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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
January—February 2020

20/20 – Building a Perfect Vision


Welcome to a new year and one with a number that means so much to professionals who specialize in understanding the visual system and how to teach everyone “to see.” Those of us in the blindness field understand that seeing can occur with our eyes, ears, and hands and always with our hearts, experience, and intellect.

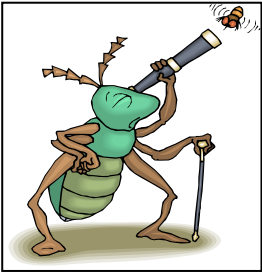
A quick check of the web definition of “vision” equates to understanding what is before and ahead of us and involves the ability to think and plan for the future with imagination or wisdom. Synonyms include inventiveness, dreams, creativity, discernment, and innovation. “Vision” as a noun describes concept, a vivid mental image, a pleasure to behold, and even an object or person of beauty!

With all these great definitions, this is the year of perfect vision! It is a time to look ahead with imagination and wisdom. How do we want to see the world ahead for students, their families, and our profession? What are our creative dreams and our vivid image of what should be? What are we propelled to do and create? Steve Jobs so wisely noted that “If you are working on something exciting that you really care about, you don’t need to be pushed. The vision pulls you.”

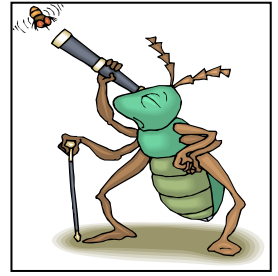
The Vision Coalition will be talking about this very topic in our last meeting of the school year, which will be on April 23rd. On the docket will be reading and math expertise, UEB technical skills and a long-range plan, the Expanded Core Curriculum, and teacher shortages. If you have a clear vision for these or other topics, be in touch with your Vision Coalition regional or agency representative or come and join us! In this year of perfect vision, let’s build a 20/20 plan for the years ahead.

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LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS

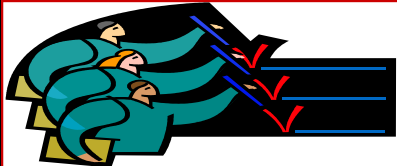


Low Vision Regional Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2019-2020

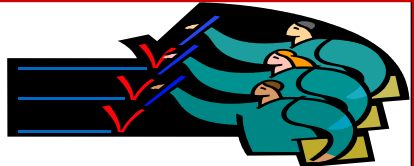
Region	Dates	Site Coordinator
Metro Region	February 19-22, 2020 All paperwork due February 5, 2020	Nancy Knight

Follow Up Hopes and Expectations

We have two more regional low vision clinics to go before the end of this school year. A huge thank you to all the people who contributed to the success of the clinics. If you attended with a student(s) and have yet to purchase the prescribed low vision device(s), please work with Jim Olson at the CIMC to make this happen. The devices are sold at cost. One of the measures of the clinics’ success and support for the continued funding, is for the prescribed devices to be purchased and used by the students. Many years ago when the clinics were designed and funded, the rationale was to assure that students who could benefit from magnification tools would have the this opportunity. If there are training needs to assist the student with optimal use of a device, let Tanni know and we will make those arrangements through the CDE mentor / coach personnel.



CHECK IT OUT!

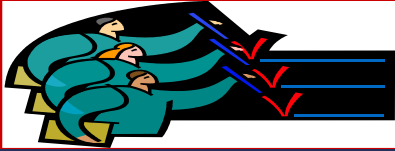


Assessing Resilience in Students Who are Deaf or Blind: Supplementing Standardized Achievement Testing

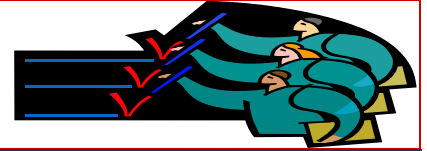
By Michelle A. Butler, Andrew D. Katayama, Casey Schindling & Katherine Dials

ABSTRACT: Although testing accommodations for standardized assessments are available for students with disabilities, interpretation remains challenging. The authors explored resilience to see if it could contribute to the interpretation of academic success for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or have low vision. High school students (30 deaf, 11 blind) responded to the Resiliency Scales and a school-specific resilience survey. Student ratings were within 1 SD of those who were not deaf or blind; resilience was positively correlated with academic success (grade point average). Resilience information may contribute to the interpretation of academic success in students who are deaf or blind and may provide insight into potential interventions. This is the first time students who are deaf or blind have been assessed on a published measure of resilience. Results defy stereotypes and affirm that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or have low vision, have more in common with the hearing and seeing world than is often recognized. For more, check out the [full article](#).

The authors would like to thank the team at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind for their commitment to this [Assessing Resilience](https://www.csdb.org/assessing-resilience/) project (https://www.csdb.org/assessing-resilience/).



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 blindness/ 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.

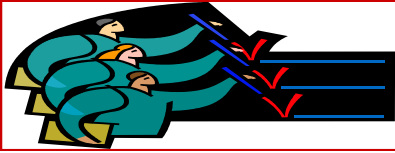
For more information and questions contact Mike Plansker at mike.e.plansker@adams12.org.

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP)

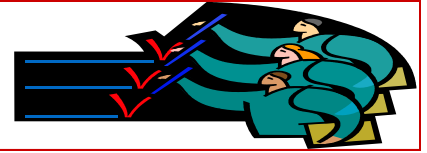
iCanConnect (ICC) is a federal grant that provides free telecommunications equipment and training to those who qualify. There is no minimum or maximum age requirement, just that the person can benefit from this technology that allows for sending an email, texting, chatting on the phone, communicating 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 (CCDHHDB) 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](#) - Click on “Education for Life Application” link on the home page (www.seethefuture.org)

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



Check Out These Great CCB Youth Program Summer Offerings!

June 8-19 Confidence Camp, A BELL Academy/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.

June 5-19 Challenge and Adventure, Self-Advocacy/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.

June 5-26 World of Work, Pre-Employment/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.

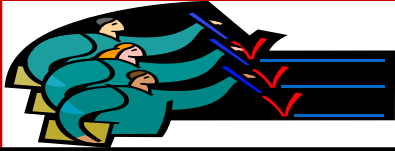
June 5-July 31 No Limits to Learning, Transition Youth Program/Ages: 14 to 21

In this eight-week residential program you will learn about the world of work and meet blind people who work in all kinds of jobs. Build your core skills in Braille, technology, home management and cane travel. Attend the convention of the NFB in Houston, Texas.

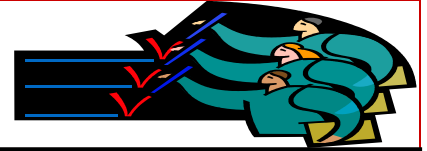
July 1-31 Cracking the College Code, College Prep/Ages: 16 to 21

Develop the skills needed to be successful in college as a blind student. Expand the needed 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

For questions or further information contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org.



CHECK IT OUT!



The American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project Announces Its Sixteenth AUDIO DESCRIPTION INSTITUTE

February 22-24, 2020 (Saturday through Monday)

In Conjunction with ACB's 2020 Mid-Year President's Meeting and Legislative Seminar Holiday Inn & Suites - Martin Room—625 First Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Washington, DC area). Audio Description (AD) makes visual images accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. Using words that are succinct, vivid, and imaginative, media describers convey the visual image from television and film that is not fully accessible to a significant segment of the population (more than 21 million Americans experience significant vision loss). BE A PART OF IT! Anyone interested in: working as freelance description writers for broadcast television, working as a describer in a local performing arts program, working as a describer for visual art exhibitions and experienced audio describers desiring an updated refresher course. The Institute will issue ACB-sponsored certificates to all successful participants confirming completion of this professional description training program.

[Online registration](https://www.acb.org/2020-audio-description-institute) for the February 2020 Alexandria, VA Audio Description Institute will be open through February 21, 2020. (<https://www.acb.org/2020-audio-description-institute>). For questions or additional information, contact: JOEL SNYDER, PhD, Director, Audio Description Project American Council of the Blind—jsnyder@acb.org -- (202) 467-5083.

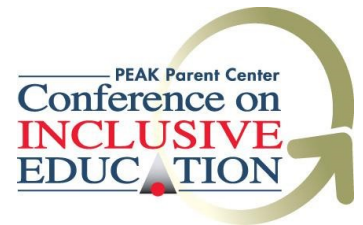
For more information about audio description, please visit the [Audio Description Project webpage](#).

PEAK Inclusive Education Conference

When: Thursday and Friday, February 20 and 21 at the Denver Renaissance Stapleton Hotel.

What: Inclusive education is a process of school reform that creates equity in education and increases achievement for ALL students. In inclusive schools students, families, general and special educators, administrators, support staff, and community members work together to make curriculum accessible to all learners and to differentiate instruction. This conference is an excellent development opportunity for all involved in the education and support of students with disabilities, and brings these groups together to learn, collaborate, and focus on strategies that work. The ultimate goal is participation by all students, regardless of ability, to lead rich lives of belonging in their communities

To register or learn more, visit the [PEAK Inclusion Conference webpage](#).



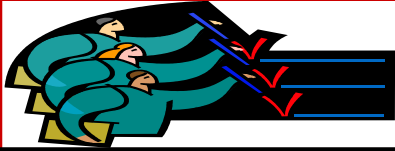
Professional Development and Program Planning Resources

[Webinar | Cultural Competence: What it Means for Person-Centered Thinking, Planning, & Practice](#)

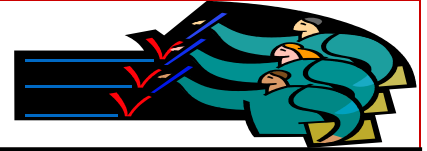
Cultural competence is widely recognized as essential to delivering high-quality services and supports. This 1-hour webinar, which includes Diana Autin as a presenter, explores what this means in terms of actual practice and includes real-life examples and personal narratives. (The link above will take you to a webinar archive page. Scroll down to October 2019, and find this webinar's slides, recording, Spanish transcript, and handouts.)

[On The Outs: Reentry for Inmates with Disabilities](#)

This 34-minute documentary follows 3 inmates with disabilities through the re-entry process. Each person's experience is depicted at 3 points: in prison prior to release, on their release date, and life on the "outs" after release. The film can be used to raise awareness about people with disabilities in prison and to stimulate communication and collaborative relationship building for much-needed re-entry reform.



CHECK IT OUT!



Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards

The National Federation of the Blind is accepting nominations of individuals or organizations who are a positive force in the lives of blind people and advance the goal of helping us transform dreams into reality for the prestigious Jacob Bolotin Award. Each application must include a letter of recommendation. Please consider making a recommendation for someone / an agency that you believe is deserving. The Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards honor individuals and organizations that are a positive force in the lives of blind people. Dr. Jacob W. Bolotin (1888-1924) was the world's first physician who was blind from birth. He achieved that goal despite the tremendous challenges faced by blind people in his time. Not only did he realize his own dream, but he also went on to support and inspire many others.

Winners of the Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards:

- ◆ Break down barriers facing blind people in an innovative way
- ◆ Change negative perceptions of blindness and blind people
- ◆ Push past existing boundaries to inspire blind people to achieve new heights

Winners receive a cash award and have included entrepreneurs, volunteers, filmmakers, authors, mathematicians, technology developers, artists, teachers, nonprofit organizations, programs, partnerships, and more. The Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards are funded by the National Federation of the Blind with assistance from the Alfred and Rosalind Perlman Trust, which was created by a bequest left to the Santa Barbara Foundation and the NFB by Dr. Jacob Bolotin's niece-in-law, author Rosalind Perlman.



The [online application](https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/dr-jacob-bolotin-awards/application-information) for the 2020 awards is now open. Application materials must be received by April 15, 2020. (<https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/dr-jacob-bolotin-awards/application-information>)

Blind Educator of the Year Award

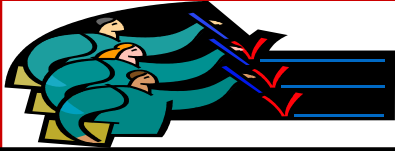
The Blind Educator of the Year Award was established by the National Organization of Blind Educators, a division of the National Federation of the Blind, in 1991 to recognize outstanding blind teachers. Every year, the award pays tribute to a blind teacher whose exceptional classroom performance, notable community service, and uncommon commitment to the NFB merit national recognition. A teacher not only provides information but also guidance, advocacy, and love. The recipient of the Blind Educator of the Year Award must exhibit all of these traits and must advance the cause of blind people in the spirit and philosophy of the NFB.

Nominations: Nominations should be sent to the committee chairperson, Dr. Edward Bell, via email at ebell@latech.edu, or by mail to the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness Department, Louisiana Tech University, P.O. Box 3158, Ruston, Louisiana 71272. Letters of nomination must be accompanied by a copy of the nominee's current résumé and supporting documentation of community and Federation activity.

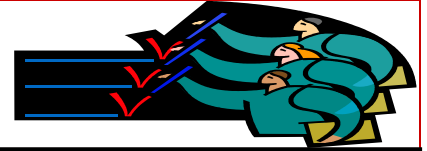
All nomination materials must be in the hands of the committee chairman by May 1 to be considered for that year's award.

The Award: The Blind Educator of the Year Award is presented at the NFB National Convention. Honorees must be present to receive their award which includes an inscribed plaque and a check for \$1,000.

For more information, please contact Dr. Edward Bell at 318-257-4554 or ebell@latech.edu. Dr. Bell was named Blind Educator of the Year in 2008. He is the chairperson the Blind Educator of the Year Award selection committee.



CHECK IT OUT!



Accommodations Research Literature Online Bibliographies and Research Summaries

NCEO has several resources that can be used to learn more about what the research says about the effectiveness of various accommodations. These include online searchable databases, and published summaries of the research on effects of test accommodations that go back to 1999.

Check out the [full list of accommodations](http://nceotacenter.org/newsletter/february-2020/accommodations-research-literature/) (http://nceotacenter.org/newsletter/february-2020/accommodations-research-literature/).

Need a Little Help from Your Friends? BVI / Mentor Coaches Can Assist!

Ever feel a need for someone to give you a little guidance on a new piece of technology? An old piece of technology? Training on a low vision device? Assessment practices for children with CVI, low vision, dual media, additional disabilities? Ever wish for more information about working in a team, writing IEP goals, consulting with general education teachers?

Would you love a peer buddy to talk through adapted mobility devices and other deep burning O&M issues and techniques? To have a trusted colleague to think through an upcoming street crossing?

The BVI Mentor / Coach Project was started as a means to provide support to both new and veteran school-based TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists. The goal was just that – to offer guidance and support. We know both fields are deep and wide with the needs of students from all age ranges, school curricular areas, and highly individualized abilities and challenges. There is so much to know and cover. Sometimes it is helpful to have another colleague to talk things through, learn from, and to gather more resource information.

We have two veteran TVIs / Orientation and Mobility Specialists who are available to work in a mentor / coaching fashion, as well as to provide resources. Our team consists of Wendy Stoltman and Shelley Moats. This project is for school-based personnel and is free of charge. There is no reporting obligation to CDE, just a connection between you and a mentor / coach on your topic (s) of need.

If you have an interest in this CDE free technical assistance service, please be in touch with Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



Resources and Materials

2018 National Deaf-Blind Child Count

The [2018 National Child Count of Children and Youth who are Deaf-Blind Report](#) and updated [data maps](#) are now available on NCDB's website. The National Deaf-Blind Child Count plays a unique role in understanding the children and youth who make up this low-incidence population. The national report is an aggregated and summarized reflection of the diligent work of the state deaf-blind projects. Without their efforts to collect this information, we would not have this rich resource to inform services that affect the nation's children and youth who are deaf-blind. Each section of the report summarizes 2018 data and identifies trends over the past several years. Detailed tables follow, displaying the 2018 data on a state-by-state basis. Tables can be viewed with all states together or as state-specific data using the "Filter report by state" drop-down menu at the top right of each page.

iModifyPE App



[iModifyPE-SD](#) is an app with videos on adapting activities for students with significant disabilities. Check it out!



Scan QR with camera to install app

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

Paths to Literacy is pleased to announce the availability of 11 short on-demand videos. These videos are designed for those working with academic students with visual impairments in K-6 classrooms. Topics include:

- How Do You Use Your Vision?
- Understanding the Numbers Behind a Student's Visual Impairment and the Use of Functional Vision
- How Do I Support the Print Reader in My Classroom?
- What is Braille and How Do Students Read It?
- What is My Role in Adapting Materials?
- How Can I Support the Student Who is Using Technology?
- Orientation and Mobility 101



Videos are designed to support: classroom teachers, paraprofessionals / teacher assistants, therapists, families, and administrators.

* *The videos were developed by Dr. Tina Herzberg, University of South Carolina Upstate, and Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum, University of Arizona.*

Learn more at [Paths to Literacy website](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/tools-support-you-having-student-visual-impairment-your-k-6-general-education-classroom). (<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/tools-support-you-having-student-visual-impairment-your-k-6-general-education-classroom>)

Resources and Materials

- [The Active Learning Space](http://www.activelearningspace.org/) website (<http://www.activelearningspace.org/>) is a good place to find information about the approach defined by Dr. Lilli Nielsen. This free website is a collaboration between Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Perkins School for the Blind, and Penrickton Center for Blind Children, and is designed to serve as a repository for authoritative information about the Active Learning approach. The site includes numerous video examples of students, as well as recorded lectures and archived webinars on specific topics related to Active Learning. There is also a series of self-paced online modules.
- To best implement an Active Learning approach with a particular child, it is helpful to download the guide to [Getting Started with Active Learning](http://www.activelearningspace.org/images/downloads/Getting_Started_with_Active_Learning_Download.pdf) (http://www.activelearningspace.org/images/downloads/Getting_Started_with_Active_Learning_Download.pdf). This document is designed to walk teams through the steps, from assessment through implementation and tracking progress. You can also subscribe to our [free newsletter](http://www.activelearningspace.org/resources/active-learning-space-newsletters), which will keep you up to date on events, new information, and resources (<http://www.activelearningspace.org/resources/active-learning-space-newsletters>). There is currently a web-based study group, where case studies are presented.



Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado Survey

Teachers are encouraged to take the 2020 Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado, or TLCC, survey by Friday, February 21. The TLCC is an opportunity for Colorado educators to anonymously voice opinions on their work environment and career satisfaction. The results from this survey are used to guide school and district improvement efforts and to drive state-level policy and research.

The last distribution of the survey happened in 2018. That year, about 57% of elementary and middle school educators responded as well as 53% of high school educators.

Through the 2018 TLCC, we learned that 89% of educators who took the survey believe they work in good schools but the biggest challenge they face is not having enough time to prepare. Other concerns raised by the 2018 results included lack of opportunities for professional development and less-than-ideal training for new teachers.

All data from the previous TLCC survey can be viewed by [category and question online](https://tlcc-reports.cedu.io/). (<https://tlcc-reports.cedu.io/>)

Teachers will be given an individual code to use by their school's principal or association representative. If the access codes are missing or did not arrive, contact the TLCC Help Desk. After you receive your unique code, go to the TLCC website to take the quick, 15-minute survey. The survey can be accessed on any device, including smart phones, and is not required to be completed in a single session.

Schools and districts need more than 50% participation and at least five responses to access their data. Each respondent will receive a unique, anonymous code from their association representative or principal. You can track your school and district response rates using this [real-time tool](https://tlcc-tracking.cedu.io/). (<https://tlcc-tracking.cedu.io/>)

The TLCC survey is offered in partnership between CDE, Colorado Education Association, Colorado Education Initiative and others.

For more information, visit www.tlccsurvey.org. Contact Lisa Steffen with CDE's improvement planning office at steffen_l@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6676 for questions.



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

Our CAER Works for You!

Are you a member of the Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired? CAER, our State Chapter, hopes so! Check out the many good things our Colorado State chapter is doing for you and for us!

They maintain the [CAER website](https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/), that includes updated information regarding Colorado AER. (<https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/>)

To get there from the [national AER website](https://aerbvi.org/) (<https://aerbvi.org/>)

- Go to **About** at the top and pull down to AER Chapters
- Then find **Colorado** on the left side and click on it

This will take you to the [Colorado Chapter for the Association of Education and Rehabilitation webpage](#).

International AER Conference

The Call for Presentations is Now Open!

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

Conference Details: AER International Conference 2020

When: July 22-26, 2020 **Where:** St. Louis, MO



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

CAER Colorado Association of Education & Rehabilitation for the Blind/Visually Impaired

Italian Dinner and Wine Tasting Fundraiser: **Saturday, February 22, 2020 6:30PM—9:30PM**
Spero Winery—3316 West 64th Avenue, Denver, CO

\$50/per person Tax Deductible Group Exemption 62-1305673

Half of the cost will go directly to CAER to fund mini-grants that can be used to assist CAER members and students/clients based on association eligibility criteria. Mini-grants are available for students, teachers, parents and adults.

Appetizers, Italian dinner, Spero wines of all varieties to sample, plus door prizes.

It is a night of relaxation and fun with friends.

Please contact a CAER board member for purchase of tickets.

Brent Batron bbatron@cocenter.org

Heather Solberg Heather.Solberg@va.gov

Nancy Cozart ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

Michelle Robinson michelle.robinson5@va.gov

Martin Becerra-Miranda mbecerra@cocenter.org

Paula Conroy paula.conroy@unco.edu

Stephanie Crosen stephanie.crosen@summitk12.org Jeannie Lei jlei@cherrycreekschools.org

Barb Galgano bgalgano@cherrycreekschools.org

National AER is pleased to announce that the 2020 Call for Award Nominees is now open!

AER announces that the 2020 Call for Award Nominees is open. There are two special awards to honor our chapters and the professionals that have dedicated their time and energy to lead them: the Richard L. Welsh Award was created to show appreciation to an individual who contributed outstanding efforts in chapter leadership, and the Outstanding Chapter Award recognizes the AER chapter who has excelled in all aspects of chapter administration, program management and leadership. How about a nomination for our **Colorado AER Chapter?**

The deadline to submit your nomination is April 1, 2020. To be eligible for consideration, all nominations must be submitted before the stated deadline. Specific criteria are noted on each individual nomination form.

Please visit the [National AER website](https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/aer-awards/) to download the nomination forms (<https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/aer-awards/>).

Awards will be distributed at the AER International Conference 2020 in St. Louis, MO (July 22-26, 2020) at a special awards luncheon to honor the winners.

Any questions should be directed to awards@aerbvi.org.



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

Wreaths Across America...and Beyond!

Wreaths Across America was started in 1992 by a gentleman named Morrill Worcester and his wife Karen, owners of The Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine. That year they realized that they had a surplus of wreaths and offered them to Arlington National Cemetery to be placed at the gravesites of the veterans buried there. Arlington National Cemetery accepted the wreaths and thus a tradition was born.

Today, Wreaths Across America is celebrated in every state in the USA, at sea and abroad where US veterans are laid to rest. On Saturday December 14, 2019,

Teachers for the Visually Impaired/Certified O&M Specialists and their family members gathered to place 30+ wreaths to honor the veterans at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado, for the 5th year in a row. Mike Plansker and daughter Sydney, Elise Darrow and husband Joe, Janet Anderson and husband Charlie, Barb Galgano and niece Maggie attended this year.

Friendships were made, lots of laughs and some tears were shed, and, overall, it was a great day!

If you would like to learn more please visit [Wreaths Across America](https://wreathscrossamerica.org) website (<https://wreathscrossamerica.org>).



(BACK: Charlie Anderson, Mike Plansker, Joe Darrow) MIDDLE: Janet Anderson, Barb Galgano, Elise Darrow) (FRONT: Sydney Plansker, Maggie Galgano)



(Maggie and Barb Galgano)



(Janet and Charlie Anderson)



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 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 Specialist, please know that you **MUST** have a current CDE license as a Special Services Provider: School O&M Specialist. If you do not have this license, your scope of O&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.



EDUCATOR TALENT

FINISHING STRONG AND PLANNING FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SERIES

The Educator Effectiveness team continues its professional learning series in support of districts/BOCES by hosting regional gatherings focused on “Finishing Strong and Planning for the Upcoming Year.”

District/BOCES teams are encouraged to attend to review the current district implementation of evaluation systems, explore strategies for maximizing the end-of-year activities, and to strategically plan for the new year. Team members can include superintendents, district leadership, principals/evaluators and teacher/school service professional leaders.

These regional gatherings occur in February and March. To view the opportunities in your region and learn more about this professional learning opportunity including how to register your team, visit the [Educator Effectiveness Regional Supports webpage](http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/regional_supports). (http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/regional_supports)

READ Act

The [Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act](https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy) (Colorado READ Act) was passed by the Colorado legislature in 2012, giving the state the guiding philosophy, structure and resources to get children reading at grade level by the time they enter the fourth grade (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy>).

Importantly, the READ Act focuses on identifying students with significant reading deficiencies (SRD), engaging parents in the development of reading improvement plans, and providing funding to support interventions for those most at-risk. Please visit the [READ Act Dashboard](https://www.cde.state.co.us/code/readactdashboard) for more information on this.

(<https://www.cde.state.co.us/code/readactdashboard>)

Colorado Department of Education is committed to building upon the current framework of early literacy policy in Colorado, the READ Act, to support students in both general and special education to meet important reading outcomes. CDE is committed to bringing together stakeholders interested in supporting students who struggle with reading including those with dyslexia. For further information and the latest news check out the [Colorado Dyslexia page](https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/dyslexia). (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/dyslexia>)

READ Act Tools and Resources

This [toolkit](https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/resources) is intended to be used by district leaders, principals and teachers to communicate with parents about the Colorado READ Act. All resources can be modified and personalized to meet individual needs. Resources include fact sheets, videos, drop-in letters and a sample social media campaign.

(<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/resources>)

For successful implementation of the READ Act, it is important to understand and consider the following about early literacy:

- Elemental Building Blocks
- Prevention is Key
- Teacher Knowledge and Practice are Critical
- It Takes A Community

For more information, reach out to the Colorado [READ Act Literacy Team Contacts](https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/contactus).

(<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/contactus>)



Educator Preparation Programs Report

Interactive Dashboard Enables Analysis of Educator Preparation Programs








Overview

The Colorado Educator Preparation Programs Report (EPP Report) provides information about the effectiveness of programs that train teachers, principals and special service providers in our state. Historically, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) prepared and released this report. Beginning in the 2019-20 academic year, and as required by a statutory change, C.R.S. 22-2-112(1)(q), an expanded version of the EPP Report featuring an interactive dashboard will be released by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with CDHE, with additional metrics that track new teachers in Colorado's workforce.

The new expanded version of the report will continue to feature information about traditional educator preparation programs, which include public and private university programs authorized and overseen by the Colorado Commission of Higher Education, Colorado State Board of Education, CDHE and CDE. Data about alternative educator preparation programs are also included. These programs serve educator candidates who already hold a bachelor's degree but still need coursework and training in education and are under the sole authority of the Colorado State Board of Education and CDE. The statutory change required that the EPP Report feature new metrics that include employment in Colorado public schools, on-the-job performance and retention of new teachers. For this year's EPP Report, student academic growth data were not available, but they will be included in future releases.

Assessment Toolkit

CDE has tools that are designed to help districts and schools communicate with parents about state assessments. These materials can be shared in newsletters or during parent information events or parent-teacher conferences. All materials may be tailored to meet your local needs. More materials will be added as they are updated.

CMAS			PSAT/SAT	
	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY	Grades 3 through 8		PSAT Grades 9 and 10
	MATH	Grades 3 through 8		SAT Grades 11
	SOCIAL STUDIES	Grades 4 and 7 (sampling approximately 1/3 of schools participating)		
	SCIENCE	Grades 5, 8 and 11		

CMAS: English Language Arts / Literacy, grades 3 through 8. Math, grades 3 through 8. Social Studies, grades 4 and 7 (sampling approximately 1/3 of schools participating). Science, grades 5, 8, and 11. PSAT / SAT: PSAT, grades 9 and 10. SAT, grade 11.

You can find these resources at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/tools-assessments>.



Orientation & Mobility

Blind Man Invents ‘Smart Cane’

That Uses Google Maps and Sensors to Identify Surroundings

The “smart cane” uses ultrasonic sensors to warn the user of objects and obstacles through vibrations in the handle.

Thanks to the ingenuity of a blind inventor, people who lack sight can more easily navigate the world. The “smart cane,” or **WeWalk** cane, uses ultrasonic sensors to warn the user of nearby objects and obstacles through vibrations in the handle.

Check out the full article at [The Mind Unleashed](https://themindunleashed.com/2019/09/blind-man-invents-smart-cane.html). (<https://themindunleashed.com/2019/09/blind-man-invents-smart-cane.html>)

2020 CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar

Friday and Saturday, April 24-25, 2020 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Cherry Creek School District – 4700 South Yosemite Street, Room #HR147, Greenwood Village, CO

Friday, April 24th Speaker, Topic, and Objectives

Mickey Damelio is an internationally recognized leader in the field of visual impairment. He has worked with people with visual impairment at every stage and level of ability from newborns to elders. He is now working with blind adults living with artificial vision technology, and created the curriculum and teaching techniques used for people living with this ground breaking technology provided by Second Sight Medical Products, where he is the Director of Artificial Vision Patient Advocacy and Rehabilitation.

Topic: *How the O&M Specialist Can Provide Much More than Human Guide Instruction for Students with Visual Impairment and Additional Disabilities*

Saturday, April 25th Speaker, Topic, and Objectives

Dr. Penny Rosenblum, owner of Vision for Independence, LLC, is the new Director of Research with the American Foundation for the Blind. For 22 years she was a career track faculty member in the Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies at the University of Arizona. From 1999 to 2016 she prepared teachers to work with children with visual impairments (TVIs). During that time, she coordinated teacher preparation programs in Arizona and Nevada. As a person with low vision, Dr. Rosenblum is able to share first-hand information with professionals and families about the impact of a visual impairment on the lives of children and adults. Dr. Rosenblum has been a teacher of children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities in Pennsylvania (2 years), South Carolina (3 years), and Arizona (3 years).

Topic: *Finding Wheels: A Curriculum for Non-drivers with Visual Impairments for Gaining Control of Transportation Needs*

Registration will close when the training is capped or no later than February 25th, 2020

[2020 Orientation and Mobility Registration](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OM2020) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OM2020>)

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 program 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>



InSights ART Competition

Entry Deadline:
March 27, 2020



The 2020 season of the American Printing House for the Blind's InSights Art Competition is now open. APH invites all artists who are blind or visually impaired to submit artwork for the 2020 APH InSights Art Competition.

Now in their 29th year, this popular, international, art contest delights the senses, provokes discussion, and allows artists with vision loss the opportunity to share their creative imagination with the world.

Please download the [rules and entry forms](https://nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/aph/app/uploads/2019/11/08144523/2020-InSights-Art-Entry-Form.pdf) (<https://nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/aph/app/uploads/2019/11/08144523/2020-InSights-Art-Entry-Form.pdf>)

For more information, please e-mail insights@aph.org or call Rob Guillen at 502-899-2242




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 19-20** **Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**
 Contact: Nancy Knight at nknight@lps.k12.co.us
- February 20-21** **PEAK 2020 Conference on Inclusion Education** —Denver, CO
 Register at [PEAK Parent Center](https://www.tfaforms.com/4767297) (<https://www.tfaforms.com/4767297>)
- February 21** **Annual Dog Shark Dissection** - Arapahoe Community College
 Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org
- 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/1FAIpQLSfe9NcOc1X5uPi0QW_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 1** **DEADLINE for ordering Braille Format Textbooks from CIMC**
 CSDB webpage: <https://www.csdb.org/programs-services/outreach-programs-3/cimc/intro-cimc/>



Calendar of Events

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

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

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 O&M 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/1FAIpQLSfe9NcOc1X5uPi0QW_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





Calendar of Events



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

May 19	ECC Parent Workshop - Assistive Technology Parents of Children who are Blind - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScNPNv5IFo7X2G1kXg2-NSThVfEk2P4SenH642BRi4lNe2ZnQ/viewform
June 2	ECC Parent Workshop - Orientation and Mobility for Everyone - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScwFb-3HlsRo46J5zBwbk6P2uQgPNk2updFSI9H5trAlI9v5Q/viewform
June 9	ECC Parent Workshop - Closing Party for Everyone - CSDB Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKFclpZhl19nEbmqvK08kvHOqgF_SG6IDA9q7k0ywXt670g/viewform
June 8-19	Confidence Camp, A BELL Academy/Ages: 5 to 10 – Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org
June 5-19	Challenge and Adventure, Self-Advocacy/Ages: 11 to 21– Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org
June 5-26	World of Work, Pre-Employment/Ages: 14 to 21– Colorado Center for the Blind Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org



One kind word can warm three winter months.
~Japanese Proverb



Calendar of Events

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

- June 5-July 31** **No Limits to Learning, Transition Youth Program/Ages: 14 to 21**– Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org

- June 8-July 17** **2020 Summer Youth Vocational Program**– Helen Keller National Center
Contact: Laura.Benge at Laura.Benge@hknc.org

- 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

- July 1-31** **Cracking the College Code, College Prep/Ages: 16 to 21**– Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Martin Becerra at mbecerra@cocenter.org

- July 27-August 7** **2020 M ~ Power** – Helen Keller National Center
Contact: Laura Benge at Laura.Benge@hknc.org

- July 20-August 28** **2020 Summer Youth Vocational Program**– Helen Keller National Center
Contact: Laura Benge at Laura.Benge@hknc.org

- October 8-9** **APH Annual Meeting**– Louisville, KY
Contact: www.aph.org

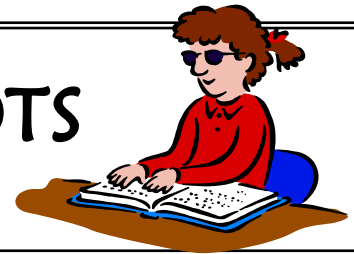
2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

- October 7-8** **APH Annual Meeting** – Louisville, KY
Contact: www.aph.org





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.

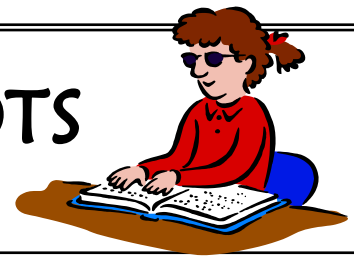
The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs.

Braillewriter Repair

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



CONNECTING THE DOTS



BANA Releases New Podcast in *BANA Braille Bits* Series



Braille Authority
of North America

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) has released a new podcast in its BANA Braille Bits podcast series. Jennifer Dunnam, who just completed a five-year tenure as Chair of BANA, discusses the workings of BANA and the future of braille. This new segment is available immediately and can be [accessed](http://Brailleauthority.libsyn.com) (<http://Brailleauthority.libsyn.com>) or by searching for BANA Braille Bits with your favorite podcatcher.

Contact: Tamara Rorie, Chair at 202-707-3001 or chair@brailleauthority.org.

New Brief on Considerations for States Providing Materials in Braille—NCEO recently published [Considerations for States Providing Materials in Braille](#). This brief provides information on, and recommendations for, providing appropriate braille materials for students. Tanni sent this document out via her email distribution list in December.

To have the link resource, go to: <https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief19.pdf>.

A Contest to Promote Literacy—Readers of the August-September 2019 Braille Monitor and 2019 National Convention attendees had an opportunity to learn about the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults century celebration. The American Action Fund Braille literacy programs have grown from the production and distribution of Twin Vision books with print and Braille text on facing pages with picture captions in parentheses to free slates and styluses and the Free Braille Books Program enabling blind children to build their own book collections.

The number of states that participated in the 2018-2019 contest shows that our blind students are motivated to read recreational materials for seven weeks and challenge others to do likewise. In the past, participating affiliates made a \$100 contribution to cover contest-related expenses. While the Action Fund is making this contest available to all of our affiliates, donations are always welcome to help with those expenses which include things like the cash prizes awarded for first, second, and third place winners in each category and the braille-related prizes each participant receives.

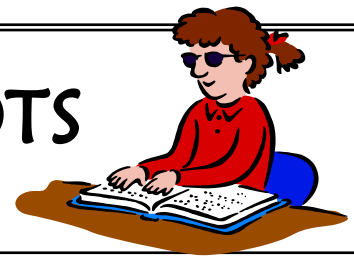
This year they are promoting braille literacy to children from K-12 grades and blind adults to encourage not only our NFB center students who are learning braille, but others who might be motivated by a little cash and other braille-related prizes, to participate in a contest. Teachers, parents, and adults may **register for the contest from Friday, November 1, 2019, through Saturday, January 18, 2020** - but you have to do a little more than just register. Each participant must keep a log with the book title, author, and number of pages read, which may not be the entire book or article. The actual reading period runs Sunday, December 1, 2019 to Saturday, January 18, 2020.

All contest-related documents are available from [American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults website](http://AmericanActionFund.org) (actionfund.org) and will be widely distributed by email and social media.

Now is the perfect time to begin gathering books, magazines, and anything that is not a textbook that you've always wanted to read. You will have seven weeks in which to get it done. [ShareBraille](#) is an excellent resource in addition to [Bookshare](#) and the braille lending library in your state.

Please help by spreading the word to blind children and adults you know who want to improve their braille efficiency.

CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille Challenge at the CCB

The CSDB Outreach Department, in collaboration with the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB), hosted the 5th annual Denver Metro Regional Braille Challenge on January 23, 2020. Twenty-three students from six administrative units participated. Students competing in the Braille Challenge are divided into 5 categories and tested on fundamental braille skills such as reading comprehension, spelling, proofreading, speed and accuracy, and charts and graphs. The top 50 students nationwide are invited to the finals in Los Angeles.

A Rookie category was offered in the Denver Metro region for the first time. The category is non-competitive and is designed around increasing exposure to braille, while providing a social component that allows students with visual impairment to celebrate braille together. Rookie students participated in fun activities that taught them daily living skills, literacy, art, music, and orientation and mobility skills.

Gazette Newspaper (printed with permission)

[Braille competition in Colorado Springs tests blind, visually impaired students' skills.](https://gazette.com/premium/braille-competition-in-colorado-springs-tests-blind-visually-impaired-students/article_e2df0c2c-388b-11ea-aef4-1be853e879c0.html)

(https://gazette.com/premium/braille-competition-in-colorado-springs-tests-blind-visually-impaired-students/article_e2df0c2c-388b-11ea-aef4-1be853e879c0.html)

By Debbie Kelley, journalist, The Colorado Springs Gazette. Photos by Jerilee Bennett of The Gazette.

The mood was tense and the competition fierce Thursday in an upper-level-math classroom at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, where an abacus replaces a calculator and white canes hang on a coat rack. Clacking keys, returning carriages, ringing bells and crackling paper being pulled out of braille writers filled the air. But the blind and visually impaired students weren't paying attention to the cacophony of their work.



With bent heads, the students concentrated on listening to an article about the transition from high school to college, then typed the words on manual braille machines.

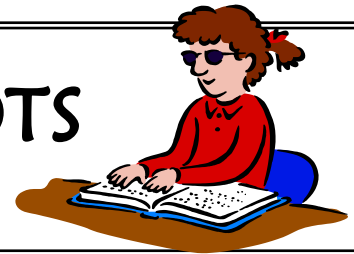
"My ears are buzzing," 15-year-old Alacia Bates said, pulling out ear buds that allowed her to hear the article she was translating into braille.

Students had just finished the first "speed and accuracy" portion of the annual Braille Challenge.

"I think I messed up — how do you spell ophthalmologist?" asked Alacia, who has a progressive eye disease that has slowly darkened her vision.

The event, sponsored by the Braille Institute, is the nation's only academic competition specifically for blind and visually impaired students in the United States and Canada.

CONNECTING THE DOTS



The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is one of 54 regional host sites for this year's challenge, which culminates in June with national finals, held in California. From first grade through high school, students' skills are measured in braille reading comprehension, proofreading, graph and chart analysis, spelling, and speed and accuracy.

The timed test is hard, said junior Jake Weatherby, who is competing for his third year. "You have to listen to words and type at the same time," he said. For the charts and graphs section, students must accurately read and analyze graphs and charts in braille, which is even tougher, students said.

Seventeen-year-old Jake began learning braille when he was 11, in Chinese, his native language. But now, he reads and writes using American Braille. "It's really important for us to show our best skills for the challenge," he said. "I cannot read print, so I read braille. "For people who are blind, it's important to feel the texture of the braille — that's how we learn different words and how to read and spell."

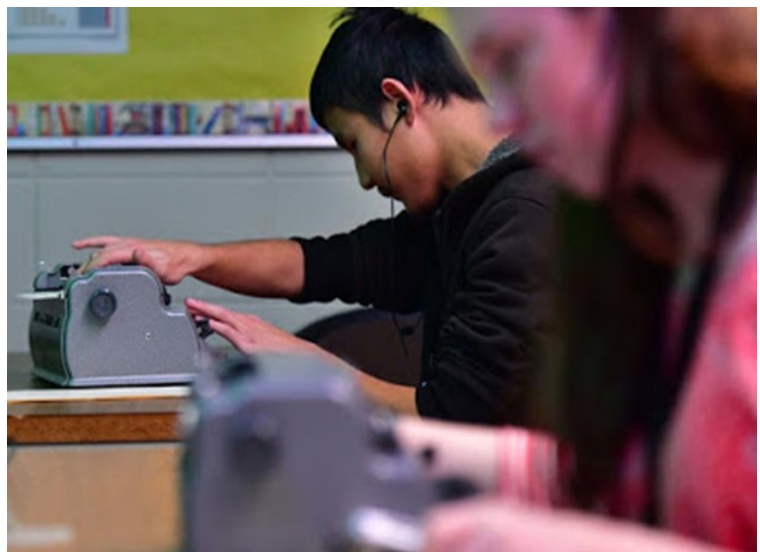
A total of 25 students who use braille participated in Thursday's event, and other students did activities such as playing braille Uno and braille Twister as part of a schoolwide celebration of the communication method.

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind has hosted the competition for 17 years, said spokeswoman Diane Taylor. Regardless of whether students qualify for the national level, the school awards first, second and third prizes in each category, said Jamie Lugo, principal of the School for the Blind. A group of nationally certified transcribers judge the work and will release the results Feb. 4, she said.

"You hear people say braille might become obsolete, but we don't believe that," Lugo said. "It's so important to literacy to emphasize keeping the braille code alive."

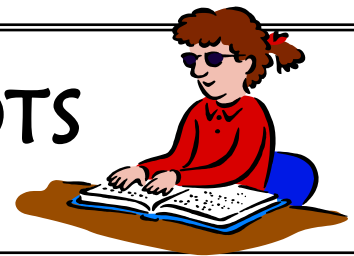
Christina Cortes, a secondary science teacher of blind and visually impaired students, and who is blind, said the contest is "something we look forward to every year." The event enables students to "experience healthy competition with their peers, where they can compete on equal footing, and practice and showcase their braille literacy skills," she said. It also promotes braille awareness, Cortes said.

A braille writer is similar to a typewriter but has just six large keys and a space bar. The keys punch raised dots onto paper, representing specific characters that blind and visually impaired people feel with their fingers to interpret words. Braille has changed in recent years to become unified and universal to all spoken languages, Cortes said. "I'd never say it's easy and simple to learn," she said. "Our students learn it at a young age and continue learn through middle school and into high school until they are proficient, so they can read and write throughout their lives."



to

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Braille, the Magic Wand of the Blind, by Helen Keller (n.d. / document source not identified)

If we should look for the greatest benefactor of the sightless — the individual who has given them a perpetual source of delight and profit, the choice would certainly fall upon Louis Braille.

Not a century ago this humble blind Frenchman, a pupil of the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, waved a magic wand which opened a new way for the sightless to knowledge and mental delight. Today on the anniversary of his discovery, we who are without sight celebrate gratefully the achievement of one who poured the sweetness of tangible printed words into the bitter waters of our affliction.

Such a significant event should not pass unnoticed; the longest forward stride in the progress of the blind is the invention of Louise (sic) Braille. Without the word, visible or tangible, there can be no education. When one thinks of the sufferings of the sightless in all countries before they could read, one does not wonder that it is said in the Bible, "In the beginning the Word was with God, and the Word was the Light of men."

It was obvious from the beginning that if the blind were to be educated a method must be devised by which they would read and study like the seeing. Louis Braille invented the embossed system which has ever since borne his name and which enables the blind to read and write easily with their fingers. His magic wand was a group of six dots in which the vertical line consists of three dots, and the horizontal of two. The combination of these dots in all kinds of positions produces characters to each of which we assign a particular meaning, just as the seeing do to the characters of ink print.

For instance, the two dots at the top of the oblong represent C, the upper and lower dots on the left side stand for K, and the addition of the other upper dot to K changes it to M, It is amazing how six dots can be so combined to represent so many things — letters, marks of punctuation, signs, numerals, a musical notation and accents in foreign languages.

Braille's invention was as marvelous as any fairy tale. Only six dots! Yet when he touched a blank sheet of paper, lo! it became alive with words that sparkled in the darkness of the blind! Only six dots! Yet he made them vibrate with harmonies that charmed away their lonely hours! Only six dots! Yet the magic of his genius gave them the power of mighty vehicles of thought! With them he captured words that sing and dance with the joy of life — words that sigh and moan — words burning with holy fire, words that weave bonds of companionship between those who cannot see and those who can, words that bring to us the dawn, the rainbow and the splendor of sunset skies, words that, like swift ships, bear us far away from the monotony of blindness, the trivial incidents of time and place and the pain of thwarted effort! So long as the memory of brave men is cherished in the world, there shall be warm gratitude to Louis Braille who, himself blind, was a light to stumbling feet along the paths of knowledge and intelligence.

1829-1929 — what a strange story, what a long, slow journey for the blind from the first clumsy attempts at reading a type resembling that of ink print to the Braille books now within their reach! How many men and women today are trying to increase this supply of Braille literature on all subjects where a century ago one blind man stood up and pleaded with well intentioned but blundering teachers to abandon the difficult Roman Line type and adopt the more readable Braille system! Today thousands of sightless people learn Braille where a hundred years ago it had to be taught to a few almost surreptitiously and out of school hours. In order to understand more fully the importance of Braille's work, it may be well to go back to the beginning and give a brief history of embossed types for the blind. It is a history of incredible obstacles, tireless experimenting and queer misconceptions of blindness and the problems arising from it.

The seeing person who knows anything about the blind knows that they employ a tactile system of reading and writing. It is not, as many imagine, a system of signs or shorthand and it is a print in which the letters, punctuation marks and abbreviations are composed of dots combined in different positions. It is called Braille. Braille is almost universally used by the reading blind, but when the education system of the blind began in 1784, the first method of printing books for them was a system of characters resembling the Latin alphabet ...(continued on next page)...

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Braille, the Magic Wand of the Blind, by Helen Keller

— the Roman Line Letter Type. Valentin Haüy, the first educator of the blind, discovered this method accidentally, while watching the process of the ordinary press. He observed that sheets fresh from the press and printed only on one side showed the letters in rather sharp relief, and he at once set about enlarging the characters for the fingers, and having them printed the reverse of the usual type, so that they would read from left to right on the sheet. He reasoned that, since the characters could be felt, the only thing needed was to enlarge them so that the blind could distinguish them by touch. Accordingly, in his first experiment, he simply had the types reversed and made larger, with the result that the letters read from left to right on the sheet. He did not ask what kind of characters could be most easily read with the fingers, and this was his initial mistake. He laid down the fundamental principle that we must establish all possible contacts between the blind and the seeing, and he pushed his idea to the extent of insisting that the letters of their alphabets should be similar in appearance, forgetting that it is not really the eye nor the finger that reads, but the brain.

Language, in its orthographic form as we are accustomed to use it in writing and printing, is addressed to sight, but it can also be addressed to the touch through points, and any one can learn to read it as easily as he can read the printed page.

There is no difference between the way the blind and the seeing read except that the blind use one nerve-channel while the seeing use another. One of the fallacies among people who see about those who cannot see is that as soon as the sense of sight is lost, an exquisite touch is developed. Every human being has a natural sense of touch; but the great majority do not train it to any considerable extent. Only a fortunate few possess a sensitive touch to start with when they are blinded, and strange to say, a man whose hand is hardened by manual labor is as likely to have this advantage as another whose fingers are more delicate.

Many seeing people have learned Braille so as to be able to write their blind friends letters they could read themselves. A letter always seems more to belong to me if I can read it than it does when someone reads it to me. As for the benefit which the seeing derive from it, Sir Arthur Pearson, who could see until late in life, and who founded St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors in London, said, "Learning to read by a new method undoubtedly helps a man to do many other things in unaccustomed ways. I would go so far as to say that it would well repay a man to learn Braille even if he were never to read a line of a Braille book, of so much value is the exercise and stimulus it gives to the mental faculties."

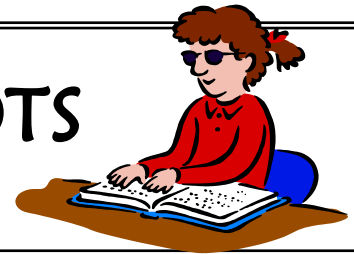
Haüy's method was spread rapidly from Paris to Great Britain, Germany, Austria and America. It was hailed as a path to deliverance for the blind; but the rejoicing gave way to disappointment when it was discovered that from one-third to one-half of the blind in the schools could not decipher Haüy's Line Letter.

The chief defect of his method was that he used curved forms, which the blind reader finds extremely difficult. Size was his first consideration, not shape. He did not know that the more elaborate a raised letter is, the less easy it is for the blind to recognize, or that the finger detects sharp angles much more quickly than curves, or that points like the period are perceived very clearly.

Countless modifications of Haüy's Line Letter were attempted in France, England and other countries with the object of discovering a more legible type; but none of them was successful, as is shown by the rapidity with which they were tested and thrown aside. Only one linear type has survived to this day — the angular Moon Type, invented by an Englishman, William Moon. This is a very large and distinct print adapted to the fingers of the adult blind, who need something to practice their touch on before they learn Braille.

So obvious was the failure of these early systems that in 1832 the Scottish Art Society offered a gold medal for the most practical method of embossing for the sightless. Fifteen typographic systems made their appearance, in which angular forms predominated, and there was one which somewhat resembled the dot system of our day. In spite of the fact that points are distinguished more readily than lines, the jury of awards decided upon the Alston form of line type.

CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille, the Magic Wand of the Blind, by Helen Keller

It requires a philosophic spirit to understand this apparently foolish disregard of the most workable way to overcome the handicap of blindness. The jury had a sincere desire to keep the blind and the seeing as close together as might be in their reading and writing and in all the activities of life. Besides, little was known about the sense of touch in those days. Educators and inventors were under the delusion that the loss of vision renders the other senses far keener and more alert. They supposed that what looked good to the eye would with modifications be equally acceptable to the fingers. Among the many who advanced theories concerning the blind, Diderot alone pointed out that while they may acquire the same amount of knowledge as the seeing, their processes of acquiring it would probably be quite different. He wrote his famous essay on the blind about the year 1749; but his wise words fell upon barren soil. Those who took an interest in the handicapped were governed by tradition and custom. Independent thought and action were not encouraged. There was no philosophy of life which took into account the need of modifying principles so as to meet the requirements of peculiarly situated human beings. Pragmatism had not taken its place in the life of society.

These facts enable us to realize in some measure what a formidable task it was to establish a system of arbitrarily formed point characters like Braille as a part of the blind man's life equipment. In 1819 Charles Barbier, a Frenchman with a rare combination of good eyes and good sense, invented a dot system which the genius of Louis Braille, a sightless man, brought to perfection. Braille was a student at the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, and the dot system has borne his name ever since. The vast superiority of Braille to all line types in embossing and in facility of writing was at once perceived by the teachers and pupils; but for some reason the authorities of the Institution insisted upon the continued use of line types.

For many years Braille remained comparatively obscure in the city of its origin, and it was still a harder fight for recognition in other countries, especially in Great Britain and America. Almost unnoticed and nearly always through blind persons who learned it, the system came to be known and approved outside of Paris. It was not recognized as the standard type for the blind in England until 1869, and even then the institutions were slow in discarding the other systems.

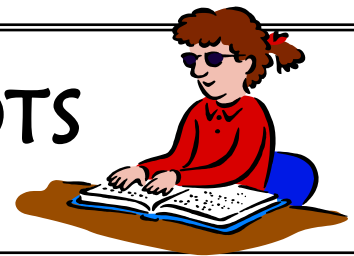
As Braille progressed little by little it encountered three rivals — mighty dragons breathing fire and smoke. The first was the Roman Line which Dr. Howe, Director of the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston, had improved for his young sightless pupils. His faith that "obstacles were things to overcome" inspired them with a determination to master even the Line Letter; and he turned out books so rapidly that soon he had the largest and finest embossed library in the world. Every school for the blind in the United States used them, and no others were to be had. The second rival of Braille was New York Point which made its appearance some time before 1868. The third was another modification called American Braille.

Each system had its zealous adherents, and the controversy as to which should be generally used was long and fierce. It did great harm because it interfered with the discussion of other important matters connected with the blind, and increased the cost of embossing books and music. The money appropriated by the Government to emboss books had to be used for all types. The same books, which were expensive enough printed once, had to be duplicated in the different types for different institutions. The long, fierce struggle between the advocates of Line Letter, New York Point and American Braille was a repetition on a small scale of the fight that goes on daily between realists and idealists, radicals and conservative, science and superstition. It was a pitiable spectacle in which friends of the blind became foes when they should have worked together toward a common end — a beautiful service to a most handicapped group of their fellowmen.

But there was one influential friend of the sightless who put service before theory or controversy. It was the generosity of Mr. M.C. Migel, President of the American Foundation for the Blind, that made possible the investigation and tests of the various raised prints, and ensured the final victory for uniformity. He gave thousand dollars ...(continued)...



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille, the Magic Wand of the Blind, by Helen Keller

to finance the committee which studied the type question. his was a tremendous benefaction to the blind of America. The only fitting expression of gratitude to him is to declare publicly the mental relief and happiness of the blind in at last having, like those who see, a unified, easy method of reading and writing, a method adequate to all the practical uses of life and work. Thus, at last the blind of both hemispheres were united in one method of embossed writing. It is now necessary to print books only in this type to make them available to all the blind.

Truly, books are lamps in my own life and in the lives of countless other blind people. They are a haven of peace sweet to rest in after we have been tossed on the waves of discouragement. They deliver us from the dreary monotony of blindness! With words of light they transport us from our little corner in the dark to the colorful, throbbing, creative life of mankind. They roll up the curtain of night, as it were, and reveal to us the glory of dawn and starry skies, the sea and mighty forests. As Madame Bertha Galeron, A French deaf-blind poet, says, "To put a book on our knee is more than a benefit, it is almost a work of salvation."

The importance of a common embossed print is still more evident when we remember that one of the first things an adult person who loses his sight must do is to learn how to read and write by touch. He has to learn how to do the old thing in a new way, and that is hard enough without confusing him with a Babel of types.

Braille has been a most precious aid to me in many ways. It made my going to college possible — it was the only method by which I could take notes of lectures. All my examination papers were copied for me in this system. I use Braille as a spider uses its web — to catch thoughts that flit across my mind for speeches, messages and manuscripts.

Without Braille I should not have had courage to jump into "Midstream," — my new book bringing up to date the story of my life which is to be published in this autumn. I wrote out in Braille a synopsis of what I wanted to say, then I copied the manuscript on the typewriter.

Oh, how often I blessed Louis Braille for his invention! Oh the appearance of my study in those days! — my table, desk, chairs, couch and floor covered with what Conrad describes as "the litter of a cruel battle-field, — living pages, pages scored and wounded, dead pages" and pages that a vagrant breeze had spirited away into a corner! Without Braille I could not have held the thread of my discourse. O the miracle of Louis Braille's invention — the strange dotted characters which gave eyes to the blind, redeemed them from despair and knit their souls with the soul of mankind in sweet unison. They who once sat brooding through sad, interminable days of emptiness now look with rapt gaze upon the universe as they read with the eyes in their fingers. From the tomb of sealed sense they have risen to the morning light and the ecstasy of thought. They live fully, instead of only the half-life of darkness! Happy, they no longer remember their hours of solitude — they are not alone any more! Like friends their books speak to them with words of enchantment.

O the joy of being able to think! O the precious power of self-expression! O the comfort of forgetting sorrow in love's confidences! O the blessedness of treading the high places of the spirit unfettered! O the delicious taste of independence that comes with an embossed book, and a Braille tablet!

Yes, the blind can now work, they can study, they can sing, they can add their share to the good and happiness in the world. And it was Louis Braille, a captive bearing a yoke cruel as their own, who found the golden key to unlock their prison-door.

Read this entire article and much more at the [American Foundation for the Blind website](https://www.afb.org/about-afb/history/helen-keller/books-essays-speeches/education/braille-magic-wand-blind) (https://www.afb.org/about-afb/history/helen-keller/books-essays-speeches/education/braille-magic-wand-blind).

A Bill of Rights for All Children with Visual Impairment and their Families

Preamble: In addition to specific principles that have been found to be true for children with visual impairment, all the provisions of what constitutes a “Free and Appropriate Education” under the Individuals with Disability Education Act shall be assumed along with this bill of rights.

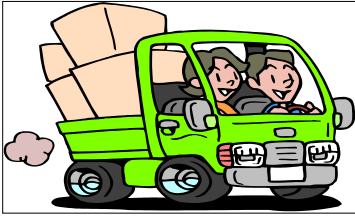
1. Children with all levels of visual impairment (including those with multiple disabilities and those who are DeafBlind) have a right to early intervention and education that is timely, ambitious and results in the highest possible achievement for each individual.
2. Children with visual impairment have the right to a functional vision evaluation and a learning media assessment by qualified educators after a comprehensive eye examination which may include a clinical low vision assessment.
3. Parents/guardians of children with visual impairment have the right to assistance in interpreting the educational implications of the diagnosed visual impairment by qualified educators (teachers of the visually impaired and mobility specialists) and the right to assistance from regional/national agencies (including consumer advocacy organizations) that can help them make informed decisions on behalf of their child.
4. As required in the Individuals with Disability Education Act "in the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, [the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team must] provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child."
5. Children and families have the right to be fully informed about the “Expanded Core Curriculum” of skills unique to students with visual impairment and which includes: compensatory skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills and self-determination.
6. Children have the right to assessment and instruction, in school and in their communities, in every area of the “Expanded Core Curriculum” (ECC) that is deemed appropriate by the educational team and includes the parents / guardians as the primary decision makers and includes the student when appropriate. The ECC is equal in importance to the standard academic curriculum and will not be overlooked in the educational plan.
7. Children have the right to receive school materials that are accessible, in the preferred format and at the same time as their sighted peers. Children have an absolute right to testing procedures and instruments that are fair and accessible, that take into consideration the results of the functional vision evaluation, and include all accommodations identified in the IEP.
8. It is the right of children and families for all placement settings (including specialized schools for the visually impaired) to be discussed at IEP meetings as equal options. Specialized school may offer the best education and be the “least restrictive environment” for some children.
9. All children with a visual impairment have the right to teams that aggressively assist them in preparing for transition to adulthood.
10. Children with visual impairment, including those with multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness, have the right to be perceived as equal, contributing members of their communities, classrooms, and schools. As with all children, their engagement through belonging increases the collective value of each setting within which they participate.

The rights listed in this document consist of a combination of both legal rights, ethical rights and right attitudes. This document exists as a resource for students, parents and professionals. The authors hope that this resource will be widely distributed, endorsed (formally or informally) by interested individuals and organizations. It is not fully inclusive of all rights; it is merely a starting point for teams when planning individualized programs for children.



This resource is the result of a joint project between the leaders of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) and the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB)





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!



The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) has just released the [2019 Youth Transition Report: Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities](#), that focuses on the prevalence and outcomes of disability in the youth and young adult population (ages 14-24). While other reports present information about the working-age adult population or children with disabilities, the 2019 Youth Transition Report focuses on the 14-24-year-old age group—youth and young adults with disabilities. The report includes national and state level data.

More than six percent of youth and young adults have a disability, and these youth are less likely than their peers to complete high school, enter post-secondary education, obtain a bachelor's degree, and enter and find jobs. At a time when youth and young adults are preparing for lifelong success in careers and financial independence, they are more likely to be discouraged from opportunities to remain in or reconnect with education and workforce systems.

The Youth Transition Report highlights include:

- No state has closed the high school attainment gap between students with and without disabilities, which hovers at 13.8 percent nationally. The average high school attainment rate for this group nationally is 73.6 percent with the highest rate in Iowa (82.5 percent) and the lowest in Louisiana (61 percent).
- The dropout rate for students with disabilities is twice the rate of those without disabilities (12.4 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively).
- National college entry rates for young adults with disabilities in 2017 was 25.4 percent, below the national average for students without disabilities. Washington, D.C. stands out with one of the highest college enrollment rates at 35.4 percent as well as the highest college completion rate of 13.6 percent for young adults with disabilities.
- In 2017, only 24.9 percent of youth and young adults with disabilities ages 14-24 were employed, significantly less than the 41.9 percent of their peers without disabilities who were employed.

[Read the report to see all of IEL's findings.](#)

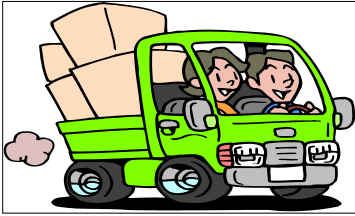
National APSE Conference

The National Association of People Supporting Employment First is coming to Denver in June!

June 15-18, 2020 Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center

The 2020 National APSE Conference is the only national conference focused solely on the advancement of Employment First. The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) National Conference brings together more than 1,000 community leaders, businesses, and people with disabilities from across the country and around the world to network and discuss state-of-the-art strategies to ensure equitable employment for all citizens with disabilities.

For more information, visit the [2020 National APSE Conference website](https://apse.org/get-educated/2020-national-conference/). (<https://apse.org/get-educated/2020-national-conference/>)



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

HKNC Offerings

The Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults is offering two different trainings this summer.

- **2020 Summer Youth Vocational Program / Offered twice in the summer / June 8, 2020 – July 17, 2020 AND July 20, 2020 – August 28, 2020**

The HKNC Summer Youth Vocational Program is a six-week program and prepares youth for competitive integrated employment and incorporates the five (5) areas under WIOA.

First Session application deadline is April 10, 2020 AND Second Session application deadline is May 8, 2020.

- **2020 M~Power / July 27 – August 7, 2020**

My Pursuit of Work, Empowerment & Resources. M~Power is a two-week program geared for transition aged youth who are deaf-blind including major areas of Pre-ETS.

Please submit applications by May 15, 2020.

Some friendly reminders to prepare for summer training:

- Connect with your RR and your student's IEP team to see how HKNC can help meet IEP goals this summer.
- HKNC Programs are first come first serve and they may fill up quickly.
- Approval for state funding may take time; so if interested in a summer program, be sure to include VR in the dialog ASAP.

For questions/additional information, visit the [Helen Keller National Center website](#) or please contact:

Laura Bengé at Laura.Benge@hknc.org or Taryn Hill at Taryn.Hill@hknc.org.

Scholarship Program

The **National Federation of the Blind's** annual [scholarship program](#) is the largest of its kind in the nation. Every year, they award more than \$120,000 to blind scholars across the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in recognition of their achievements and professional aspirations.

Thanks to our generous partners, there are thirty merit-based scholarships currently available, ranging from \$3,000 to \$12,000. All scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence, community service, and leadership. The finalists are announced every spring. They then attend our national convention in July when the winners of each individual scholarship are selected. Scholarship winners have gone on to succeed in careers ranging from computer science and engineering to civil rights law and international diplomacy.

How to Apply: Apply online or through the mail— Apply online using the [online application](#)—Apply through the mail using the [print application](#). (<https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/scholarship-program>)

Deadline: The application period for the 2020 program will be open from November 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020.

Eligibility: The following requirements apply to all applicants:

* Must be legally blind (PDF) in both eyes. * Must be residing in the United States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico. * Must be pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time, post-secondary course of study in a degree program at a U.S. institution in the fall of the year of application (one scholarship may be given to a person employed full-time while attending school part-time) * Must participate in the entire NFB National Convention and in all of its scheduled scholarship program activities (finalists will receive assistance to attend the national convention).

For more information regarding eligibility, we strongly encourage you to review our [scholarship program FAQs](#). (<https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/scholarship-program/scholarship-program-faqs>)

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/>.



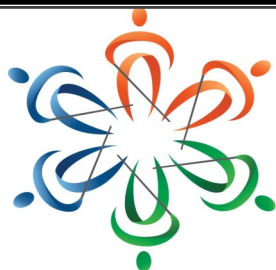
NATIONAL FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR DEAF-BLIND
Empowering Families with Individuals who are Deaf-Blind



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.

Improving Instruction Parent-Educator Toolkit

The parents of English learners need to be involved in decisions about accessibility features for their children. An NCEO affiliated project, Improving Instruction for English Learners Through Improved Accessibility Decisions, recently developed a [Parent-Educator Toolkit](#) which contains a set of concise briefs for parents, teachers, and principals. (<https://nceo.info/About/projects/improving-instruction/parent-educator-toolkit>)



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PARENTS OF BLIND CHILDREN DIVISION

Live the life you want.

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 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 our 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.

just for PARENTS



Center for
Parent Information
& Resources

Parent Center Video Resources

[How to Request a Special Education Assessment](#)

This 7-minute video from Parents Helping Parents (CA) introduces the assessment process used when considering a child for special education services. It's great for anyone who is new to the process and in need of a simple explanation. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoBSv0FdPYo&feature=youtu.be>)

[Consent and Kids with Disabilities](#)

Talking about consent with children may feel like a daunting task, but the speaker in this 4-minute video discusses why understanding consent is important for all children, especially those with disabilities. The video comes with a written guide, *A Step-by-Step Guide to Talking about Consent with Disabled Kids*. (<https://rootedinrights.org/video/consent-and-kids-with-disabilities/>)

[Person-Centered Career Planning Exercise](#)

This 33-minute video from Person Centered Planning demonstrates a person-focused career planning exercise. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQbs5JhKNXM&feature=youtu.be>)



CADRE

*The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in
Special Education*

Educational Advocates: A Guide for Parents

An educational advocate, also known as a parent advocate, child advocate, student advocate, or independent advocate, assists parents of students with disabilities in navigating the complex world of special education. For a fee, professional advocates provide information, guidance and support throughout the IEP process to encourage decisions that meet the needs of the student. This guide, developed by CADRE, will assist parents in:

- Asking interview questions that will help get an understanding of an advocate's approach to providing support
- Connecting with parent centers in their state
- Connecting with additional sources of information about advocacy

Tell us what you think of the document, please [click here to take a short survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CADREpubs). (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CADREpubs>)

To order copies of this publication, please [fill out this order form](https://www.cadeworks.org/cadre-publications-order-form). (<https://www.cadeworks.org/cadre-publications-order-form>)

Please visit the [Education Advocates website](https://www.cadeworks.org/resources/cadre-materials/educational-advocates-guide-parents) for further information. (<https://www.cadeworks.org/resources/cadre-materials/educational-advocates-guide-parents>)



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 contract work, and work at A Shared Vision. Magic!





colorado connections



- ◆ Colorado was well represented at the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute in Baltimore, MD. **Will Reynolds, Martin Becerra-Miranda,** and **Natalie Palmer** received extensive training for the summer's BELL Academy and Confidence Camp (A BELL Academy at the Colorado Center for Blind). Dates for these opportunities are to be determined and announced later this Spring.
- ◆ Hats off to the following people who earned CDE Renewal Hours: **Nicole Andersen, Julie King, Lori Mattick,** and **Dana McMullen!** Also a big congratulations to **Mike Pillow** (Adams 12), **Julie Swegele** (CSDB), and **Nancy Barron** (CSDB) on earning their initial CDE Certificates of Braille Competency! Also hats off to **Ashley Ives** for earning her CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency. Thanks to proctors **Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard,** and **Julie Wetzstein** for test proctoring and mentoring work.
- ◆ A big THANK YOU to the following people who took the time to submit the Child Count Data Forms for learners with deaf-blindness: **Bev Blagg, Sally Burch, Linda Campbell, Peg Collins, Meghan Crosby, Elsa D'Angelo, Kathy Emter, Donice Fennimore, Kari Finholt, Jeanine Holmes, Abby Horner, Julia Hutchinson, Ashley Ives, Charlotte Javier, Carol Jordan, Lori Mattick, Brooke Miller, Judy Mumford, Mike Plansker, William Reynolds, Callie Robinson, Mindy Roden, Wendy Schlageter, Angela Sims, Roberta Weidemeyer.**

We depend on YOU to ensure our annual and ongoing registration of learners with combined vision and hearing loss is accurate. Learners identified with deaf-blindness are eligible for free technical assistance from the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. Our TA Specialists, Wendy Stoltman and Shelley Moats, have been very busy this year with the free technical assistance support to school personnel.

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 email 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

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

The contents of this handout were developed under a grant from the United States Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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