to Tanni to distribute across the state.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision has started the new year by taking stock of our incredible progress during 2018. This past year we served a total of 189 very young children and their families in the state of Colorado, up 33 percent since 2017. We provided 1,619 in-home visits; 359 of those in-home services occurred on the Western Slope and in northeastern Colorado. In our annual Family Satisfaction Survey families overwhelmingly felt that their needs and their children's needs were met, the frequency and schedule of visits were appropriate and convenient, and the education and coaching from their EI-TVI were beneficial. As one rural parent said, "Our teacher from A Shared Vision is an amazing asset to our son's team and his overall development!"

We're finalizing our plans to launch our Family Support events for 2019. The goals are positive mental health and improved capabilities of the caregivers in service of their children with visual impairments. Be sure to save the dates for these fun, sensory- learning events throughout the year in metro Denver, Sterling, Fort Collins/Greeley, Grand Junction, Montrose/Delta and Durango.

We're also in the process of meeting with TSVIs of school-age students to streamline and improve the transition process from Part C to Part B. We welcome your ideas. If you'd like to schedule a meeting with us, please let us know.

Come be a part of our team! If you are a Colorado Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments and interested in learning more about Early Intervention opportunities, contact A Shared Vision at referrals@ASharedVision.org

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Melinda Carter)

Moving into the second half of the school year has seen continued growth in our Infant and Toddler programs with 2-4 referrals coming in every week. We now have 29 infants and 11 toddlers enrolled.

We are beginning registration for the 2019-20 preschool program and at this time we will have 13 returning preschoolers and several in the Toddler Program moving on into preschool.

Anchor Center is planning for our annual Anchor's Away Summer Camp and Summer Sprouts. These are held in July with Summer Sprouts for Infants, Toddlers and their siblings on four consecutive Mondays. The Anchor's Away Summer Camp will be held over two weeks, Tuesday-Friday, July 16-19 and 23-26 for current preschoolers and Anchor Center graduates up to age six and their siblings.

Coming up in February and April we have two fundraisers: Visions of Love, Friday February 8 and Dancing with the Anchors on Saturday April 13. This is the ninth year for Visions of Love hosted by Delta Gamma Alumnae Chapter of Denver. Dancing with the Anchors is when Denver's finest news anchors team up with Arthur Murray professionals to showcase their moves in a spirited ballroom dance competition to benefit Anchor Center. More information is available on our website <https://anchorcenter.org/>.

Dr. Cathy Smyth has returned to the Anchor Center. She is the new Director of Research. Melinda Carter is now the permanent Program Director and has left her position as an on staff TSVI. At this time, the Anchor Center has an opening for a full time TVI.

Colorado Chapter of AER (Nancy Cozart)

The CAER board has appreciated members' participation at board meetings, fundraisers and training events. Remember we are YOUR professional organization so engage to serve our field to the best of our abilities!

Here is what has been happening:

- Managing Challenging Behaviors Training in October 2018
- Mini-Grants given in November 2018
- Wreaths Across America in December at Fort Logan Cemetery
- iOS Apps Training in December 2018
- Updating Information on Services from DVR for Colorado's Youth 15-21
- Monthly Newsletters for current CAER members

Here is what's coming:

- CAER is creating an updated logo. CAER members will be voting from the final two options. Be looking for an email to vote on the new logo in late February.
- Nominations are going to be open soon for the Gary Schmidt Award, Ken Neve Award, Connections Award and Lifetime Achievement Award.
- CAER's Annual Meeting and Banquet is Friday April 26, 2019. Awards will be presented and an AER membership will be raffled! More details coming soon!
- Spero Winery Fundraiser will be March 30th. Tickets are \$50. Look for information soon.

CAER is working to ensure we have active Colorado membership. For membership details, please be in touch with one of the board members.

Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Dan Burke)

At the end of 2018 we had great Fun Activities & Skills Training events. In November we had about 15 kids and a number of parents cook a mini-Thanksgiving meal, substituting four chickens for a turkey, but including mashed potatoes, stuffing and other trimmings. Parents had a chance to put on sleep shades and do a short cane travel lesson around the building to introduce them to some of the basic elements of nonvisual travel. In December we held our annual Holiday Party in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind of Denver. Kids did holiday arts and crafts learned to wrap gifts and Santa made an appearance to pass out small gifts.

We offered scholarships for blind/low vision high school students to attend the NFB's Washington Seminar from January 28 -30. Students had to write an essay, and we selected two outstanding young people to attend with us – Ian Lee, a senior at Aurora West College Prep and Deya Villa Cazares, a sophomore at DSST: Conservatory Green High School. They joined 15 other Coloradans tramping the halls of Congress and they held their own in meetings with legislative aides as we presented our case for a \$2,000 tax credit toward the purchase of assistive technology and the establishment of accessibility standards for medical equipment, exercise equipment, and home appliances. We were proud to include them in our advocacy effort this year.

We are projecting March 1 or March 8 (both Fridays) for this year's shark dissection, but at this writing are still unable to lock down the date.

The NFB of Colorado will hold a Scholarship Seminar on Saturday March 2, from 12:00 to 4:00 pm at the Colorado Center for the Blind. All the information is in the attached flier. This will be a great event to learn about all types of scholarship opportunities and to get some training on how to write a good scholarship essay, and tips on increasing the student's opportunity to win scholarships.

Employment/College Seminar - Making Connections On

Date: May 8,

This summer we are introducing new, shorter-term modules into our youth programs. We'll still offer an 8-week program for high school and college-bound students, but we'll run topic-specific modules in parallel with those. Below is the schedule and descriptions of all of our summer programs. But first, we'll also be sponsoring two Confidence -BELL Academies outside the Colorado Center, as follows:

June 24-28 Westminster, Rocky Mtn. MS Center, 8845 Wagner St,

July 15-19, Grand Junction, Center for Independence, 740 Gunnison Ave.

Confidence Camp/BELL Academy Location: Colorado Center for the Blind

Dates: June 10 through June 21 Ages: 5 to 10

Program Description: This two-week day program will be filled with learning, challenge and fun. Students will meet competent blind role models who will work with the kids on cooking, cleaning, Braille, independent travel and technology. The kids will learn how to take the bus and use the light rail. They'll have fun swimming, rock climbing, making a tactile art piece and going on exciting field trips.

No Limits to Learning Location: Colorado Center for the Blind

Dates: June 7 to August 2 Ages: 14 to 21

Program Description: This eight-week residential program will change your life. You will live in an apartment with other students and a staff member. Learn about the world of work and meet blind people who work in all kinds of jobs. Challenge yourself through our program by participating in rock climbing, goalball, white water rafting and much more. Build your core skills in Braille, technology, home management and cane travel. Attend the convention of the National Federation of the Blind in Las Vegas, Nevada. Expand your skill set in STEM fields with hands-on experiments using accessible, nonvisual tools and strategies. College coming up soon? Learn what it takes to be successful, including how to navigate the unfamiliar new landscape of higher education. You will learn that being blind will not limit you from pursuing your dreams.

Module Madness: Want a shorter training program? We offer three different modules throughout the summer that may fit your schedule and your interests. In all three modules, you will live in one of our apartments with other students and a counselor, and you will build your core skills in Braille, Technology, Home Management and Cane Travel classes.

The World of Work Location: Colorado Center for the Blind

Dates: June 7 to June 21 Ages: 11 to 21

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

We have been working with CDE to update our procedures. Lori has emailed each district designated contact person the updated statewide count database report for each administrative unit. For those districts without a contact person or who use independent contractors, the reports were emailed to the Directors of Special Education with a request to send them along to the appropriate persons. Please check with your Director.

We are in the process of entering the final data into the Federal Quota Census specific to enrollment on the Federal Quota Census count day which is always the first Monday in January. This year it was Monday, January 8, 2019. You have until February 14th to return your Quota Census information to the CIMC at cimregistrations@csdb.org If you have questions, please contact Lori directly at lwilson@csdb.org.

NEW for the Census this year:

- The CIMC is no longer asking for copies of the eye health reports you have on file. There still must be a record of an eye health report on file with the district.

- Revised registration form. The registration form has been revised and will be posted to the website soon. You are still required to have current eye health information for every student you are including in the Quota Census. More than just proof the student went for an exam, the documentation must verify that the student sees at the level of legal blindness, either "Meets the Definition of Blindness" or "Functions at the Definition of Blindness." Acuties would meet this requirement. When eye health information does not clearly identify MDB or FDB, it is recommended that you use the MDB/FDB form that Colorado developed for instances where acuties cannot be obtained. You must retain a copy of current eye health information in your district files. Many TVIs have shared that they upload it directly into their electronic IEP as well.
- A new document from the President of APH has been included in the batch of attachments CIMC sent to your district contacts to accompany your district's database report. This form will be good to use if you have a parent/guardian who may have questions about the *Parent Consent Form*. It has been translated into Spanish as well.
- We are requesting that you also include an alphabetized list (by last name) of each student you are telling Lori to enter into the Federal database. This should help clarify the discrepancies found on the cover sheet that your directors sign, and your contacts sign, that identifies the total number of students on your statewide count and the number of students you want included in your Federal Quota Census count of legally blind students (that will generate Federal Quota funds for the purchase of braille books, and instructional materials manufactured by the APH). Simply attach an alphabetized list to your signed cover sheet when you return your count to Lori.

Textbook order deadline for the 2019-20 school year is April 1, 2019. If you can submit ISBN numbers for textbooks sooner than that so they can be sourced for availability in braille, please send an email to cimcbookorders@csdb.org.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Student Activities: Students and staff attended the Children of Color Summit, Diversity Conference, and Colorado Association of School Boards Conference. Students participated in the Winter Program entitled, "Music of the Night." Instrumentalists, soloists, original songs, and group acts were all featured. Our supported secondary room led a winter sing-along for the elementary students on the last day before winter break. Through this project, social skills and leadership skills were emphasized and practiced. Archery season is in full swing. Students practice after school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the season will end with a virtual tournament. We have 12 archers this school year participating. Three new students have joined our elementary department since coming back from winter break.

Parent Activities: Parents participated in Lunch in the Dark. During this event, a power point presentation was shared and distributed with independent living skill strategies. A meal was then shared under blindfold or simulator with assistance from teachers of students who are blind/visually impaired.

Staff Activities: Suzanne Scott, from Generation Wild, presented on Thursday, November 29th. Generation Wild's mission is stressing the importance of children of all ages having unstructured play outside. This speaker is supporting the secondary students with their accessible playground project. There has been great collaboration between teachers, counselors, dorms, and the nursing staff to teach topics relative to human sexuality. Having the option of small groups and 1:1 lessons has been positive.

Dr. Theune worked on campus to provide low vision evaluations to three of our students. These students are excited to begin using some of their new prescribed devices as soon as they arrive.

We hosted our annual Braille Challenge on Thursday, January 17th. 24 students competed in various levels. Twenty rookies enjoyed tactile activities and spending time with student mentors throughout the day. Fourteen student helpers assisted CSDB staff members to implement the event. Thank you to the Audio Information Network for donating gift cards to this special day. In addition to the competition in Colorado Springs, another competition was held in Denver. The materials were scored on January 30,. The results are:

Braille Challenge Results (CSDB Contest):

Apprentice: Amaya Tellers 1st Nikolas Adams 2nd Lyla Trudo 3rd
Freshman : Jose Gutierrez 1st David Moore tied 2nd Jonah Raiford 3rd Thallan Schwartz
Sophomore: Mikayla Hernandez 1st Marcello Saenz 2nd Izabella Davilla-Armendano 3rd
Junior Varsity: Jasmine McCandless 1st Jake Weatherby 2nd Skyla Walsh 3rd
Varsity: Quincie Mattick 1st Sophia Garza 2nd Cheyenne Argys 3rd

Foresight Ski trips are in full effect. Three different groups have ventured to Vail and given it their all on the slopes! Thank you to Foresight for providing our students with such a rich opportunity.

CSDB Outreach Services (Jayme Cusimano)

Update on Past Events: CSDB Outreach worked with a team of TVIs in the metro area to hold an event at Lucky Strikes Bowling at the Denver Pavilions on January 26, 2019. It was a great time for families, TVIs, and students. Thanks to all TVIs who sent students!

The Denver Metro Region Braille Challenge was held on January 24; 15 students, who are blind/visually impaired, from seven Colorado school districts, participated in the Denver Metro Braille Challenge, hosted at the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB). CCB provided lunch and door prize donations – both received cheers from the students. Nineteen adults worked the event including 5 scoring volunteers, 7 CSDB staff, 3 CCB staff and 4 CCB student volunteers. We appreciate the sponsors: Colorado Center for the Blind, CSDB, the Braille Institute, Humanware, Seedlings, and the National Braille Press. A hope for the next year will be strong attendance to ensure the continuation of a metro location of the Braille Challenge.

The contests for both regional events were scored, following protocol of the National Braille Institute, on January 30th by a group of braillists from Colorado school districts and CIMC staff under the guidance of Debbie Haberkorn – scoring room coordinator (CIMC). Special thanks to Chris Maynard (El Paso County School District 20), Diane Carpenter (El Paso County School District 11), Lisa Brocard (Arapahoe County School District 6, Littleton), Lori Wilson (CIMC), Tabitha Wyatt (Weld County School District 6, Greeley), Teresa Kilbury (CIMC), and Tina Boddicker (CSDB). If you are interested in volunteering to help score for next year's contest, contact Debbie Haberkorn at dhaberkorn@csdb.org.

Braille Challenge Results (Denver Metro Contest):

Apprentice: Logan Galloway 1st Kai Meyer 2nd Sawyer Cybulski 3rd
Freshman Vianca Marez 1st
Sophomore: Hayden Roswell 1st Lexi Mink 2nd
Junior Varsity: Ty Gillespie 1st
Varsity: Isaac Garcia 1st Jaylen Anders 2nd

Upcoming CSDB Outreach Events:

- The Sensory Safari will be at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, but the date is not finalized. This event is for children ages birth through eight years and their families. Please contact Dale Wolf with questions and to register: dewolf@csdb.org or 719-578-2245.
- *Meal Time Routines* will be a featured topic on Saturday, April 13th 9-12. Cathy Smyth, Zoe Morgese, and Carol Spicer will share results of a study about this topic. A flyer will be mailed with more details.

- The iAdvocate camp will take place June 16-20th 2019 on the CSDB campus. This event is for middle school/ high school students focusing on the expanded core curriculum. Please contact Donna Keale with questions and to register: dkeale@csdb.org or 719-330-7387.

Reminder that CSDB Outreach offers funding for student activities for up to \$400. Jayme will send this out directly to the TVIS.

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 data are coming back into CDE. Thanks to all the school district contacts, many of whom are TVIs, for returning the forms. . 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: Stay tuned for the game plan for Summer 2019.

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.

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: The 2019 CDE O&M Seminar will be held on April 26-27, 2019 at the Ames Facility in Littleton School District. Our featured speaker will be Lynn Gautreaux. Lynn is a COMS and a certified therapeutic recreation specialist. The topics are AMDs and Cane Repair / Modification.

CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: Four Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have been planned / scheduled for this school year. Thus far, we have had a southern clinic and a northern clinic. We thank Debbie Haberkorn as the Southern LVE Clinic Coordinator and Carol Love and Liz Weider as the Northern LVE Clinic Coordinators; and Nancy Knight as the Metro Denver LVE Clinic Coordinator. We thank our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Team of Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, Jim Olson, and Debbie Haberkorn.

Recruitment and Retention: Denver Public Schools has hired Christopher Kinney and continues to have two openings. Cherry Creek School District has hired Rachel Sullivan. We have two openings in Weld 6 School District and Denver Public Schools, and contract work up north in Johnston-Milliken. There will be openings in Falcon School District, Pikes Peak BOCES and St. Vrain School District in the next school year. Douglas will have a .5 FTE opening 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.

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

Parent Database: We currently have about 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. So far we have had six requests across four districts. The mentoring cannot be student specific, but the coach can address broad strategies for learners with specific types of needs. To request a coach / mentor, contact Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

O&M Service Provider Committee: The current draft of the O&M Rubric is posted at CDE is currently taking feedback on the draft rubric. A special thanks from Tanni to Wendy Schlageter and Mike Plansker for their great assistance with updated our rubric.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CDE BVI Budget for 2019-20: Proposed new activities for the next budget year include:

- * Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- * CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- * CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment
- * Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- * Podcast Topics Specific to BVI
- * BVI Coach / Mentor Project
- * CDE O&M Seminar
- * Vision Coalition
- * Videos on Braillewriter Needs
- * UEB Math Training

Potential training topics: UEB (math), Learning Media Assessment (broad with some tease out of information specific to CVI / additional disabilities), Learning Media Plans (training webinar)

The Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics still appears to be a viable entity for our students. It is really important to offer a clinic in the western region for the next year. We need to have strong efficacy data for the clinics to survive. Current data indicates 22 devices have been purchased this 2018-19 school year. Of those 22 devices, 18 were prescribed at clinics during the 2017-18 school year. Since clinics are still pending for the Metro Denver and Colorado Springs regions, 2018-19 school year data will be shared in the future.

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 Orientation and Mobility

- Article and resources in KIT (done)
- Listserv discussion on O&M information (done)

January / February Individualized Education Program / Individual Family Services Plan

- IEP Article and resources in KIT
- Listserv discussion on IEPs and IFSPs

March Social Emotional Skills/ Developing Friendships

- Collect social opportunities for kids for over the summer – list on one document. This would be an easy to use handout for families. Also be sure to put in costs. We will want to include: CCB, CSDB, Anchor Center for Blind Children, Heathers Camp, DVR Blind and Low Vision Services
- Do want to do a website? Live Calendar of Events / List of Activities
- Check out TSDBVI / Family Connect for articles specific to SE Development and friendships
- Listserv discussion on SE development / friendship strategies

April / May Independent Living / Recreation

- Our list of specific events for children
- Check out national resources on these topics
- Listserv discussion on independent living and recreation strategies

Each theme will be associated an identified period of time. During this time, 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.

Eye Report Form: The final version of the *Example Template for Medical Eye Examination Report* is posted on the CDE webpages specific to Visual Impairment, Including Blindness. Check it out at:

[Vision Coalition Update Feb 7, 2019.docx](#)

Braille Math: We currently have a number of students who have learned UEB only for math. To date, the CIMC has received requests for math textbooks transcribed in UEB technical format for 8 students in Colorado. Several of these students are of state assessment range. There may be an opportunity yet this school year for students to receive their state math assessment in UEB technical format. This has not been finalized. There is also a plan to amend our state IEP system to have a choice of braille format for state math tests (with a choice of UEB or UEB/Nemeth). What drives the system is the request for a specific math code. Currently there are 72 textbooks formatted in either EBAE with Nemeth or UEB with encapsulated Nemeth being used across the state with 35 students.

There is currently a Library of Congress UEB literary transcriber course managed by the NFB Jernigan Institute. A second, more advanced/ second level UEB (math) transcriber course is currently being developed by Clovernook.

They have been working on this course for over a year. It expected to be piloted soon and ready for this summer.

Accurate textbooks are critical. Jim encourages everyone to order all of their textbooks, but particularly math books (for next 2019-2020 school year) NOW, whether you need UEB technical format or UEB with encapsulated Nemeth format!

The decision for a student to be instructed in UEB with Nemeth or UEB technical is an IEP team decision, with the understanding that the TVI is often the most trained person on this topic. The CDE cannot dictate a code since our country has two approved braille math codes. We continue to have students who have never learned Nemeth and kids who know Nemeth very well. We have braillists who have learned UEB and some that have not. A suggestion was to ensure we have transcriber training and support for UEB (math) across the state. In addition, there is an ongoing suggestion that UEB be the code taught to our youngest students to grow a generation of UEB users. This cannot be mandated, but may well be an important discussion with our EI and early childhood VI providers.

Assignment: Tanni will follow up to learn more about the course(s) and then generate a Listserv discussion. It might also be good to zoom someone in from BANA for our next Vision Coalition meeting to help build our perspective.

Learning Media Plan Form:

This has been a topic across the state. The northern region just met to dive in on how people are writing their Learning Media Plans. It was obvious that there is a wide variation on how people are responding to the standard LMP components on the state IEP. The main question was whether it is possible to change the questions.

Assignment: Tanni will confirm whether the guiding questions are in stature and have any flexibility for change. If they cannot be changed, it is recommended that each question be addressed for recommended components and then develop a guidance document that covers the required components and gives information about what might be included in each section. It might be helpful to have some bullets to help guide proposed content. It is recommended that this content is informative not only to the current IEP team, but also a future IEP team (the stranger test – does the content inform the reader of the IEP about the game plan?). The results of the LMA should absolutely be in the PLAAFP, goals, and accommodations.

In addition to the Learning Media Plan, there was discussion about whether TVIs feel they have training and support to do a Learning Media Assessment with very young children, children with CVI, and/or children with visual impairment and additional disabilities. This may well be a topic to explore with Colorado TVIs to determine any needed next steps.

Assignment: Tanni will check on the exact wording in the state rules / regulations. What can we change /merge / or just provide guidance on how to answer? Then develop a guidance document that covers the required components and gives information about what might be included in each section. It might be helpful to have some bullets to help guide proposed content. A question is how much content is embedded across the populations of students with visual impairment only versus children with visual impairment and additional disabilities. It is recommended that this content is informative not only to the current IEP team, but also a future IEP team (the stranger test – does the content inform the reader of the IEP about the game plan?). The results of the LMA should absolutely be in the PLAAFP, goals, and accommodations.

Eligibility for Visual impairment, Including Blindness:

The current eligibility criteria that is being proposed is as follows:

2.08 (11) A child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness shall have an impairment in vision where, even with correction, he/she is prevented from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education.

2.08 (11)(a) A determination that a child is an eligible child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness shall be based upon one or more of the following:

- i. The child is blind, has no vision, or has little potential for using vision;
- ii. The child has low vision based on visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;

- iii. The child has visual field restriction to 20 degrees or less; and/or
- iv. The child has been diagnosed with a progressive condition that will most likely result in a visual impairment or no vision after best correction and involves current or imminent educational impact;
- v. The child has an impairment in vision that, even with correction, is prevented from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education.

2.08 (11)(b) As a result of the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness, as set out above, the child requires specialized instruction.

Discussion: The CDE will determine when the ECEA Rules will be opened to include this proposed definition. This process will involve a period of public comment and CDE State Board approval.

One of the questions that is being discussed in school districts currently is what constitutes specially designed instruction. The definition of specially designed instruction per our ECEA Rules is:

2.43(2)(c) *Specially designed* instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction –

2.43(2)(c)(i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and

2.43(2)(c)(ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards of the responsible administrative unit or state-operated program as established in Section 8.00 of these Rules.

Another consideration is who will conduct evaluations to determine VIB and what evaluation tools are available to ensure reliability of outcome. It is anticipated that an eye report will continue to be required. A TVI will review medical records and conduct a FVA / LMA, as well as other assessments to determine educational impact. It is unknown what other school-based evaluations might occur to address educational impact that are outside of the immediate realm of a TVI.

A question is who in a school district can reliably assesses oculomotor function and have strategies to address functional improvement in binocularity, saccadic movement, etc. It appears that there are not standardized assessment and strategies within the fields of a TVI or the field of OT.

The other main question is about the provision of vision therapy for students who are followed by an eye care specialist. Vision therapy is considered a medical therapy, most often an optometric therapy that is under the practice of a trained eye care specialist provider.

AER has a position paper on the following topic: *Low Vision Position Paper #4 – The Role and Training of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment (TSVIs) as a Special Educator and Why TSVIs Do Not Provide Vision Therapy Services*. It can be found at: <https://aerbvi.org/resources/publications/position-papers/>

Further there is reference to vision therapy in the DORA OT Practice Act on VT and Low Vision Rehab Services, as follows:

COLORADO REVISED STATUTES

Occupational Therapy Practice Act

§ 12-40.5-109. Limitations on authority

Nothing in this article shall be construed to authorize an occupational therapist to engage in the practice of medicine, as defined in section 12-36-106; physical therapy, as defined in article 41 of this title; vision therapy services or low vision rehabilitation services, except under the referral, prescription, supervision, or co-management of an ophthalmologist or optometrist; or any other form of healing except as authorized by this article.

This focus area will continue to be a discussion area.

Resource Allocation Document:

The current draft of the RAD has been piloted. Of the piloting that occurred thus far, there were concerns about reliable scoring. Part of the challenge is philosophical differences across providers specific to services for learners with visual impairment and additional disabilities and service time for students with early literacy needs. Assignment: Tanni had a few suggestions that she will share with Amber. It may be a good next step to finalize the current draft, then post it on the CDE website as ‘guidance awaiting piloting for further next steps.’

Braille Competency:

Per our last Vision Coalition meeting, there was a suggestion to provide Colorado TVIs-in-training at UNC with a braillewriter. Assignment: Tanni will follow up with Paula on the recommendation to provide Colorado students-in-training with a braillewriter.

There is a Practice Test posted on the CDE website specific to multiple choice questions and braille passages. This information is shared with personnel scheduled to take the CDE Braille Competency Test.

It would be nice to see if we could locate / create videos on topics such as: (a) putting paper in the braillewriter, (b) clearing a paper jam on the braillewriter; (c) erasing an error. UNC has such videos as a part of their program.

Assignment: For all of the VC to look for such videos and report them to Tanni. Jim and Jayme will see if these topics may be of interest to develop short videos through the CSDB Outreach Program.

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 our state 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 / COMS

Steps for Recruitment

- Anticipate vacancies – be in the know of expected retirements (right now we know we have openings in Denver, Falcon, Pikes PEAK BOCES, Greeley, Johnston Milliken, and St. Vrain,
- 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 COMS
- Be open to hiring an Orientation and Mobility Specialist (without TVI dual certification)
- Deliberately appeal to undergraduates
 - Community Colleges (with a prepared module)
 - Career Center
 - Extended Campus - UNC
 - 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 the administrative unit's Human Resources Office 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 / COMs
- 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 the administrative unit's Human Resource Office 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 / COMs
- Define the role of the TVI for administrators
- Define the role of the COMS 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 Date:

April 25, 2019 – Anchor Center for Blind Children

Key Topics to Be Discussed

- Eligibility Update
- Eye doc perspective – vision therapy
- BANA update on math
- Learning Media Plans
- Recruitment and Retention (TVI and O&M Specialist)





colorado connections

- ◆ Congrats to our UNC colleagues - **Silvia Correa Torres, Paula Conroy, Amber Rundle Kahn, and Tara Brown-Ogilvie** for the publication of their article on !Voices from the field: Literacy skills needed to access disability services for college students with visual impairments. Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research. 8(2). Retrieved from <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/jbir/jbir18/jbir0802tc.html>
- ◆ Hats off to **Jeanine Holmes** of Thompson School District and **Morgan Fitzpatrick** of Denver Public Schools for earning their CDE Certificate of Braille Competency. More hats off to **Jayme Cusimano, Abby Horner, Erin Noe, and Christina Martin Olps** for earning braille renewal certificate clock hours. Thanks to braille proctors hard at work **Christine Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Sarah Sonnier**.
- ◆ Many thanks to our BVI Coach / Mentors who have worked with several Colorado school district TVIs over the past few months - **Janet Anderson, Shelley Moats, and Wendy Stoltman**. We are so grateful to these TVIs / COMS for such a great lift-off of this new project. Thanks also to the TVIs who have requested technical assistance. This project is relying on its use to the field as to whether it will continue with funding in the next budget year.
- ◆ Thank you to the following people who served as our AU contact people for assisting with the Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count

Deborah Andrews	Morgan Fitzpatrick	Sara Noel
Sally Burch	Sarah Goodfellow	Teresa O'Brien
Linda Campbell	Abby Horner	William Reynolds
Jennifer Caster	Carol Jordan	Wendy Schlageter
Peg Collins	Nancy Knight	Angela Sims
Kathy Emter	Marcy Lawrence	Roberta Weidemeyer
Donice Fennimore	Janis Mountford	Chloann Woolley
Kari Finholt	Judy Mumford	
Diane Fitzkee	Beth Myers	

- ◆ **Christopher Kinney** is a new TVI in DPS! He has lived in Denver since 2011 and worked as a Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind at the Colorado Center for the Blind from 2011 to 2018 , teaching woodworking and home maintenance skills to adult consumers in training, and then as the Senior Services Outreach Specialist, before joining the DPS TVI team at the end of 2018. He is an active member of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado-Denver chapter. A few of his interests outside of work include supporting local music and performing arts, taking road trips to see the country, and following professional and collegiate sports. He shares that he is very excited to be serving the Denver community in this capacity.
- ◆ We welcome **Rachel Sullivan** back in her role as a TVI in Cherry Creek. She took some time off to raise her family and now is back!

MAIL TO:

25-43E-3401

Katy Anthes
Commissioner of Education



COLORADO
Department of Education

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Exceptional Student Services
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202

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Debora Scheffel
4th Congressional District

Rebecca McClellan
6th Congressional District

Steve Durham
5th Congressional District

Jane Goff
7th Congressional District