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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

Nothing is Impossible

By Tanni L. Anthony

My niece, Sara is a teacher and a good one. A few years back, she was a second grade teacher in a Colorado school district. Of her many stories, this one in particular seemed like an appropriate way to begin the close our calendar year and prepare for the new year ahead.

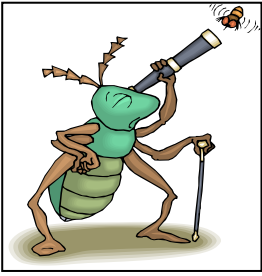
At one point in her classroom, one of Sara’s students grumbled loud enough for the whole class to hear “This is TOO hard!” in response to the work being covered. Sara responded simply “It is hard, but it is not too hard. In this class, I will never give you anything that is impossible for you to do.” The class moved on and Sara forgot about the conversation ... until a few weeks later when she overheard the conversation of two of her young students. One child said to the other, “I can’t do this – it is too hard,” and the other child responded promptly, in probably her best teacher-voice, “No IT isn't. This is Miss Lugert’s class. NOTHING is impossible.” This proclamation brought relief to the struggling student and she calmed, found her determination, and the two set back to work together on the task.

Without a true plan to do so, Sara had established the mantra of the class for the rest of the school year. Time again and again, the students worked on because they believed nothing was impossible—they could do it.

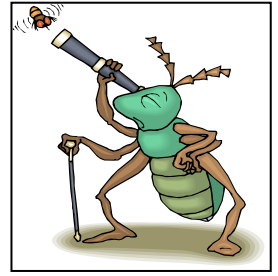
Whether it is said as *anything is possible* or *all is possible* or *nothing is impossible* – it is a mantra worth integrating in our work to be accomplished now in the many school days ahead. I wish for each of you the commitment of those determined second graders to believe and practice with yourselves, your colleagues, and most importantly, with your children and students. I do believe in each of you! With each of you in the world, in our Colorado administrative units, early intervention agencies, and in the homes of our children, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE! All the best as we head into the new year!

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LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Low Vision Regional Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2019-2020

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator
Metro Region	February 19-22, 2020 All paperwork due February 5, 2020	Nancy Knight
Southern Region	TBD	Debbie Haberkorn

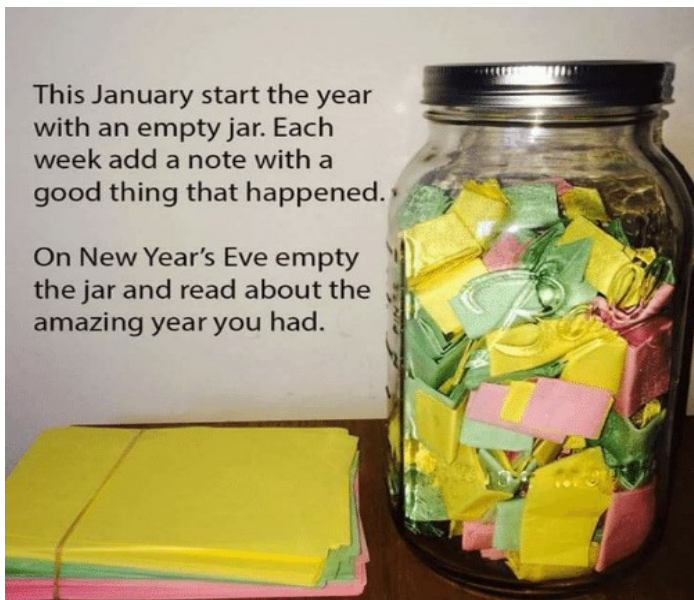


Northern Low Vision Evaluation (LVE) Clinics

By Debbie Haberkorn

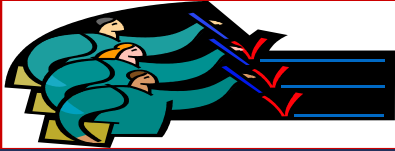
The Northern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held Thursday and Friday, November 7th - 8th at the Enight Skills Center in Fort Collins. Eleven students from four Administrative Units (Boulder County St. Vrain Valley RE-1J, Boulder County Boulder Valley RE-2, Centennial BOCES, Larimer County Poudre R-1) received evaluations. Eleven parents and seven TVIs (Chris Holmes, Julia Hutchinson, Aryn McNichol, Liz Wieder, Paula Conroy, Danielle Burden, and Melissa French) attended the evaluation with their students.

It was wonderful to meet TVIs attending the clinic for the first time and it is always a pleasure to see those of you who bring a student every year. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank the staff of the Enight Skills Center for hosting the clinic. Thank you to Liz Wieder for coordinating the clinic and to the TVIs and parents who brought students!

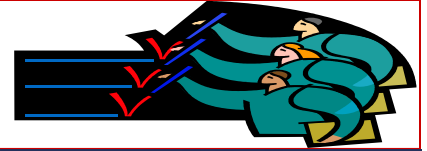


Wishing you a wonderful holiday break and a New Year ahead.

2020—Here We Come!



CHECK IT OUT!



OSERS

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) understands the many challenges still facing individuals with disabilities and their families. Therefore, OSERS is committed to improving results and outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages. OSERS supports programs that serve millions of children, youth and adults with disabilities.

Check out and sign up for the [OSERS blog](#) on topics such as, [The Power of Parental Engagement](#) to [Knocking Down Barriers for Blind People](#).

Save the Dates

Winter and Summer Mountain Mobility with the Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte

* Winter Dates: February 13-17, 2020

* Summer Dates: June 21-26, 2020

The Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) in Crested Butte will be running winter and summer adventure sports camps specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The winter camp will bring youth together for a weekend of skiing, snowboarding and other fun activities in the Rocky Mountains. The summer camp activities have not been determined yet but could include mountain biking, backpacking, rafting, rock climbing, and hiking. These camps will focus on building confidence and making connections with others who share similar experiences.

Connecting to the outdoors will be a large aspect of the camp, yet campers will also focus on a variety of invaluable life skills throughout the weekend. Campers will shop for groceries, prepare their own meals, and interact in a team setting. Additionally, campers will advance their orientation and mobility skills as they learn to travel through the bustling town of Crested Butte, Colorado.

These camps are for middle and high schoolers with visual impairments who are independent in their care of activities of daily living and want to experience some adventure. Spots are limited and paperwork should be turned in as soon as possible. Expect to see paperwork for winter camp in the next couple of months.

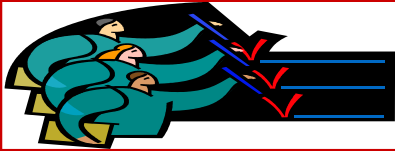
For more information and questions contact Mike Plansker at mike.e.plansker@adams12.org.

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP)

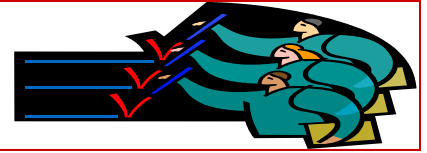
iCanConnect (ICC) is a federal grant that provides free telecommunications equipment and training to those who qualify. There is no minimum or maximum age requirement, just that the person can benefit from this technology that allows for sending an email, texting, chatting on the phone, or communicating 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 Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind's (CCDHDB) web site at <https://ccdhhdb.com/index.php/ctprogram/>.



CHECK IT OUT!



“Education for Life” for Colorado Residents

Application Deadline March 1, 2020

Scholarships Awarded for: Certificate Programs (i.e.. Massage Therapy) - Associates (2 year) —Bachelors (4 year)
—Masters and Doctorate Degrees

Up to \$42,000 will be awarded to deserving recipients.

Application and Information (www.seethefuture.org)

Click on the “Education for Life Application” link on the Home page.

If you have questions, contact Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund (719) 471.3200

twtheune@comcast.net

CCB Seeks Blind Colorado Youth to Go to DC in February 2020



Early each year, more than 500 blind Americans tap their canes across Capitol Hill in the District of Columbia to keep appointments at the offices of every member of Congress. It is the Washington Seminar of the National Federation of the Blind, and it is how we make our legislative concerns and priorities known to those who have been elected to serve us. It is how we, the blind, make our voices heard, and doing so is the foundation of our democracy.

For the 2020 Washington Seminar, The Colorado Center for the Blind will assist up to 3 blind Colorado high school students to travel with the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado to the annual Washington Seminar, February 10-13, 2019. The scholarships will include the costs of air travel, lodging at the Holiday Inn Capitol and a food allowance. We typically fly on the Sunday before the Washington Seminar begins, returning late on Wednesday. So, our travel plans will likely run from Sunday, February 9, 2020 to Wednesday, February 12, 2020. In that time, students will attend the National Association of Blind Students (NABS) meeting, learn about this year’s legislative priorities, attend meetings at the offices of members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation, and possibly get to visit some important sites in our nation’s capital.

How to qualify

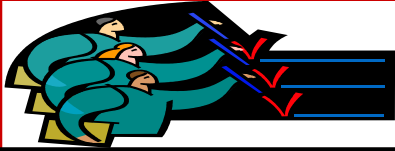
Blind and low vision students will submit an essay, 350 word minimum, that details how their experiences leading up to this point have shaped their goals and how attending the Washington seminar will help in their transition into college or the workforce.

Applicants are encouraged to [read more about the Washington Seminar](#), and be able to identify who represents them in the United States House of Representatives. Here’s the link to the House [Find Your Representative](#) search page.

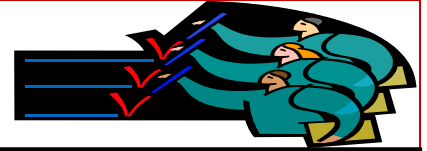
Essays should be sent to Martin Becerra-Miranda, Director of Youth Services as soon as possible—the deadline was December 1!. Electronic copies are preferred, but braille will also be accepted. Send the essays to:

[Martin Becerra-Miranda \(mbecerra@cocenter.org\)](mailto:mbecerra@cocenter.org) or in braille to Colorado Center for the Blind, 2233 West Shepperd Avenue, Littleton, CO 80120, ATTN: Martin Becerra-Miranda.

For more information, call Martin at 303-778-1130, ext. 223.



CHECK IT OUT!



PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

BENEFITS OF AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN EDUCATION CONTEST -- "BADIE"

Young People Who Are Blind Write Reviews of Film and Video

The American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project (ACB-ADP) and the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) are continuing their co-sponsorship of an exciting opportunity for blind and visually impaired young people, in four categories from ages 7 to 21: the Benefits of Audio Description in Education (BADIE) contest. Kids love movies! Movies, videos, and other forms of multimedia are, these days, integral to public, private, and special education curriculum. If you're a young person who can't see or can't see well, audio description provides access to all the visual images of the movies that sighted young people enjoy.

Students choose an audio-described film or video from the more than thousands of titles available through DCMP - visit www.dcmp.org. Or a young person who is blind can borrow an audio-described video or film from a library, and dozens of audio-described films videos are available for purchase through the ACB-ADP's website at www.acb.org/adp/dvds.html.

Reviews can be submitted in writing, in braille or via an audio recording. Register for the contest at: <http://listeningislearning.org/badie.html>. Entries can also be submitted via e-mail or postal mail (submissions from outside the United States are fine) to:

ACB-DCMP Benefits of Audio Description In Education

Contact: Joel Snyder, PhD

1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 420, Alexandria, VA 22311 USA

E-mail: jsnyder@acb.org Phone: (202) 467-5083



⇒ DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: **Friday, December 6, 2019**

Contest winners in each category will be chosen by January of 2020, and the grand prize winner will receive an iPad Mini! Each first-place winner will receive a \$100 iTunes gift card. Second-place winners will receive a \$50 iTunes gift card, and third-place winners will receive a \$25 iTunes gift card. Each supporting teacher who has a first-place winning student will be awarded a \$100 Amazon gift card.



BRIDGINGAPPS®

Bridging the gap between technology and people with disabilities

BridgingApps is a program of Easter Seals Greater Houston that provides access to educational and therapeutic tools—anywhere, anytime—allowing parents, teachers, and therapists to effectively use mobile devices and apps to target and improve individual skill development to help children and adults with disabilities reach their highest levels of physical and cognitive development.

BridgingApps also has a [Teacher and Therapist App list](https://search.bridgingapps.org/lists/2f8a5ef9-9b99-49f3-8aea-c7c352199d7e) (<https://search.bridgingapps.org/lists/2f8a5ef9-9b99-49f3-8aea-c7c352199d7e>)

Check [BridgingApps](https://www.bridgingapps.org/) out. (<https://www.bridgingapps.org/>)

Resources and Materials



PATHS TO LITERACY

Tools to Support You in Having a Student with a Visual Impairment in Your K-6 General Education Classroom

An on-demand training developed by Dr. Tina Herzberg at the University of South Carolina Upstate and Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum at the University of Arizona. There are 11 videos each ranging in length from eight to 12 minutes. You may watch the videos in any order, or only watch a few as needed. These videos were originally developed for general education teachers, but are also appropriate for paraprofessionals, therapists, administrators, family members, and others who are seeking knowledge. These videos do not address the needs of students who have additional disabilities.

Check out the whole article on the [Paths To Literacy](#) webpage.

Living with CHARGE Syndrome (Being Me: Sarah)

Sarah Dalton was born with CHARGE syndrome, a rare condition resulting in 32 surgeries, three resuscitations, and countless scares for Sarah's family in her 22 years of life so far. Check out this [video by Sarah Dalton](#) on her life living with CHARGE syndrome, which is a leading cause of pediatric deaf blindness.

Video Fact Sheet on Hand Under Hand

The Idaho Deaf-Blind Project and its partners have created a video fact sheet on the all-important topic of Hand-Under-Hand. Please take a few minutes to check out this video. We hope everyone is using this well established practice and not using or modeling the hand-over-hand practice.



Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcERQWPnc2Y>



The Colorado Chapter for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

CAER Board Members

President:	Nancy Cozart	cozart_n@cde.state.co.us
Past President:	Brent Batron	bbatron@cocenter.org
Treasurer:	Heather Solberg	hwparsons@hotmail.com
Secretary:	Michelle Robinson	blindsign@yahoo.com
Members at Large:	Paula Conroy	paula.conroy@unco.edu
	Stephanie Crosen	Stephanie.crosen@summitk12.org
	Barb Galgano	bgalgano@cherrycreekschools.org
	Jeannie Lei	jlei@cherrycreekschools.org

Thanks to each of these good people for leading us to sustain a strong Colorado AER Chapter!

For membership information to join the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI), please go to: <https://aerbvi.org/>.

Your new or continued membership makes us Colorado AER Strong.

The Call for Presentations is Now Open!

Deadline to Submit: 2/3/2020

Do you have a best practice, hot topic, research or valuable information to share?

Themed "Gateway to Community," the AER International Conference 2020 program committee is currently accepting submissions for conference presentations. The Call for Presentations is open until February 3, 2020. We are especially interested in presentations that reflect the best thinking in the field and informed by practice, theory or research. We invite proposals that:

- Reflect innovation and cutting edge content.
- Stimulate and provoke discussion and audience engagement.
- Target new, mid-career or seasoned professionals.
- Provide diverse approaches for different types of learners.
- Explore issues important to professionals in the field.

AER is seeking two types of presentation proposals: papers, which are educational breakout sessions that are 1 hour, 1.5 hours or longer, and posters, which are poster display presentations. To learn more, please visit: [Submission Information](https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/conferences/aeric2018/info/) (<https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/conferences/aeric2018/info/>).



Submit your proposal: [AER International Conference 2020 Submissions](#)

Questions; please email conference@aerbvi.org



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 Colorado Department of Education. ✓ 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 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>



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 restricted significantly 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

Orientation & Mobility



SAVE THE DATES
June 22—25, 2020

Challenges for an Inclusive Society

Gothenburg, Sweden 2020

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The International Mobility Conference presents the “Challenges for an Inclusive Society” to focus on identifying the worldwide needs in regard to orientation and mobility in order to achieve an inclusive society, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The conference will build on interdisciplinary professional and academic work. Here we want to bring together researchers, practitioners and people with visual impairment and blindness in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and collaboration across different perspectives on orientation and mobility (O&M).

Topics to include:

- ***Learning, activity and participation***—The conference will highlight individuals of all ages that have to learn to lead a new life due to visual impairment or blindness, and put focus on the meaning of orientation and mobility skills for successful learning, where psychological, perceptual, existential and social aspects will be emphasized. A special focus will also be on children, youths, their families and schools in the process of participation; thereby focusing on the learning individual, the surroundings or the individual’s lifeworld, as well as on the content to be learned.
- ***The relation between the human being and the environment***—Orientation and mobility will be highlighted in their relational aspects, focusing on both the human being and the environment. This interconnection will involve physical, as well as social aspects of the environment. Subtopics to be included will be the public transport system, architecture, inclusive design as well as societal attitudes and participation in various areas of life.
- ***VISION 2020***—“The Right to Sight” is the global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness, which is a joint programme of the World Health Organization [WHO] and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness [IAPB]. The general themes of the IMC17 are in agreement with the VISION 2020 “A world in which nobody is needlessly visually impaired, where those with unavoidable vision loss can achieve their full potential” (WHO). The aim is to enlighten everyday problems due to visual impairment and blindness and to uncover new and potential solutions for living a healthy life.
- ***Theory and development of orientation and mobility***— Learning and education are involved in both O&M rehabilitation practice and theory. We want to expand this knowledge further and will invite scholars and practitioners to contribute to an enhanced theoretical knowledge in the field of O&M relevant for various ages and groups. There is also a need for developed evidence-based methods that can meet the needs and life-situations for children, youths, adults and elderly people with visual impairment and blindness all over the world. Education initiatives to intertwine theory and practice can also be focused within this theme.

For more information, go to: <https://ips.gu.se/english/cooperation/conferences/imc17>



Calendar of Events



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

- January 4, 2020 **World Braille Day**

- January 15 **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting** - CSDB campus
 Contact: Jim Olson - jolson@csdb.org

- January 15 **CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting** - CSDB campus
 Contact: Jackie Skinner - jskinner@csdb.org

- January 16 **Braille Challenge**—CSDB
 Contact: Diane Taylor at dtaylor@csdb.org

- January 16 **CAER Board meeting**—CCB or ZOOM
 Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

- January 18 **Arts & Crafts!**—Colorado Center for the Blind
 Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org

- January 23 **Assistive Technology Vendor/Resource Fair**
 Contact: Heather Parsons hwparsons@hotmail.com

- January 23 **Braille Challenge**—CSDB
 Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org

- January 23-25 **Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference**—Colorado Springs, CO
 Contact: Joyce Thiessen-Barret at Barrett_J@cde.state.co.us

- January 28 **ECC Parent Workshop - Sensory Efficiency for Parents of Children with Low Vision** - CSDB
 Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXgpEaBz820KFHsK61bDiuhhEechSjBX_mdvRtCJOaw3AQZQ/viewform

- January 30 **Metro Region TVI / COMS Meeting**—Aurora Public Schools
 Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org

- February 4 **ECC Parent Workshop - Sensory Efficiency for Parents of Children who are Blind** - CSDB
 Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeuNQJSIICKwlr-6WDdeuDfozBzwZDE83v8H5W-RyIM0p_CJQ/viewform

- February 6 **CAER Board meeting**—Colorado Center for the Blind or ZOOM
 Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

- February 10 **Washington DC Seminar Great Gathering**—Washington D.C.
 Contact: www.nfb.org





Calendar of Events

2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
February 19	CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB campus Contact: Jackie Skinner - jskinner@csdb.org												
February 13-17	Winter Mountain Mobility —Crested Butte, CO Contact: Mike Plansker at mike.e.plansker@adams12.org												
February 20-21	PEAK 2020 Conference on Inclusion Education —Denver, CO Register at PEAK Parent Center (https://www.tfaforms.com/4767297)												
March 1	See the Future Scholarship Applications Due For more information: www.seethefuture.org												
March 3	ECC Parent Workshop - Self Determination for Parents of Children with Low Vision - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdvseEmJV3aspjjaZophyN1VbAZT_RQLQg1fq4mN9XwX1HBA/viewform												
March 5	CAER Board meeting —Colorado Center for the Blind or ZOOM Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us												
March 10	ECC Parent Workshop - Assistive Technology Parents of Children with Low Vision - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfe9NcOc1X5uPj0QW_xd1awBljAsySS5w89u4NsMV26eve--A/viewform												
March 11	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - CSDB campus Contact: Jim Olson - jolson@csdb.org												
March 18	CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB campus Contact: Jackie Skinner - jskinner@csdb.org												
March 27	Insights Art Application Due For more information: https://nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/aph/app/uploads/2019/11/08144523/2020-InSights-Art-Entry-Form.pdf												
April 2	CAER Board meeting —Colorado Center for the Blind or ZOOM Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us												
April 2-4	Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference —Grand Junction, CO Contact: Joyce Thiessen-Barret at Barrett_J@cde.state.co.us												



Calendar of Events



2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
April 7	ECC Parent Workshop - Independent Living Skills for Parent of Younger Children - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe6MTOhW0Yifr7hceoC6EhxiSzdRcC4woF8hFD50naXVyf3ng/viewform											
April 9	CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB campus Contact: Jackie Skinner - jskinner@csdb.org											
April 14	ECC Parent Workshop - Independent Living Skills for Parents of Older Children - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe5u7y8bFS1Oq1tuzT8DzzyWg7la5QEaUoqam8UzG7SD33CGQ/viewform											
April 16	Metro Region TVI / COMS Meeting—Denver Public Schools Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org											
April 23	Vision Coalition—Colorado Talking Library Contact: Tanni Anthony @ Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us											
April 24-25	CDE Annual Orientation and Mobility Seminar – Cherry Creek School District Contact: Tanni Anthony— anthony_t@cde.state.co.us											
May 1	Cane Quest— CSDB campus Contact: Lisa VanDam at lvandam@csdb.org											
May 12	ECC Parent Workshop - Assistive Technology Parents of Children with Low Vision - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfe9NcOc1X5uPj0QW_xd1awBljAsySS5w89u4NsMV26eve--A/viewform											
May 13	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - CSDB campus Contact: Jim Olson - jolson@csdb.org											
May 14	CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting - CSDB campus Contact: Jackie Skinner - jskinner@csdb.org											
May 19	ECC Parent Workshop - Assistive Technology Parents of Children who are Blind - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScNPnv5IFo7X2G1kXg2-NSThVfEk2P4SenH642BRi4INe2ZnQ/viewform											
June 2	ECC Parent Workshop - Orientation and Mobility for Everyone - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScwFb-3HIsRo46J5zBwbk6P2uQgPNk2updFSI9H5trALI9v5Q/viewform											



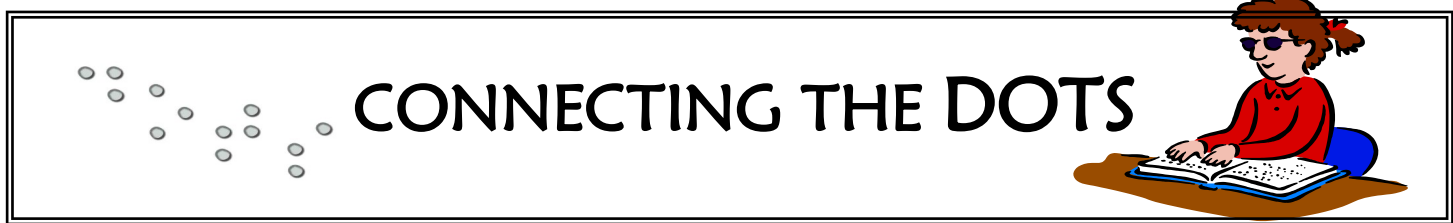
Calendar of Events

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

- June 9** **ECC Parent Workshop - Closing Party for Everyone - CSDB**
Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKFclpZL19nEbmqvK08kvHOqF_SG6IDA9q7k0ywXt670g/viewform
- June 21-26** **Summer Mountain Mobility** —Crested Butte, CO
Contact: Mike Plansker at mike.e.plansker@adams12.org
- June 22-25** **International Mobility Conference (IMC) 17** – Gothenburg, Sweden
For more information: <http://ips.gu.se/english/cooperation/conferences/imc17>
- June 30—July 5** **National Federation of the Blind Convention**—Houston, Texas
Contact: www.nfbco.org
- October 8-9, 2020** **American Printing House for the Blind Annual Meeting**– Louisville, KY
Contact: www.aph.org

2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

- October 7-8** **American Printing House for the Blind Annual Meeting** – Louisville, KY
Contact: www.aph.org



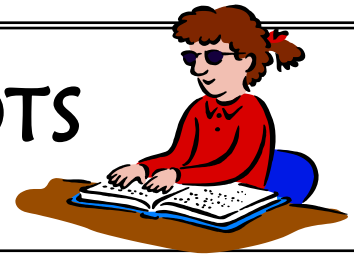

Braille Authority of North America
NCEO Braille Brief

The National Center on Educational Outcomes has a new brief on UEB implementation. It is a valuable resource explaining the history of the code change, a succinct EBAE & UEB comparison, misconceptions and facts about UEB and Nemeth Code and guidance for states.

Check it out at: [National Center on Educational Outcomes brief regarding UEB implementation](#)



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	Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us
Sarah Sonnier	(970) 245-5228	Sonnier_S@cde.state.co.us
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us

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



PEAK Parent Center 2020 Conference on Inclusive Education

[General Info](#) | [Presenters](#) | [Registration](#)



- Passionate about launching or forwarding Inclusive Education in your classrooms, schools and/or communities?
- Want to explore practical strategies and resources for Inclusive Education ensuring success for all students?
- Interested in the latest evidence-based research and emerging issues for Inclusive Education?

Mark your calendar and join us **February 20-21, 2020** at the Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel in beautiful Denver, Colorado.

Details, Details, Details

Get Connected - For the latest updates about sessions, presenters and all things inclusive education happening at the 2019 conference check us out:

[Website](#) [Join Our Mail List](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Meet you at the conference!

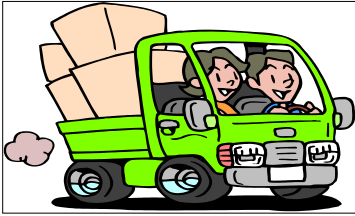


REGISTRATION information can be found at [PEAK's 2020 Conference on Inclusive Education](http://www.peakparent.org/conference_on_inclusive_education/registration-information) (http://www.peakparent.org/conference_on_inclusive_education/registration-information)

LOCATION & HOTEL Information for the [Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel](http://www.peakparent.org/conference_on_inclusive_education/location-and-hotel-information) at (http://www.peakparent.org/conference_on_inclusive_education/location-and-hotel-information)

Registration is now open! Save money and take advantage of the Early Registration rates which **expire January 17, 2020**. [Register online today](#); last year's conference sold out so don't delay!

The **Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel** is the location for all conference sessions and festivities. Conference attendees are eligible for **discounted room rates** when booked by January 24, 2020. [Learn more](#) and [reserve your room today!](#)



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Field Test of 4 to 24: App for Youth and Parents to Focus on Employment

Sign up by
December 31!

Are you the parent of a child who is blind or visually impaired, ages 4 to 24?

If so, we (The NRTC on Blindness & Low Vision at Mississippi State University) could truly use your help with field testing our new app, “4to24”.

You’ll be influential in supporting families of children and young adults with blindness and visual impairment in **fostering independence and building skills toward employment.**

The “4to24” app is designed for youth with blindness or visual impairment and their parents, to help focus on and prepare for employment starting from an early age.

It will send modules of information about different topic areas such as academics, technology, and social skills, based on the youth’s age and skill levels. Modules will also include a list of suggested activities that parents and youth can do to build skills related to each topic.

Field-test details

We are seeking parents of children or youth who are blind or visually impaired, ages 4 to 24, to test the parent version of our app.

The field test will involve creating an account in the app and using the app features for six months, as well as completing a series of surveys. Surveys will ask questions about preparation for future employment and expectations for the future, as well as seek feedback about how the app fits your needs.

We will ask you to use the app as you normally would and to complete surveys related to our study before, during, and after the 6-month trial period. The surveys should take between 10 to 30 minutes each, for a total of about 1.5 hours of time on surveys. **Participants who complete the final survey of the study will receive a thank-you gift card for \$35.**

If you’re interested in becoming a field tester for the app and participating in our study, please fill out the information form at this link: msstatecoe.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uaUIPCXctQWxal.

For assistance or further information, contact Anne Steverson (acc155@msstate.edu) or Karla Antonelli (kantonelli@colled.msstate.edu).

just for PARENTS

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.



**NATIONAL FAMILY
ASSOCIATION
FOR DEAF-BLIND**

**Empowering Families with
Individuals who are Deaf-Blind**



National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

Founded in 1983, the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC) is a membership organization of parents, educators, and friends of blind children reaching out to give each other vital support, encouragement, and information. They have thousands of members in all fifty states plus Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

The NOPBC offers hope, encouragement, information, and resources for parents of blind or low-vision children. NOPBC provides emotional support and a network for families. They also provide information, training, and resources to empower families to take an active role in guiding their child's development and education.



Their status is as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is the annual conference. Every year since it was established, the NOPBC has conducted an annual conference for parents and teachers of blind children as part of the national convention of the NFB. The program has grown to include five exciting days of workshops, training sessions, activities for all family members (including sighted siblings) and countless opportunities to meet blind adults and other families and children from around the country.

Most states have an NOPBC affiliate chapter. Colorado has one! For more information, call the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130.



2019- 2020 Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences

WHO: Colorado families who have a child with a disability. Both parents in a two-parent family are encouraged to attend. Single parents are encouraged to bring a support person who will also participate in the conference. (A support person is someone who is directly involved in the regular care of the child or youth with a disability.)

Directors of special education, principals, special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, health care and other Colorado professionals interested in the family and school partnership who work with children or youth with disabilities.

WHAT: Decades of research show that the participation of families in their child's education, through specific coordinating between home and school, results in improved outcomes (Jeynes, 2012). PEP Conferences bring together families and professionals and are designed to promote partnerships that are essential in supporting students with disabilities and their families in schools and the community. PEP is a non-specific disability conference that focuses on commonalities.

WHEN: PEP is held from 5:00 PM Thursday through 3:00 PM Saturday. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) pays for registration and meals, and pays for lodging **if a participant lives more than 35 miles from the hotel conference center.**

WHERE: In order to enable more families and professionals to participate, PEP Conferences are scheduled throughout Colorado.

Sessions

Parenting a Child with a Disability and Rebuilding Dreams
The Law and the Education of Children with Disabilities
Living with a Disability
Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Early Childhood Supports and Services
Transition IEP and more!

2019-2020 PEP Conferences

October 10-12, 2019
Fort Collins, CO

January 23-25, 2020
Colorado Springs, CO

April 2-4, 2020
Grand Junction, CO

Apply Now!

For more information and to apply online go to:
[The PEP Website](#)

Or contact:

CDE-ESSU-PEP
PEP Hotline: (303) 866-6846

jobs

IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with current vacancies for the current 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** (1 FTE) for Greeley Schools. For more information, please contact Nyla Buffington at nbuffington@greeleyschools.org
- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE) for Thompson School District in Loveland. For more information, please contact Charlie Carter at charlie.carter@thompsonschoos.org

Southern Region – Jobs

- ✓ **CSDB** - Please be in touch with Chelle Lutz for possible CSDB Openings in the School for the Blind. She can be reached at (719) 578-2100 or clutz@csdb.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) position in Cherry Creek School District effective immediately. For more information, please contact Frances Woolery Jones at fwoolery-jones@cherrycreekschools.org

TVIs and COMSs—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE teaching and support services licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing in the future with part-time or substitute work.

Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement! We are seeing many retired TVIs and O&M Specialist come back to contribute as subs for maternity leave, do contact work, and work at A Shared Vision. Magic!



VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2019

Persons in Attendance: Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Martin Becerra, Kyle Berns, Melinda Carter, Nancy Cozart, Jayme Cusimano, Julie Hutchinson, Julie King, and Jim Olson

Absent: Paula Conroy, Paula Landry, and Michelle Reed

Guests:

- Kyle Berns is representing CSDB School for the Blind
- Amy Campbell, State BVI Consultant from NC Office of Public Instruction
- Wendy Spirek, chief Strategy Office of the Children's Eye Physicians / CO Center for Eye Alignment / CO Family Eye Center / CO Family Optical

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
BVI	= Blind / Visually Impaired
CAER	= CO Chapter of the Association of the Education/Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired
CCB	= Colorado Center for the Blind
CDE	= Colorado Department of Education
CIMC	= Colorado Instructional Materials Center
COMS	= Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
CSDB	= Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
DVR	= Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ESSU	= Exceptional Student Services Unit
TVI/TSVI	= Teacher of students with blindness/visual impairments

MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
Anchor Center for Blind Children – Melinda Carter
Colorado AER Chapter – Nancy Cozart
Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Martin Becerra-Miranda
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
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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are grateful for our two guests today and will have dedicated time with them to discuss key issues.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

The topic of the Metro Region meetings has been to focus on the various parts of the IEP. Recently they looked at PLAAFPs and SMART Goals. They are also looking at rubrics across different domains. People are looking for ideas on biking options for students. It would be good to put this topic on listserv. At a recent meeting, they also discussed ways to increase the use the CDE Mentors more effectively. Would like to get a calendar of the district's professional days that could be used for training and support by the mentors. This would be an opportunity for dedicated time with the mentors.

Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

Updates: The last northern region meeting was held on October 4, 2019. At the meeting, the northern region TVIs were introduced to Paula Landry of A Shared Vision and Becky Porter and Laverne Dell from DVR about the various intervention services their programs provide. We spoke a great deal about the referral processes for both early intervention and transition services, as well. The group discussed the possibility of having transition-age students meet at a certain location and address some various transition-age life skills with the support of Becky, but this is still in the works.

The Northern Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held on November 7 and 8 and the Enight Skills Center in Ft. Collins. Eleven students from the Northern Region attended along with their parents and TVIs.

The next Northern Region meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2020. At this meeting, we will meet with Cathy Smyth from the Anchor Center, who will be providing a training on The Boehm-3 Assessment.

Discussion Items:

- ◇ *Updates on Eligibility criteria and consensus on the definition of specially designed instruction. Tanni said to stay tuned! She is hopeful the ECEA Rules will be open for this proposed amendment soon.*
- ◇ *CDE is no longer providing a temporary licensure authorization unless the TVI has earned the level of degree required for their service. This applies to Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as well. Tanni shared that a bachelor's or higher degree is required for all special education endorsements; special service providers must have earned the level of degree required for their area of service. O&M Specialists in training cannot be licensed on a Temporary Educator Eligibility authorization.*

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

We have been busy at our meetings in the Southern Region. We had a good discussion on Functional Vision Assessments; with the New TOAD and TADPOLE kits from APH available for everyone to explore.

Brian Smith from Magnisight of the Rockies, LLC demonstrated their new tablet/phone stand. Brian Smith email is sales@magnisightoftherockies.com

We had the chance to demo some new APH products: Four Little Corners book, Six Little Dots book, Adapted Science Materials Kit, Earth Science Tactile Graphics, Braille Trail Reader, and the Light Box Ledge for the mini and full size light box.

DVR presented on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-Ets), the DVR process for youth, Personal Adjustment Training and Summer Pre-Ets workshops. We also welcomed their new AT Specialist Showe Trela. Showe is a great resource for JAWS and Zoom Text training.

There is a new low vision doctor in town! Dr. Molly Dixon, OD. She practices low vision one day a week at Vision Institute with Dr. Blake Simmons.

We only have three meetings left this year. All are scheduled for 12:30 - to 3:00 p.m. in Lions Conference Room at CSDB. Remember to bring your state issued ID to check in and pick up your visitor badge. Contact: Jim Olson, jolson@csdb.org or (719) 578-2195. Dates are: Wednesday, January 15, 2020; Wednesday, March 11, 2020; and Wednesday, May 13, 2020.

Discussion Items:

- ◇ *What kind of time are other TVIs providing to students who are diagnosed with CVI? Can we help each other with these students? The CDE Mentors are available to help with how best to support students with CVI. One person shared that she gives extensive amounts of time to the teams, serving as a speaker on CVI to help educate the team members. Another person shared that she does give an hour per week to the student and the team; sharing materials and how they can be used with the student. This is tempered based on the team's experience and training to work with a particular child. There are also concerns of how to differentiate service time with students with CVI because of their unique needs when it appears that one child has more time than another to other school staff / parents. Services may range from weekly to monthly services. Some services are more consultant-/coaching heavy to ensure there is an understanding of accommodation implementation needs, based on the goal in the IEP. Progress monitoring data should be used to support service time. The other balance is evidence of implementation of accommodations. May want to build in an accountability system of the accommodations to then take data on student performance. We may also may want to train others on the impact of CVI and the need for the accommodations. The training is key – one district has been highly proactive with educating others because of the high percentage of learners with CVI on the caseloads. TVIs providing to students who are diagnosed with CVI? Can we help each other with these students?*
- ◇ *Who in your districts are paying for/providing laptops/iPads for our students? Vision program? The student's school? Other methods? In some districts, this is built into the VI Budgets. In others, the VI Budget may have funds, but they also may want to look for other avenues of funding (e.g., SWAAC budget, grants, etc.). Some districts do not have a VI specific budget.*

Western Region (Julie King)

Congratulations to Brooke and Chris Miller on the birth of their son, Hunter, who was born on November 15th. Brooke, Hunter, and family are doing very well. The western slope TVIs are planning a meeting sometime in the spring. Also, we are in the process organizing a ski trip with Foresight Skiing. So far there is a small handful of students interested in attending. Finally, Meghan Crosby expressed her appreciation for the support we receive from CDE. This includes conferences, CIMC, Vision Coalition, and the newsletter.

Discussion items:

- ◇ *If a student has indirect services, should the student have a LMP or is it sufficient to cover the need in accommodations? One TVI recently got a transfer student who is on consult with no LMP but they qualify as VI. If a child is eligible as a child with visual impairment, including blindness, it is a state requirement that the child have a LMP? A question is what does "on consult" mean – is the TVI providing specially designed instruction or just checking into see how things are going or checking to ensure accommodations are being implemented?*
- ◇ *One district is struggling with access for braille readers to new curriculum in computer classes. Students are learning coding skills, which is very visual, and JAWS doesn't work really well with it. Has anyone else run into these issues and what are they doing? CU may be doing some work on this area.*

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Michelle Reed)

Staff Updates: We have a new O&M/VRT instructor in the Pueblo office and her name is Rebecca (Becca) Gardom. We have a new Assistive Technology Instructor in Colorado Springs and her name is Michelle Trela. So BLVS has a full staff of both counselors and PAT instructors. Yea!!

The waitlist for Denver Metro Center Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) program is around 6-7 months. This year we have one active Job Club in the North Metro Region. We are always happy to start additional job clubs in other school districts in collaboration with TVI and O&M Specialists in the school. DVR Job Club is designed as an after school activity that introduces students to Work Readiness Skills. The Personal Adjustment Training Unit at DVR and TVI/O&Ms will co-facilitate the Job Club. Job Club meets once a month for an hour. Our Job Club's modules offer students the opportunity to discuss and engage in activities to develop skills including:

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Professionalism
- ✓ Career exploration activities
- ✓ Interviewing skills
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Daily living activities
- ✓ Resume building



Please contact [Michele Reed](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us), michele.reed@state.co.us or 303-866-3512 if you interested in teaming up to create a club in your district.

DVR/BLVS are developing workshops and volunteer activities during school breaks like last year. I will be sending announcements and flyers to Tanni to distribute to teachers statewide.

To date, we completed one volunteer activity at the Denver Rescue Mission last month. In addition to food preparation for dinner service, we donated personal care/grooming kits that the students in the North Metro Job Club assembled to focus on the soft skill of TEAMWORK.

In January 2020, we have another volunteer activity at SAME (So All May Eat). SAME Café is a donation-based, fair exchange restaurant that serves healthy food to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. SAME is located at 2023 E Colfax Ave Denver, CO, 80206. We are schedule on January 3, 2020 9:30-12:30pm. Volunteers will be put to work prepping food, serving, dishwashing, cleaning tables, & doing maintenance. Lunch will be provided.

We are currently working on workshops for Spring breaks. Stay tuned!!

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that is Colorado's leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind or visually impaired or have vision concerns. Their goal is to ensure that all families of children with visual impairments, from birth to age three, have access to and receive essential early intervention services specific to blindness, visual impairment or vision concerns from a community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals. Services include: home-based services and specialty co-visits; hospital visits and consultation services for in-patient children; community visits, ophthalmology appointments, childcare and educational programs; community outreach programs; Family Assessments; Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP); Functional Vision Assessments (FVA), initial and annual reviews, including learning styles, learning media assessments, Teller Acuity testing; transition support from Part C to Part B; Community Centered Board transdisciplinary team meetings; professional development trainings and presentations in pediatric blindness and visual impairment; and internship opportunities for students in pursuit of degrees in early intervention or visual impairment services. For more information, contact Paula Landry at plandry@asharedvision.org.

ASV has experienced record growth in 2019. The staff provided more than 2,200 in-home service visits with approximately 200 children. Their 15 teachers supported 14 Community Centered Boards encompassing 50 of Colorado's 64 counties. ASV is continuing to offer educational programs to medical and therapeutic providers on pediatric blindness and visual impairments, their effect on a child's overall development and basic strategies that can be used to engage with a child who is blind or visually impaired.

With support from the Colorado Avalanche hockey team, A Shared Vision celebrated their third year of service with a party at the Pepsi Center on October 26. One of their families spoke about how their EI-TVI helped them understand how to nurture their son and give them hope.

A Shared Vision also has a new addition to their family. Co-founder Stefanie Hamilton and her husband Lee are the proud parents of Benjamin, who was born on September 17!

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Melinda Carter)

Our biggest news at Anchor is the hiring of our new Executive Director in November, Anchor Center said goodbye to our Executive Director of four years, Heather Cameron, as she begins a new life in Florida with her daughter and grandchildren. Knowing of Heather's planned departure, in early September, Anchor Center embarked on an Executive Search process. Our search was successful and we are pleased to welcome Meghan Klassen as our new Executive Director! Meghan will officially take the helm on Monday, January 6, 2020.

Widely recognized for her accomplishments in early childhood and special education, Meghan earned her Bachelor's degree in journalism and marketing from Creighton University and her Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Texas-Austin. Most recently she served as the Executive Director at The Rise School, an inclusive preschool for children with and without special needs. Among her many accomplishments during her seven (7) years as the Executive Director, Meghan led the nonprofit school through tremendous growth and transformation including more than doubling their revenue, elevating programs, and leading the launch of a capital campaign to renovate and expand the school. Today, The Rise School has a waitlist of more than 100 children. Prior to serving as Executive Director, Meghan was a pre-K teacher with The Rise School in San Antonio, Texas, and Denver. Her experience also includes volunteering at an orphanage in the Dominican Republic for children with disabilities and in San Antonio for low-income families of children with disabilities.

Colorado Chapter of AER (Nancy Cozart)

What Has Been Happening:

- Training on the IEP Process was held on November 2nd at the NFB Conference in Fort Collins. The focus was on creating SMART Goals and the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) sections of the IEP. Based on the number of attendees, it became a round table discussion with facilitators, Nancy Cozart and Tanni Anthony.
- Mini-grants were awarded at the November board meetings.
- Wreaths Across America was December 14th at Fort Logan Cemetery. Thanks, Barb Galgano and Heather Solberg, for organizing this service activity with colleagues, clients and students!

What Is Coming Up:

- Vendor Fair will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) on January 23, 2020 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.. This will be in conjunction with the Denver Regional Braille Challenge. We are encouraging consumers, agencies, school personnel, students and families to attend!
- Spero Winery fundraiser will be held February 22, 2020 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.. Tickets are \$50/per person. It will be located at 3316 W. 64th Ave, Denver, CO. The phone number is 720-519-1506
- White Cane Day 2020 Fundraiser - Look for details soon!
- King Soopers' Cards as an ongoing fundraiser is in the works. Details coming soon!

Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Martin Becerra-Miranda)

Mentoring Program: The 2019/2020 CCB/CSDB Mentoring Program has been a great success! The Youth Services team at the Colorado Center for the Blind and CSDB principal Jamie Lugo have been collaborating over the last several years on a monthly mentoring program. Starting this 2019 – 2020 school year a more robust and fulfilling Mentoring Program has been offered to a wider range of blind students. Director of Youth Services Martin Becerra-Miranda, along with four student mentors have been traveling to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind on the first Wednesday of every month to work with blind students ranging from kindergarten age to seniors in High School. The purpose of the mentoring program is to provide blind students with positive adult role models and to instruct in the areas of Communication, Reading, Career Education, Employment/College Preparation, Independent Living Skills, Recreation, Problem Solving, Self-Advocacy, and Social interaction.

FAST Program (Fun Activities and Skills Training): The participation for our 2019/2020 FAST Program has increased significantly. We found it important to ensure that family members and friends of our blind students felt welcomed to attend and get involved in these programs. We have averaged upwards of 16 participants for the different activities thus far. FAST is held on the second Friday or Saturday of each month during the school year, flyers with details are made available prior to the program.

FAST Calendar:

- December 14, The Colorado Center for the Blind and the Denver Chapter of the NFB is happy to invite all to attend the yearly Christmas Party from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. There will be food, caroling, white elephant gift exchange (\$15 gift value), oh and Santa Claus may stop by if time allows.
- January 18, Arts & Crafts! Learn about and get hands on with tactile art or put together your very own woodshop project. Tactile learning is a key component to full integration in school so let's make sure our students know how it works, when it works, and how to advocate for it in the classroom. 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at CCB, lunch will be provided.

NFB of Colorado State Convention: The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado held the 2019 state convention in Fort Collins on Thursday, October 31 through Sunday, November 3. The Colorado Center for the Blind provided funding for four high school students to attend the convention. We hope to continue providing this funding for future state conventions. The goal is to have at least 10 high school students attending the 2020 NFB of Colorado State Convention next fall.

Denver Metro Braille Challenge: The Colorado Center for the Blind, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Colorado Association of Education and Rehabilitation together invite you to participate in a day to include the 2020 Denver Metro Regional Braille Challenge followed by the Assistive Technology Vendor/Resource Fair. Join us at the Colorado Center for the Blind on Thursday, January 23, 2020, lunch will be provided.

The Denver Metro Regional Braille Challenge will be taking place from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. For those new to braille, we will have a rookie component to our programing that will include tactile literacy with renowned tactile artist Ann Cunningham, as well as many other activities to get everyone excited about using Braille. For questions regarding the Braille Challenge or to register your student, please contact Debbie Haberkorn at dhaberkorn@cldb.org

The Assistive Technology Vendor/Resource Fair: (1:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) is open to everyone including professionals in the field, community members, parents, children, etc. This fair will give you the opportunity to talk to experts about various devices, try out different devices, and get contact information from participating vendors. Free ACVREP credit available for professionals!

For questions concerning the Vendor Fair, please contact Heather Parsons at hwp Parsons@hotmail.com or call (303) 505-2758.

2020 NFB Washington Seminar: The Colorado Center for the Blind will be providing scholarships for up to three blind students to attend the 2020 NFB Washington Seminar from Sunday, February 9 through Wednesday, February 12. "At our Washington Seminar, members of the National Federation of the Blind convene to learn about and advocate for legislative initiatives that will improve the lives of blind Americans. Approximately three legislative initiatives are chosen for priority attention each year." Deadline to submit essays has passed. Director of Youth Services Martin Becerra-Miranda will be reviewing applications and informing scholarship recipients in the coming weeks.

2020 Summer Programs

Confidence Camp, A BELL Academy: Dates: June 8 – 19, 2020

Ages: 5 to 10

This two-week day program is filled with learning, challenge and fun. Your child 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 will have fun swimming, rock climbing, making a tactile art piece and going on exciting field trips.

No Limits to Learning, Transition Youth Summer Program: Dates: June 5 - July 31, 2020 Ages: 14 to 21

This eight-week residential program will change your life. You will live in an apartment with other students and a residential counselor. 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 Houston, Texas. Expand your skill set in STEM fields with hands-on experiments using accessible, non-visual tools and strategies. College coming up soon? Learn what it takes to be successful, including how to navigate the ever-changing landscape of higher education. You will learn that being blind will not limit you from pursuing your dreams.

Short Programs (pick one or two): Looking for a shorter training program? We offer three different modules 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.

World of Work, Pre-Employment Program: Dates: June 5 - June 26, 2020 Ages: 14 to 21

Challenge yourself with new experiences! You will travel the Denver Metro area via bus and light rail to participate in a 20 to 30 hour internship. Meet with blind people who work in a variety of professions, develop confidence and your own style for networking, practice your interviewing skills, and put together a resume and cover letter.

Challenge and Adventure, Self-Advocacy Program: Dates: June 5 – June 19, 2020 Ages: 11 to 21

Practice guide running, play goalball and hockey, learn self-defense, go whitewater rafting and much more. Prepare healthy & delicious foods, learn about using a shopper's assistant and maintaining a nutritious diet. On the more relaxing side, try yoga and develop an exercise routine that works for you and your needs.

Cracking the College Code, College Prep Program: Dates: July 1 - July 31, 2020 Ages: 16 to 21

Develop the skills you need to be successful in college as a blind student. Expand your skill set with accessible tools and strategies for chemistry, biology, statistics, robotics and more. Practice self-advocacy and learn how to navigate the unfamiliar new landscape of higher education. Not enough? Join all summer program participants in Houston, Texas for the 2020 NFB national convention. Meet other blind students, successful blind professionals, and attend several student-oriented workshops.

Contact: Martin Becerra-Miranda, Director of Youth Services

(303)778-1130 extension 223 or email mbecerra@cocenter.org

Visit the Colorado Center for Blind website at www.cocenter.org for more information.

Also in addition to all the other good stuff, CCB has partnered with Colorado Visionaries Blind Hockey Club (CVBH). CVBH is recruiting skaters and volunteers to help teach. No experience is necessary for either. The Colorado Visionaries Blind Hockey Program was founded in January 2018. The team began regular practices immediately after a highly successful Try Hockey Event sponsored by the Avalanche at the Pepsi Center. The team has a roster of 27 athletes, several of whom are youth players. Check out the [registration link for the "Try Blind Hockey"](http://tryhockeyforfree.com/10468) (<http://tryhockeyforfree.com/10468>) for the event on January 9 from 3 – 6 p.m. event at the Pepsi Center.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

Federal Quota Census 2020: The next federal quota census day occurs on Monday, January 6, 2020.

New requirement this year: Based on guidance from CDE, we are requiring a signed parent consent form for every student in the statewide registration database. We have revised our parent consent form so that only one form covers the consent to share personally identifiable student information (PII) with the CDE, CSDB, and CIMC for purposes of the statewide registration and count; and share PII with the CDE, CSDB, CIMC, and APH for purposes of the federal quota census. The form has been revised and is being translated into Spanish. It will be posted to the CIMC website as soon as it has finished the accessibility check.

Book Orders for 2020-2021 School Year: Your due date to submit book orders is April 1, 2020. Please remember to work with your Directors and curriculum departments to include the recommended NIMAS/MathML language into your textbook purchasing contracts. Sample language is available on the CIMC website.

CIMC Website: The website pages are continually being updated. The new infant registration form is now complete and available. It will be posted to the website when it has gone through an accessibility check with a JAWS user who is blind. The registration form for ages 3-21 is in the process of being revised.

Please be attentive to the cause of visual impairment on the registration form. The cause should be an eye condition associated with visual impairment, as opposed to myopia, sensory nystagmus (which is a symptom of poor vision caused by an ocular condition), amblyopia, strabismus, or even other medical conditions, such as cerebral palsy or Down syndrome. Be prepared for questions coming from Tanni or Jim on “questionable responses” for this field on the registration form.

Staff News: Lori Wilson has resigned from the CIMC for another work opportunity. She will be missed!

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo / Kyle Berns)

School Events: We hosted our annual Parent-Teacher conferences in October. School for the Blind had 70% attendance at the conferences. The Mental Health team facilitated Bully Awareness activities in October. Activities included taking time to think about the little things we can do every day to be kind to each other. Safe-to-Tell presenters educated our students, ensuring they know how and why it is important to report concerning information. Preschool and elementary students dressed up in Halloween costumes for their annual trick or treating parade around the CSDB campus. White Cane Day was celebrated at Acacia Park with students, families and community members. The PRIDE Band and Bulldog Band performed, a guest speaker inspired the crowd, and student speakers educated the community about White Cane Day and its significance in the blind community. The secondary team hosted an assistive technology day to ensure students are set up for success with their technology and have the basic skills in place to be as independent as possible with their schoolwork in and out of the classroom. A second set of 16 students in the special education program from UCCS are observing teachers of the visually impaired to learn more about serving students with a variety of abilities. The Colorado Center for the Blind continues to visit our students every first Wednesday for their monthly mentor time spending time with students in our elementary, middle, and high school programs. The fall music show for our elementary students was a success on Thursday, November 21st.

Upcoming Events:

- December 17th, Winter Performance, 6th-12th Grade Music Classes, 6:30pm in Gottlieb
- January 16th, Braille Challenge, 9:00 a.m., Lions and Adams Buildings
- January 28th, Parent Involvement Workshop, Sensory Efficiency for Parents of Students with Low Vision, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center
- February 4th, Parent Involvement Workshop, Sensory Efficiency for Parents of Students who are Blind, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center
- March 3rd, Parent Involvement Workshop, Self-Determination for Parents of Students with Low Vision, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center
- March 10th, Parent Involvement Workshop, Self-Determination for Parents of Students who are Blind, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center
- April 7th, Parent Involvement Workshop, Independent Living Skills for Parents of Elementary Students, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center
- April 14th, Parent Involvement Workshop, Independent Living Skills for Parents of Secondary Students, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center
- May 1st, Cane Quest, 9:00am Across the CSDB Campus
- May 12th, Parent Involvement Workshop, Assistive Technology for Parents of Students with Low Vision, 6:00 p.m., Adams Media Center

CSDB Outreach Services (Jayme Cusimano)

CSDB Outreach hosted a hiking event with Hike for Life at Fox Run Regional Park on November 4, 2019. Two TVIs and three students attended. Students had the opportunity to trial different cane tips on gravel, snow, and ice. While learning history about the area and local plants and animals, students explored “twisted” trees, modified by the Ute Indians for generations.

CSDB Outreach provided a training to MGA Homecare on November 7, 2019 covering topics requested by service providers, including basic strategies for working with individuals with CVI, as well as the nine areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) and how additional service providers can reinforce ECC skills taught by TVIs/O and M Specialists.

CSDB Outreach and the School for the Blind are planning a Goal Ball Extravaganza for all ages to be held at CSDB in February 2020. The event will introduce students to the game and provide an opportunity to play with the CSDB Goalball team. A packed lunch social will follow. If you are interested in bringing students to this event, please contact Jayme Cusiman at jcusimano@csdb.org.

Sara Noel is on the International Orientation and Mobility Online Symposium Planning Committee. The agenda is set and registration is open. If you're interested in attending this event January 29-31, 2020, for further information and registration information please visit the International Orientation and Mobility Online Symposium (<https://www.orientationandmobilitysymposium.com>).

The Braille Challenge will be held on January 23rd at the Colorado Center for the Blind. They are adding a Rookie Croup. Registration deadline is Dec. 13th. 6 confirmed rookies, 9 apprentice (grades 1-2), 1 freshman (grade 3-4), 2 Soph. (grades 5-6), 1 Junior Varsity (grades 7-9), and 2 Varsity (grades 10-12)

CSDB had an Independent Program Review that included "outside" professionals collecting data on the effectiveness of programs and services at CSDB, as well as needs both at the school and throughout the state. As the result of the Program Review and recommendations made by the Review team, all of CSDB's resources both human and monetary are being reviewed and reprioritized. A strategic planning process will be conducted during February 12 – 15, 2020 to collect additional needs from constituents throughout the State. The area of services for students who are blind/visually impaired will be a focus of data collection. Teachers will be offered an opportunity to provide feedback about the needs for services and supports provided through CSDB's Outreach Programs and at the School. Opportunities for participation will be announced early in 2020.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are entering the third year of our five year grant cycle. The project's mission is free technical assistance to parents and service 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 GOALS: Goal One: To collaborate with State, Local Education, Agencies, and Local Agencies to implement a statewide system to identify Colorado children and youth, 0-21 years, of age, who are deaf-blind, and to heighten awareness of deaf-blindness. Goal Two: To ensure family members of children of are deaf-blind have the training and information needed to maintain and improve productive partnerships with service providers and contribute to the academic and functioning outcomes of their children. Goal Three: To increase awareness, knowledge, and skills of EIS providers, general / special educators, and related service providers regarding evidence-based practices that will promote academic achievement and improve results for children and youth with deaf-blindness.

PROJECT STAFF: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are co-directors on the grant project. Wendy Stoltman and Shelley Moats are our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist for the project. Both 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 CHILD COUNT: The Child Count Data for December 1, 2018 revealed a total of 147 children and youth in Colorado who are deaf-blind. There are 85 boys and 62 girls on the Child Count. A total of 15 children exited from the previous year's count. We identified 19 new children. There are currently 16 infants and toddlers with deaf-blindness identified across the state. We have 113 children, ages three to 17, and 18 youth who are 18-21 years old. We are seeing an increase in children with cochlear implants, as well as CVI. Also we are seeing an increase in interveners being used in the school districts. The most common conditions identified include CHARGE syndrome, Usher Type 1 and 2, and Down syndrome. The new Child Count Forms for December 1, 2019 are in the mail to agency / school district contacts no later than the end of this month.

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.

Interveners: We are receiving more requests for information about interveners or assistance with hiring and training interveners. We have work to do to equalize an understanding of this role. The project is currently sponsoring a course on interveners with seven people involved! Gina Herrera is leading this important work.

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

SUMMER INSTITUTE / TRAININGS: We have a date, a location, and speaker for the 2020 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs! The training will be held on June 30 – July 1, 2020 at Front Range Community College. The trainer will be Megan Mogan and her topic will be tactile strategies for learners with deaf-blindness. The Save the Date Flyer will be sent out by early January with more information about the content.

WESTERN REGION EARLY INTERVENTION CONFERENCE: Colorado was the host site of the WREIC on September 11-13, 2019. The preconference session was on September 11th and featured Dr. Corinna Bauer, who is a neuroscientist whose research focuses on characterizing the visual dysfunctions observed in individuals with cerebral visual impairments and how these relate to brain structure and function. 75 TVIs attended this session. The next WREIC will be in September 2022 in Utah.

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: The 2020 Annual CDE Seminar is scheduled for April 24th and 25th, 2020 and will be held in the Cherry Creek School District. The Friday April 24th session(s) are still being finalized and Dr. Penny Rosenblum will be the featured speaker on April 25th on the *updated Finding Wheels: A Curriculum for Non-drivers with Visual Impairments for Gaining Control of Transportation Needs*. Stay tuned for a flyer and conference registration.

CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: Five Low Vision Evaluation Clinics are scheduled for this school year. Thus far, we have had the Western, Southern, and Northern Clinics. We thank our Regional LVE Clinic Coordinators: Angela Sims (Western Region), Debbie Haberkorn (Southern Region), Liz Weider (Northern Region) and Nancy Knight (Metro Region). We thank our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Team of Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, Jim Olson, and Debbie Haberkorn.

Recruitment and Retention: Currently we are doing pretty well in filling our TVI positions. We have two openings in Denver currently. Please be in touch with Tanni about expected vacancies. 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 1,200 families across the state. The database is used to mail out the Keeping in Touch newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate addresses 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.

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 posted on the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness website. It includes practice multiple choice items and braille samples.

The process of ensuring that school-based TVIs in Colorado are braille competent is going very well. Since the 2016 Braille Refresher Course, over 39 TVIs and braillists have demonstrated competency in the Unified Braille Code using the CDE testing materials. Mentors have been provided to support TVIs in this process. *Discussion: The goal is to provide as much support to our new TVIs in their efforts to demonstrate braille competency.*

It is important for TVIs to understand the new Fall 2019 excerpt to the CDE Braille Competency Guidelines:

"..If the licensed teacher endorsed in the area of visual impairment, including those on Temporary or Emergency Authorizations, does not demonstrate braille competency before the first semester of the second school year of employment (consecutive or not) with one or more Colorado administrative units, the CDE will require written documentation of the following assurances from the Special Education Director(s) who employs this individual:

- *Assurance that the individual is being supervised and supported in his or her work with students with visual impairment, including blindness.*
- *Assurance that another licensed teacher endorsed in the area of visual impairment and who has demonstrated braille competency, will oversee this individual's completion of Learning Media Assessments and development of the state-required Learning Media Assessment Plan, which are designed to determine and document whether a student will be a braille reader.*
- *Assurance that another licensed teacher endorsed in the area of visual impairment and who has demonstrated braille competency will oversee the individual's instruction to a student(s) who is an identified braille reader."*

If braille competency is not demonstrated by the end of the first semester of the second year of employment, a citation of noncompliance will be issued to the AD of hire that will require a Corrective Action Plan.

BVI Coach/Mentor Project: We have two amazing veteran TVIs/O&M Specialists who can provide free technical assistance to school-based TVIs/Orientation and Mobility Specialists. They are Shelley Moats and Wendy Stoltman. To request a coach/mentor, contact Tani at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CDE BVI Budget for 2020-21:

- Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- Western Region Early Intervention Conference
- Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- Keeping in Touch Newsletter
- VI Coach / Mentor Project
- CDE O&M Seminar
- Vision Coalition
- UEB Math Training

Discussion: We talked about training needs of the TVIs. The requirement of the CDE ESSU is that we are requiring training on evidence-based practices that are defensible in the literature. Tanni discussed an upcoming READ Act requirement for all K-3 teachers to be trained on the science of reading during the 2020-21 school year. There also may be a requirement for these educators to then take a state test specific to reading knowledge and skills. Whether this requirement will include teachers of students with visual impairment has not yet been determined. As we discussed the most recent statistics on our K-3 learners who have participated in the READ Act screenings, we are concerned that 43% of this population was identified as having a significant reading deficiency. These findings are representational of learners under the eligibility category of visual impairment, including blindness. They do not include the children with additional disabilities. The group recommended that the focus on the Fall 2020 State Conference be on Blindness/Visual Impairment focus on the science of reading. We also discussed whether the Mentor / Coach project should continue.

UEB Technical with Amy Campbell

Amy Campbell is the State Consultant on Blindness/Visual Impairment with the North Carolina Office of Public Instruction. She shared their journey specific to becoming a complete UEB State.

In 2014, North Carolina began their journey with UEB. They were very thoughtful and intentional with the transfer to UEB. They did a literature review on UEB Technical. The very term UEB Technical can have some edges, as it may feel different than what other countries use for terminology. The literature review in January 2015, they also did stakeholder meetings (one specific to literary needs and one specific to math). They used a decision-making process. Their stakeholders were broad, but intimate and included about 25 members. They asked the question about what they wanted from a braille code. They were not interested in pitting one code against the other. They used a facilitator who was a third party. Through answering those questions, they made lists on what were MUSTS. At the time, they understood the press releases from BANA to mean that BANA adopted UEB as a complete code. That was the lens they used to look at their statewide process.

North Carolina's MUSTS:

- To promote math and science literacy
- To promote college and career readiness
- To be competitive in a global society
- Aligned with all student's needs, including those with additional disabilities
- Supporting forward and backward translation with software
- Flexibility to be used in all digital environments

Then they did a cross walk of the two codes. It was determined that UEB as a complete code was the only code that could meet those musts. From that point, they put forth the recommendation to adopt the full UEB. They had a very strategic implementation plan. This is the last school year of the transition, with the intent that all students will be fully transitioned. They have brought in experts for training – including Darleen Bogart and Dr. FM D'Andrea. They did professional development on the general code and overarching math components. Every year since this time, there has been training on UEB. In 2017, they broke it down to school groups with trainings specific to age ranges, such as elementary math, then middle school and high school. All training has been aligned with standard course of study across each of the grade levels. In November, they did their last professional development and this was completed with in-house expertise. The teachers now have the resources. They have a listserv – with a monthly posting of UEB Moments for TVIs and braillists to share what they were doing to train students. They have done webinars within the state for their teachers to offer a Question and Answer opportunity. They do have a Prison Braille Program that does all of their transcription for tests. They do have the provision that schools can make requests in a different code, if needed.

November 2015 – BANA gave a press release on additional clarification that the decision to use UEB or Nemeth with a UEB context should be made on a braille student's individual needs. "UEB is the default code in North Carolina for Braille Instruction. The use of the complete UEB code for Literary and Technical (including math and science) materials are required unless the student's IEP Team determines that an alternate code is needed for Technical (including math and science) materials to access FAPE." (per the NC flyer on UEB).

Amy has done a report out on what different states are doing across the country based on an informal survey. They have learned that NC is not a true minority. Twenty-one states noted they recognize UEB as a complete code and even a default code. More similarities than differences. Florida is a choice state and, yet, in the informal survey there, over 50% of their students are receiving access to the full UEB.

Current Recommended Resources: In October 2019, the National Center on Educational Outcomes. It is factual based and very helpful. Tanni has sent this out to Colorado TVIs. The Royal Institute has an excellent UEB Technical Resource Manual. The cost is about \$25. APH is working on a reference guide for Nemeth and for UEB technical.

ACT / College Boards: North Carolina is an ACT state. In 2017, North Carolina had an overwhelming number of students who had transitioned to the complete UEB Code. As such, they needed to act quickly to ensure the ACT was ready for these students. They were able to get ACT to offer the test in UEB. There has been a tremendous amount of advocacy to work with College Board to offer UEB. There was a letter from MA. NC has a letter that is going through the vetting process that will also be sent to College Board. On the College Board website, there is a listing of their

accommodations. There is a statement about “the accommodations are not limited to those posted.” They have used this statement as a way to ask for UEB. It will be important for students to apply for the UEB accommodation to highlight the numbers who are asking for UEB.

Literature Base: Amy is working with Dr. Tessa McCarthy to address whether one code is easier or harder than another / is there something that would be better for one kind of student over another. Other English speaking countries have used, with success, the complete UEB Code.

Anecdotal Information: There is anecdotal information from braille users who support the ease of the UEB codes. Amy recently talked about a situation of a group of students who did a transition to full UEB. They started in January and all chose to take the May exams in UEB. There was not one student who picked Nemeth within the UEB context. With that said, we do not have a literature base on this topic. They do have students who are still using Nemeth. They are largely students in the later grades, older high school students. For students who are new to North Carolina, Amy is not sure of the specifics of who may come in with Nemeth expectations. Amy is not aware of any sticky situations!

Textbooks: North Carolina has a textbook adoption list and schools can also make their own local decisions. If schools tap into the adopted list, the NC will use the prison braille program to create the braille books. The majority of the schools operate off the text-book list and on their own. NC does not have an IMC, they have students without textbooks because teachers are not using textbooks. They advertise heavily in the spring of each school year to identify book needs to get the needed files for students. This is different in Colorado, which is an open territory state.

Certification in Technical: A transcriber course is in process with Cloverbrook. This will give access to actual certification. Amy thought they are taking 26 beta testers. There is currently not a proofreading certification.

Discussion: *There is a lot to ponder and discuss ahead. We do not have a Prison Braille System in Colorado and the vendors who can prepare math text books are rare. Colorado is an open territory state and we have many different math texts. With that said, our CDE Assessment Unit is preparing tests in complete UEB and we have TVIs who are actively teaching only UEB to their students and more than are interested in this direction as a State.*

Needs in the Medical Community with Wendy Spirek

Wendy represents a community-based private practice. They include Children’s Eye Physicians. Children’s Eye Physicians currently offers our community seven Board Certified Ophthalmologists, all Fellowship Trained in Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus. Have three metro offices. They fly a pediatric ophthalmologist into Grand Junction on a regular basis. They want to know about eligibility for children identified with visual impairment, including blindness in Colorado school districts. They are interested in information and training. They are upping their engagement with public school districts in the Front Range about failed vision screenings. They are concerned about the number of children they see who have failed vision screenings, but are late to coming in for eye care.

- Eligibility Process: It might be helpful, once we are on the other side of the updated Visual Impairment, including Blindness eligibility category criteria, to develop a simple explanation document that details how eligibility works within the public schools. What is the eye doctor role, what is the school district role, etc.?
- Vision Screening Failure: The CDE K-12 Vision Screening referral process is as follows:
Following the initial referral, the responsibilities of the school nurse does not end. Ensuring that students receive care from an eye care professional is the most essential step of the screening program. Unfortunately, there are many barriers that interfere with successful vision referral follow-up. Considering these barriers can help the school nurse individualize their approach to each student’s unique situation.

Vision referral follow up steps:

1. *The completed vision referral forms should be returned to the school nurse. Information provided by the eye care professional should be reviewed, shared with teachers if appropriate, and documented in the student’s school health care record.*
2. *If there is no response from the parent regarding the initial referral within 30 days, a second contact should be made with the student and/or parent regarding the status of the referral.*



colorado connections

- ◆ Congratulations to **Stefanie** and **Lee** Hamilton on the birth of their son, Benjamin Sherwood Hamilton, who was born on September 17th, weighing in at 8 pounds, 10 ounces. So happy for this special family!
- ◆ We are grateful for **Jim Olson** who attended the American Printing House for the Blind Annual meeting in Kentucky. He attended informational sessions sponsored by the National Prison Braille Forum. He also attended sessions for Instructional Resource Centers for the Blind/Visually Impaired and a session related to Outreach services provided by Schools for the Blind. Jim is a member of the Louis Advisory committee, which is the database of braille textbooks available nationwide.
- ◆ Also we have good news that **Jim Olson** and **Debbie Haberkorn** of the CIMC attended the National Braille Association Professional Development Conference in Phoenix. Debbie attended sessions on Nemeth and NIMAS file translations, MathType, Duxbury, and on organizing and proofreading tactile graphics. She also attended a session on Common Errors in Nemeth Code Transcriptions. Jim Olson is a member of the Transcriber & Educator Services Committee of the National Braille Association for this year's conference. He attended sessions on early learning materials and braille formats, Grade 1, capital indicators and basic training for braille formatting
- ◆ Hats off to **Dr. Silvia Correa-Torres** and **Dr. Paula Conroy** who presented at the Northern Rockies AE Conference. The conference was held on October 29-31 in Coeur D' Alene, Idaho. Silvia and Paula presented on *Try It, See it, Reflect on It: Using Video Analysis in O&M Instruction – Part 1 and Part 2*.
- ◆ Congratulations to all of the involved parties on hosting the recent NFB of Colorado State Convention, which was held in Fort Collins on October 31-November 2. Familiar TVI faces included: **Tanni Anthony, Michelle Chacon, Nancy Cozart, Jeannie Lei, Lori Mattick, Marty Rahn, and Trina Boyd Pratt**.

Also present was CSDB Superintendent **Nancy Benham** and Board of Trustee members **Teresa Raiford** and **Brent Batron**. A big hats off to **Nancy Cozart** for all of her work on a CAER presentation entitled The IEP Process for the Professional and for the Parent. Persons in attendance of this session include **Tanni Anthony, Martin Becerra, Michelle Chacon, Susan Harris, Rob Harris, Anahit LaBarre, Jeannie Lei, and Marty Rahn**. A big thank you to Nancy for all of her prep and onsite facilitation work on this important topic.

- ◆ We are so happy to share the sweet news of **Brooke** and **Chris Miller** on the birth of Hunter Nicholas Miller who was born on November 15, 2019. Hunter weighed in at seven pounds and two ounces and was 19 inches long. Such happy news!
- ◆ Congratulations and happy-ever-after wishes to **Caitlin (Bleything)** and **Alan Geoffrion** who were married on November 9th in Las Vegas at the Little Neon Chapel. Caitlin shares, "We blended our families together and share three kiddos now. We both feel so blessed to have found each other and love. Alan's diving in to learn the basics of braille so he can jump in and help our oldest when practicing at home. He's in IT and is great resource to helping our students who have an interest in that area."





colorado connections

- ◆ Colorado was represented at the November 13-16, 2019 Seattle-based *Getting in Touch with Literacy* Conference with attendees: **Tanni Anthony, Michelle Chacon, Paula Conroy, Amber Rundle Kahn, and Lucia Hasty**. Tanni, Michelle, Paula, and Amber were all involved with presentations at the conference and Lucia represented a tactile graphics vendor.
- ◆ A bundle of appreciation to **Nancy Cozart, Anitha Muthukumaran, and Marty Rahn** who volunteered their time and expertise to provide a review of the braille format tests of the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) that occurred the first week of December.
- ◆ Hats off to **Nicole Andersen, Jeff Hadala, Ashley Ives, Kari Finholt, Lori Mattick, Dana McMullen, and Erin Noe** for earning braille renewal hours. Thanks to proctors **Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Sarah Sonnier**, and **Julie Wetzstein** for both proctoring and mentoring hours with Colorado TVIs!
- ◆ **David Gooldy's** last day with Cherry Creek School District will be December 31. He is moving onto new professional opportunities. We thank David for his service and wish him all the best.
- ◆ The Anchor Center for Blind Children will have a new Executive Director, as of January 6, 2020. **Meghan Klassen** is recognized for her accomplishments in early childhood and special education, Meghan earned her BA degree in journalism and marketing from Creighton University and her Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Texas-Austin. Most recently she served as the Executive Director at The Rise School, an inclusive preschool for children with and without special needs. Among her many accomplishments during her seven years as the Executive Director, Meghan led the nonprofit school through tremendous growth and transformation including more than doubling their revenue, elevating programs, and leading the launch of a capital campaign to renovate and expand the school. A Denver native, Meghan enjoys spending time with her family, which includes her six siblings; her husband Matthew, who is a teacher at Regis Jesuit High School; and her daughters, Murphy (10) and Norah (8.) She also enjoys running, cooking, reading, live music, and traveling. Welcome, Meghan!
- ◆ **Dr. Kay Ferrell** was at the UNC December graduation ceremony to hood and celebrate the graduation of the last of her many doctoral students. Congrats to **Nana Phan Dewald!**

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Parents: If you are moving out of state or your child will or has graduated, please be in touch, so we can remove your name from our newsletter mailing list. If your child is still enrolled in a Colorado school district and you have a new mailing address, please be in touch with your address changes.
TVIs and COMSs: If you have any changes in program contact information, please contact Tanni these changes. Thanks to everyone for helping to keep our mailing list up-to-date!

Please send changes to: anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202. Or you can leave a voice message for Tanni at (303) 866-6681.

Thank you so much!

MAIL TO:

25-43E-3401

Katy Anthes
Commissioner of Education



COLORADO
Department of Education

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Exceptional Student Services
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