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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

Education In the Time of COVID-19

By Tanni Anthony

As it has been said many times, we are experiencing an unprecedented time in our personal and professional lives. For those who have ever glamourized working from home, there may now be a new reconciliation of just how complicated, difficult, and exhausting it can be to meet home-life and work-life needs when the former physical separation of these two worlds has been eliminated. There is a new-day balance of caring for love ones while meeting work needs, the exhaustion of completing tasks on your “to do” list that may have never been done before, and the anxiety that comes with the uncertainty of what the days ahead will bring. It has been a lot to do and a lot to absorb.

Along with the challenges, have been triumphs. Students served in new ways, creative thinking of a profound magnitude and example to others, new resources developed locally and nationally, problem solving that has highlighted new ideas and solutions, and many acts of kindness along the way. Examples of the latter include school bus drivers dispatched in rural communities to do wellness checks on families that have not been responsive, educational materials dropped off with notes of encouragement and gifts of food, and virtual mental health and social supports.

We have experienced positive and challenging moments in this current time of COVID-19. How we have responded and continue to respond matters. In his time with us on at a recent BVI Office Hours, CDE Affective Needs / SED consultant Bill Brown shared the importance of having a routine, taking time to breathe / move / be outside / reclaim our privacy, and staying present with what we know and not what we fear ahead that has not and may not ever happen. Bill shared that our anxiety magnifies when our worries are greater than our resources. This confirms our need to help ourselves and others with securing assistance and supports.

As we move toward summer, there are virtual student and professional supports ahead. My office is open, be it in my home or downtown Denver. Keep in touch with how CDE can provide support. In closing of this school year, my admiration and gratitude is off the charts for your commitment to provide children with school-based and life-based education in this time of COVID-19. Be well!

Table of Contents

Education During COVID-19	1	Calendar of Events	22-23
Low Vision Evaluation Clinics	4	Connecting the Dots	24-26
Check It Out	5-10	Transition Information	28-29
Resources and Materials	11-12	Just for Parents	30-33
CAER News	13	Jobs in Colorado	34
CDE Happenings	15-19	Vision Coalition	35-47
Orientation and Mobility	20-21	Farewells / CO Connections	48-51

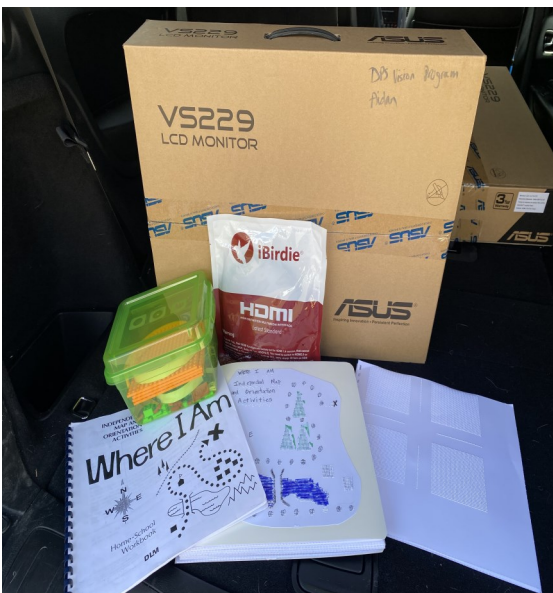


Pre-calculus survives the pandemic!

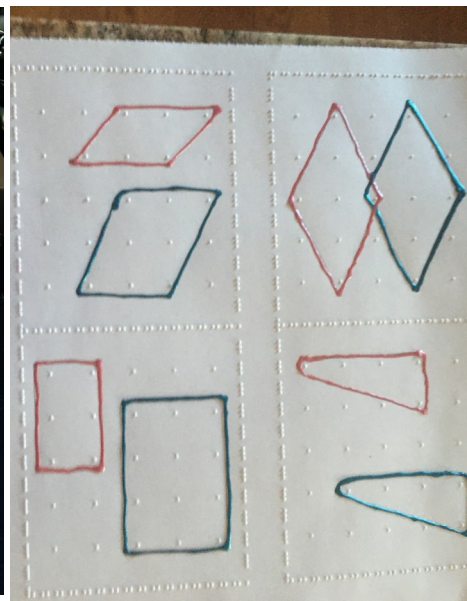


Orientation and Mobility Supplies

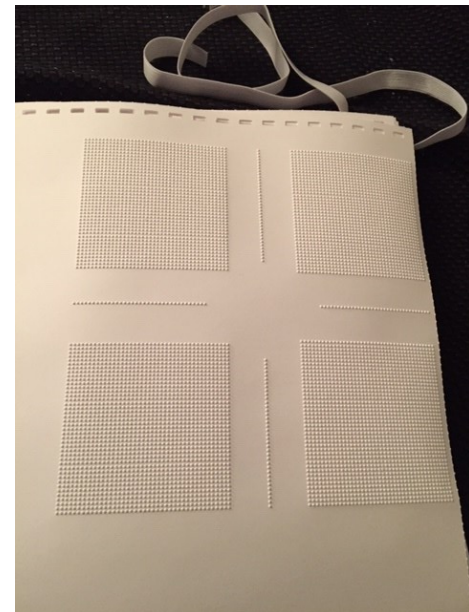
Porch Braille and Other Instructional Drop-Off Delights to Keep Our Students in the Know and on the Go!



Monitor with an HDMI cable for Braille Note, a Lego kit for O&M mapping purposes, and a Map Activity Book.



O&M Perimeter Tasks



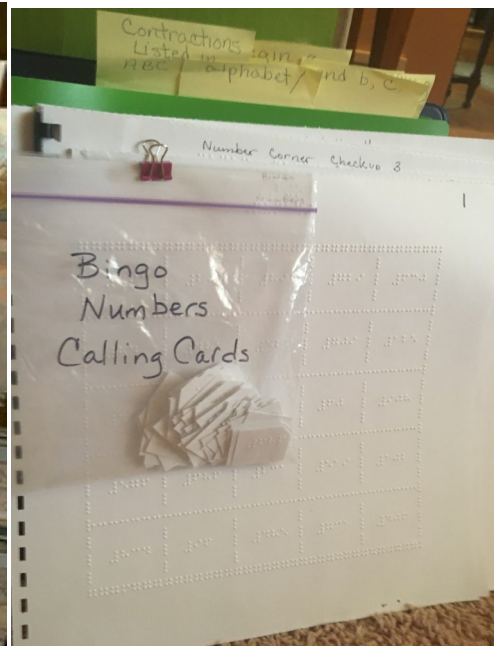
O&M Supplies



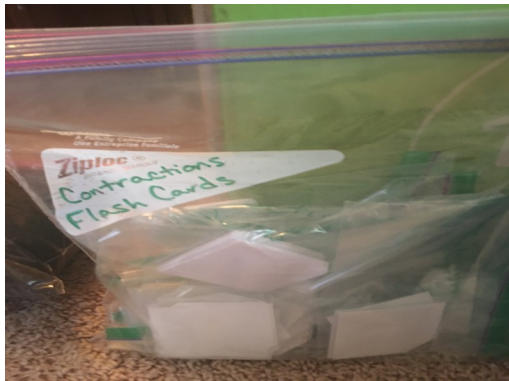
Braille drop off with a healthy sweet treat!



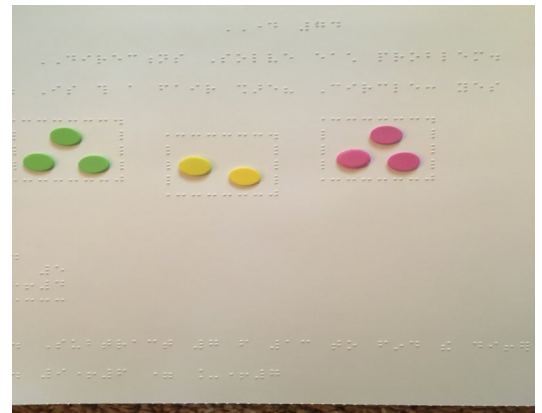
Braille to go!



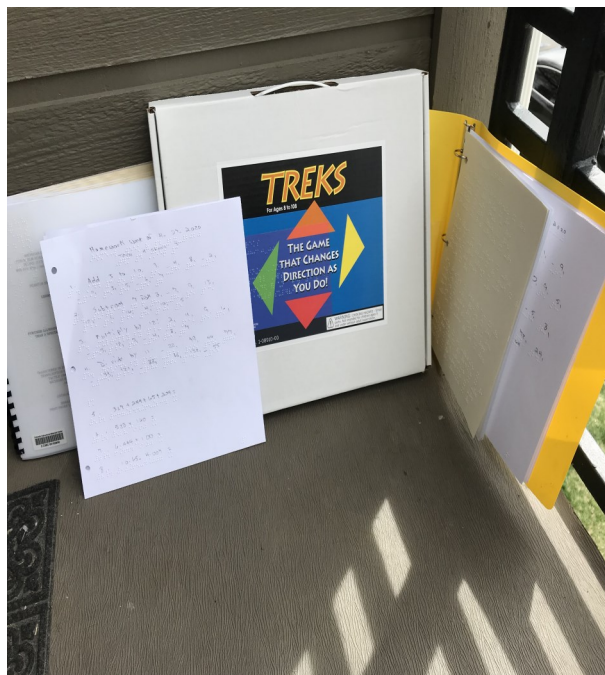
BINGO with Reading



**(To the Left)
Braille Contraction
Flash Cards**



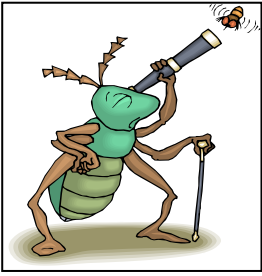
**(To the Right)
Math Workbook**



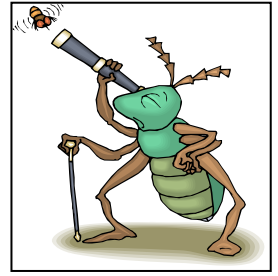
Braille and O&M lessons in home style!



Enjoy a Braille lesson courtesy of a home drop-off!



LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Low Vision Regional Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2020-2021

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator(s)
Western	To Be Determined	Angela Sims
Southern	To Be Determined	Debbie Haberkorn
Northern	To Be Determined	Liz Wieder
Metro	To Be Determined	Morgan Fitzpatrick Karin Hensel

Thanks to the 43 wonderful TVIs who responded to the LVE Clinic Survey—we have close to 75 kids to see in the next school year! The LVE Clinic Team is currently working with the Site Coordinators to book out dates for in-person clinics.

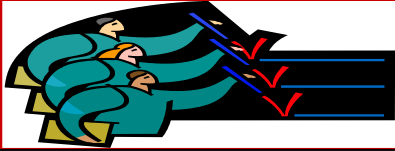
As Tanni has these dates, she will send them out to each region. Stay tuned!

Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

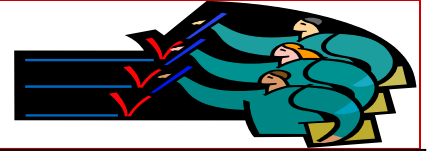
By Debbie Haberkorn

The Metro Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held Thursday, February 20th to Saturday, February 22nd at Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver, Colorado. Twelve students from eight Administrative Units (Adams County District 12, Adams County District 14, Adams/Arapahoe County District 28J, Arapahoe County District 2, Arapahoe County District 6, Denver County District 1, Douglas County District RE-1, and Jefferson County District RE-1) received evaluations. Twelve parents and twelve TVIs (Mike Pillow, Kaitlin Lombardi, Wendy Schlageter, Amber Rundle-Kahn, Nancy Cozart, Jill Bookwalter, Elsa D’Angelo, Christopher Kinney, Brooke Thomas, Anitha Muthukumaran, Maggie Tutt, and Kari Finholt) attended the evaluation with their students.

Thank you so much to the TVIs and parents who brought students. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank the staff of Anchor Center for hosting the clinic this year. Our gratitude and a very heartfelt thank you to Nancy Knight for her dedication and service over the years.



CHECK IT OUT!



CDE COVID—19 Resources

- [CDE Website](#)
- [CDE COVID Resources](#)
- [CDE Office of Special Education COVID resources:](#)

The CDE Office of Special Education COVID resource webpage has many topics specific to federal/state guidance, topics for instruction, disability-specific resources, and parent support resources.

Also the [CDE Visual Impairment, Including Blindness webpage](#) has been built out.

[Google Drive with BVI COVID Resources:](#) thanks to Nancy Cozart, Elsa D'Angelo, Karin Hensel, Julie Hutchinson, Jamie Lugo, and Tanni Anthony. This link does not require that you have a Google account.

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 the effects of test accommodations that go back to 1999.

Check out the [full list of accommodations](#).

Save the Dates—Summer Mountain Mobility with the Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte

Summer Dates: June 21-26, 2020—Still On!

The Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) in Crested Butte will be running summer adventure sports camps specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. 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.

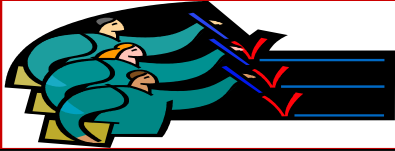
For more information and questions contact Mike Plansker at mike.e.plansker@adams12.org.

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP)

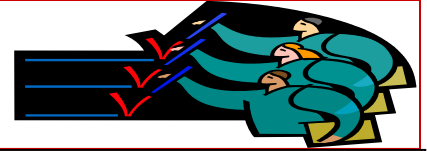
iCanConnect (ICC) is a federal grant that provides free telecommunications equipment and training to those who qualify. There is no minimum or maximum age requirement, just that the person can benefit from this technology that allows for sending an email, texting, chatting on the phone, communicating 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!



Do you know an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled K-12 teacher? Nominate one of your colleagues to apply for the [2021 Colorado Teacher of the Year award](#).

Each year, the Colorado Teacher of the Year Program honors an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled K-12 classroom teacher to represent the entire profession in the state. The selected teacher will automatically become Colorado's nominee for the National Teacher of the Year competition.

This special teacher also gets to attend the following events:

- The National Teacher of the Year Induction, an opportunity for the country's teachers of the year to come together and understand their individual identities in their new roles.
- Washington Week, an opportunity to go to the nation's capital for recognition. Teachers will get to visit the White House and meet the president as well as attend the National Teacher of the Year gala.
- NASA Space Camp, where teachers participate in a version of astronaut training designed specifically for educators to take strategies and concepts back to their classrooms.
- College Football Playoff National Championship Game to participate in the College Football Playoff Foundation's Extra Yard for Teachers event, which elevates the teaching profession by inspiring and empowering quality teachers.

All this can be possible for one exceptional Colorado teacher so tell the one you're thinking of right now to apply. If you would like to apply for this opportunity, stay tuned. CDE will announce the release of the application process.



Determination, courage, and opportunity are needed to grow in an unlikely place or time in the world.

Thanks to each of you for taking root and growing tall over these past weeks of virtual and remote instruction.



CIMC – End of Year Instructions

We have been receiving a lot of questions about if/when districts can return braille textbooks, novels and APH materials for the repository. You can ship your items back at any time – we never ‘closed’ our shipping and receiving services throughout this whole COVID-19 situation. USPS has the ability to deliver mail and packages to our receiving room, even if we are not present (they have a code to the door lock).

If returning in person:

Call or email us to make arrangements so that at least one CIMC staff can be present when you want to make your returns in person.

If you are mailing your returns using the USPS:

- Please only return COMPLETE sets of books.
- Do not return a partial book now, with the intention of returning the last volumes later. This only confuses us and makes our jobs more difficult.
- Please remember to pack your books sufficiently.
- No returns in refrigerator-sized boxes please – this only makes the USPS and us angry. We have to be able to lift the box, alone, without assistance.
- Try to use only 12” x 12” x 12” boxes – hopefully you are able to reuse the boxes we originally used to ship you your books.
- Your district is charged for missing/damaged volumes of braille.
- Use a lot of packing tape on your boxes.

We would appreciate it if you would send an email to cimcbookorders@csdb.org when you return boxes of books, so we can keep an eye out for them. This helps our documentation process as well.

If you are returning APH materials for the repository:

- You should be returning APH products to the repository as you are finished using them and we CAN receive them now.
- **Please DISINFECT the products before returning them.** Then, insert a little love note that tells us that you disinfected the products in the box.
- We want clean, complete, items returned that we can simply put on our shelves in the repository now and pull from the repository to fill a future order.
- Think of your colleagues receiving your gently used products. They appreciate that you took the time to make sure your return had all of its pieces and parts, and that they were all clean.

We appreciate you! If you have any questions, please ask.

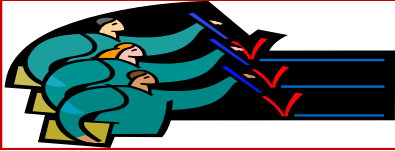
Jim

Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)

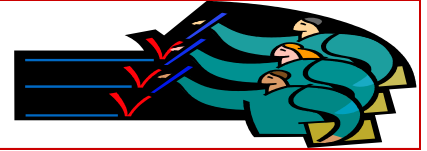
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) Outreach Programs and Services

(719) 578-2195, Jim Olson (Coordinator) jolson@csdb.org

Mailing Address: CIMC, 1015 East High Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3559



CHECK IT OUT!



Helen Keller National Center is excited to announce three (3) virtual summer learning opportunities for youth, ages 16-22.

Virtual M~POWER

Program Cost: \$625.00 / week—July 27– August 7, 2020 -

This includes an introduction to the world of work and emphasizes the five areas of Pre-ETS: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary educational opportunities, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy.

Summer Youth Vocational Program (SYVP)

Program Cost: \$625.00 / week

Session I: June 8, 2020 – July 17, 2020 / Session II: July 20, 2020 – August 28, 2020

This offers opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in the following areas: vocational exploration, self-determination, advocacy, communication methods, worksite orientation & mobility, assistive aids & devices, and interviewing & employment skills. Participants will gain self-awareness through the process of gathering information about their interests, abilities, and values. They will explore the “world of work” through the distribution of information of a variety of career options. As a result of their discoveries through self-awareness and “world of work,” participants will narrow potential career options supported by informed decision-making.

Summer Assessment (eight weeks)

Program Cost: \$625.00 / week / Offered June, July, and August 2020

This will offer opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in the following areas:

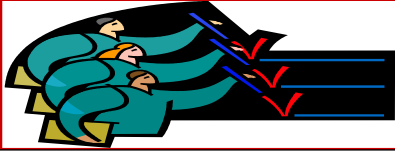
- * Career and Job Exploration
- * Workplace Readiness Skills
- * Adaptive Technology
- * Orientation & Mobility
- * Communication
- * Virtual Worksite Tours
- * Counseling on Post-Secondary Education
- * Self-Advocacy - Facilitate an IEP Meeting
- * Low Vision and Audiology

Along with the assessment areas, participants may choose to join peer-learning groups such as Emergency Preparedness, ASL instruction, Virtual Yoga, Coping with COVID-19 Support Group, Advocacy in the Deaf-Blind World, and Working with Support Service Providers (SSPs). Additionally, HKNC is offering virtual assessment and training for adults who are not transition-age, who have both vision and hearing loss during this summer and fall. These services will be provided via remote learning methods unique to each individual depending on their communication methods and access to technology.

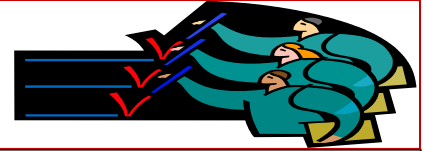
The assessment and training will occur in the five core areas of orientation & mobility, communication, independent living, technology and vocational preparation/soft skills, with additional support in the areas of low vision, audiology and creative arts. There is flexibility with developing the individual’s schedule and number of classes. Outcomes from the assessment and training are co-developed with the individual, vocational rehabilitation counselor, HKNC regional representative, and HKNC instructors.

For more information, contact Dora Carney, Admissions Coordinator:

Dora.Carney@hknc.org Or Your Regional Representative: <https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/nationwide-service>



CHECK IT OUT!



OSEP-Funded TA Center COVID-19 Resources

OSERS' technical assistance centers are ready to address your questions regarding the IDEA and best practices and alternate models for providing special education and related services, including through distance instruction. The National Center for Systemic Improvement is the primary source for technical assistance resources during the COVID-19 national emergency for IDEA Part B programs. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center is the primary source for IDEA Part C programs. For questions pertaining to Part C of IDEA, States should contact their Early [Childhood Technical Assistance Center State Contact](#). For Part B of IDEA, States should contact the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#).

** Early Childhood

The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) is providing State Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs with the [latest information](#) on funding and guidance, as well as information on [talking to children and families](#) during the COVID-19 national emergency.



** NCSI

The [National Center for Systemic Improvement's](#) web page provides a resource hub for supporting students with disabilities during the COVID-19 national emergency, including [educator resources to support remote learning](#).



** Proficient Communicators Who Are Deaf-Blind

The [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#) has compiled and organized [Resources for Providing Technical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). It covers OSEP guidance, distance TA, resources for families and service providers, and online learning for proficient communicators who are deaf-blind. The page is being regularly updated with input from state deaf-blind projects and national partners.



** Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

[TIES Center](#) has launched a distance-learning series that provides a framework for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to get through these new transitions, engage fully in academics online, and interact with their teachers and peers, a critical component of well-being. TIES Center is regularly adding resources to the distance learning series that offer the following recommendations to support the inclusion and engagement of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Current resources include:

- [TIES Distance Learning #1: Morning Meetings](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #2: A Collaborative Start to Behavioral Supports](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #3: Effective Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) Within the Distance Learning Environment: What in the World Does That Look Like?](#)



** Accessible Materials and Technologies

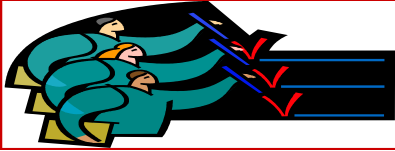
The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 crisis.



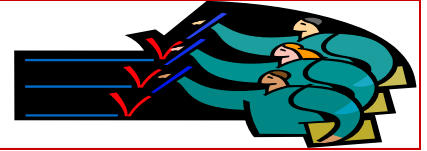
** Ebooks

[Bookshare](#) provides accessible Ebooks for eligible individuals with barriers to reading. The resources linked here will help students with dyslexia, blindness/visual impairment, cerebral palsy, and other print reading barriers to continue learning during school closures.





CHECK IT OUT!



Mountain Mobility Winter 2020

The annual Mountain Mobility winter trip to Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) in Crested Butte happened February 13-17, 2020 and was once again a huge success. Mike Plansker and Sally Burch were the chaperones for six wonderful, skilled and independent high school students. We had five returning students and one student brand new to the trip and skiing. The first task of the trip for these students was to go grocery shopping for eight people for six days. Needless to say, we had to get a lot of food. The students were responsible for following menus to cook breakfast and dinners while learning new skills in the kitchen. Our menus were delicious and we all decided they were way more complex than we cook at home! February 14th was our first full day in Crested Butte. We walked from our house in downtown Crested Butte to the bus stop to hop the bus to Crested Butte ski resort. Once at the resort, we received the tour of the brand new Kelsey Wright Building which is now home to Adaptive Sports Center.

The new building is four stories and includes a climbing wall, kitchen, rooms for participants and a huge equipment room. It is quite a step up from their old facilities. After the tour, the students were paired up with their instructors, fitted with equipment and off to the slopes for a full day of skiing. Each student went out with their individual instructor to work on their unique ski goals based on their ability. The instructors are fabulous. After the first day of skiing, it was time to head home on the bus, relax and then cook our feast to power up to ski again on day two. On the night of day two, we played a quite competitive game of goalball and had some of the ASC instructors join us for the fun. The students weren't tired yet and we headed back to the mountain for our third day on the slopes. The students were all progressing up the mountain and to more difficult terrain. They had the idea to all ski down together and the ASC instructors made it happen. It was quite a sight to see all the orange blind skier vests coming down the mountain together. While we all had a ton of fun skiing, the highlight of the trip was seeing the confidence level of all six students increase throughout our time in Crested Butte.

We are already looking forward to our summer Mountain Mobility trip on June 21-26, 2020. Paperwork will come out in April.

If anyone is interested in going to Crested Butte to ski with Adaptive Sports on their own, visit the [Adaptive Sports webpage](#) and sign up. The staff at ASC are amazing people to work with and love working with our students. Plan for a great ski year next winter!

Mike and Sally



Image of Crested Butte



Image of high school students skiing with Adaptive Sports in Crested Butte

Resources and Materials

[Virtual Expanded Core Education Learning \(ExCEL\) Academy](#) for Students with Visual Impairments provides guidance on ways to provide virtual services or activities for students who are visually impaired. Join virtual classes from home! Together with our friends from the California State University, LA and Paths to Literacy (a joint project of Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Perkins School for the Blind), they offer FREE engaging lessons for very young children and school-age students with a variety of abilities.

APH Webinars

It is the priority of the American Printing House for the Blind to create access to the information you need to keep learning and working during this time of social distancing and quarantine. As part of [#AtHomeWithAPH](#), APH will be releasing webinars covering favorite classroom and workplace tools.

Providing Distance Family Support

Are you providing early intervention or preschool services using distance technology? Do you have questions about how you can support families as they help their children with learning activities or conducting intervention within routines? On this April 17 webinar, [Providing Distance Family Support: What do I say? How can I help?](#), faculty at the ED-funded [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#) discuss challenges related to assisting families using distance learning. They also share ideas on checking in with families, how to respond to difficult questions, and resources that might be shared.



The Top 5 Misconceptions Schools Have about FERPA/HIPAA

We live in an age filled with menace toward student privacy. As an important member of your school community, you're a defender of that privacy. Part of your responsibility is understanding two primary laws that protect against the unlawful disclosure of personal and health information: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule.

These laws are complex and often misunderstood – education law attorney representing schools, John Comegno, takes some of the mystery out of compliance with [FERPA/HIPAA regulations](#) by debunking common misconceptions for schools in [these five short videos](#).

BONUS: Take the quiz at the end of the blog post to test your FERPA/HIPAA knowledge.

ObjectiveEd

This resource provides free access to their digital curriculum to schools and teachers to use with their students through the end of the current 2019/2020 school year. Check out this quick [video that describes how ObjectiveEd works](#).

Tele-Intervention and Distance Learning

The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) has compiled a number of resources on [tele-intervention and distance learning](#). Check out the [new video](#) on using family guided routines based intervention for guiding home visits, whether in-person or delivered through video conferencing.

The video also provides general considerations when delivering home visits during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Resources and Materials



HKNC Courses

Helen Keller National Center is offering professional learning courses, **free of charge, up to May 31, 2020**. They hope these resources are helpful in supporting the needs of individuals who are deaf-blind. There have been a few changes in courses and CEUs offered so please look over the choices. You can access our class catalogue by going to: <https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/available-classes>. All courses are asynchronous and designed to learn at your own pace. For other resources and training tools, visit us at: <https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/professionallearning>.

Contact Laura Benge at laura.benge@hknc.org or my assistant at taryn.hill@hknc.org. They will give you a coupon code to that course.

Due to the success of the [Virtual ExCEL Academy](#) that was hosted this spring, there is an opportunity for students to experience the Inaugural Virtual ExCEL camp from mid-June through mid-August. Here is an opportunity to be sure our kids have opportunities to play, learn, and socialize from home! Check out the dates and topics on the Calendar of Events.



CDE Training and Professional Development

Professional development opportunities

[CDE has created a webpage of professional development offerings](#), which include opportunities specifically from ESSU.



USD 375
Continuous Learning Plan Focus
Less is More
Quality over Quantity
Relationships over Rigor
Grace before Grades
Patience before Programs
Love before Lessons
Do the Right Thing before Doing Things Right



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](#).

Update News: The International AER Conference has been rescheduled for July 20-24, 2022

CAER NEWS AND UPDATES:

Drawing For a Free Membership

Every year CAER keeps track of members who attended a board meeting or CAER sponsored event. At the end of the year we take all the names of those who attended and prepare them for a drawing for a CAER paid for membership to AER. This year CAER is proud to announce that Michelle Chacon won the drawing. She attended the IEP training in Fort Collins. Congratulations Michelle!

CAER Banquet Update and Awards

As of right now, the CAER banquet is still being planned and will be hosted to honor those who have won awards. It will be scheduled when it is safe for an in-person event of this size. An email will be sent out with details when we have more information. The Board has chosen award winners, but this information is under quarantine until the announcing at the banquet. If you have questions, please contact a member on the CAER Board.



Considerations for Summer School Programs

Summer school often provides meaningful academic and enrichment-based opportunities for students. This year, summer school might be even more important to students, as well as districts, that are considering new approaches to learning for summer and beyond.

As local education providers consider summer school in these exceptional times, the Colorado Department of Education provides these considerations to support the local decision-making process.

As districts and charter schools are determining whether they can offer summer school programs in these exceptional times, CDE has compiled a [list of considerations to support the local decision-making process](#).

There are sections on:

- [Planning in Uncertain Times](#)
- [Purpose and Goals of Summer School](#)
- [Student Engagement and Dropout Prevention Strategy](#)
- [Teacher Training and Professional Development](#)
- [School Connection and Support](#)
- [Nimble, Flexible Instructional Options](#)
- [Funding Sources](#)
- [Summer Food Service Program](#)
- [Summer Camps/Sports Camps](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Appendix: Protecting the Health of School Community Members](#)

For information that has been gathered specific to equitable learning outcomes, including summer school for students with disabilities and other learners with special considerations, please visit the [Summer School Equitable Learning Outcome Considerations](#) web page.



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.



K – 3 Teacher Evidence-Based Reading Training Requirements

About the training requirements—Colorado school districts are required to ensure all kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers complete evidence-based training in teaching reading by the 2021-22 school year, as a result of changes to the Colorado READ Act in [SB 19-199](#). In subsequent years, districts will need to ensure that teachers new to teaching K – 3rd grade also meet this requirement.

To meet this training requirement, State Board of Education rules require that the evidence-based training in teaching reading must:

- ◆ Consist of a minimum of 45 hours;
- ◆ Address the content of the educator preparation literacy standards referenced in the state board’s [Rules for the Administration of Educator License Endorsements, 1 CCR 301-101, section 4.02\(5\) through 4.02\(12\)](#) (effective May 30, 2019); and
- ◆ Include an end of course assessment that teachers can provide evidence of passing.

State law and State Board of Education rules allow the following options for teachers to meet the training requirement. CDE will provide information for teachers to submit documentation that one of these training options met the hour, content and assessment requirements. At this time, CDE anticipates that the documentation will be a part of a teachers’ license.

Teachers need to only complete one of these options to meet the training requirement:

1. Reading Teacher or Reading Specialist Endorsement

- Teachers who have a Colorado Reading Teacher or Reading Specialist endorsement meet the training requirement.

2. State Board Approved Assessment of Knowledge of Teaching Reading

- Teachers may take and pass a reading content assessment authorized by the State Board to meet the training requirement.
- The Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary 5205 exam with the passing score of 159 was approved by the state board in April 2020.

3. Appropriate undergraduate or graduate university course in teaching reading

- Teachers may submit evidence of successfully completing an undergraduate or graduate course in teaching reading for CDE to review to determine whether it meets the statutory requirement.

4. Appropriate course for license renewal

- Teachers may submit evidence of successfully completing a course in teaching reading appropriate for license renewal for CDE to review to determine whether it meets the statutory requirement.

5. CDE-provided training

- Teachers will have the option to successfully complete a CDE-provided training (online course or in-person) at no cost to the teacher.
 - CDE anticipates access to the online training course by the end of June 2020. In-person training scheduling will depend relaxed on relaxed social distancing requirements related to COVID-19.

6. District- or BOCES-provided training

- Teachers will have the option to successfully complete a district- or BOCES-provided training approved by CDE and can check with their district or BOCES whether this option will be available to them.

7. Training program from the CDE Advisory List of Professional Development

- Teachers can successfully complete a training program included on the CDE Advisory List of Professional Development that has been designed to meet this requirement.



K – 3 Teacher Evidence-Based Reading Training Requirements ...(continued)

Teachers need to meet this training requirement only once. The rules for the Colorado READ Act define a kindergarten through 3rd grade teacher as a “professional responsible for the literacy instruction of the student(s) and may include the main instructor for a class, an instructional coach, reading interventionist, special education teacher, Title I teacher or other personnel who are identified as effective in the teaching of reading.”

State law provides districts the ability to request a one-year extension from CDE to comply with this requirement. Depending upon the length of the impact of COVID-19, the department may consider a blanket one-year extension for all school districts.

CDE is currently working on a system for teachers to submit documentation of meeting the training requirement. We anticipate having more information about the process in the fall of 2020. As more information becomes available, this webpage will be updated.

For districts/BOCES: training options to help teachers meet the requirement.

CDE-provided training

CDE will be providing no-cost training via an online course or in-person training organized in cooperation with districts and BOCES.

Online Course: CDE anticipates that access to the online training course will be available by the end of June 2020. More information about registration will be forthcoming.

In-Person Training: CDE will be providing information on scheduling in-person training once it is clear how social distancing requirements will be relaxed related to COVID-19.

District- or BOCES-provided training.

Districts or BOCES may submit proposals to CDE to develop or provide training to meet this requirement.

CDE will be providing an application for districts and BOCES to have their training programs approved.

CARES Act

Colorado to Receive \$121 Million from Federal Relief Fund

The Colorado Department of Education [has calculated preliminary funding amounts](#) the state’s Local Education Agencies will receive from the Elementary Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), which is part of the federal CARES Act relief package.

The state will receive \$121 million ESSER funds, of which a minimum of 90% must be allocated to the state’s LEAs based on their 2019-20 Title I shares. While LEA allocations have been calculated using the Title I formula, ESSER funds will not be subject to Title I requirements. The remaining 10% of ESSER funds may be reserved at the state level for statewide support to LEAs in response to COVID-19 or to provide additional grant opportunities for LEAs. To gather stakeholder input on how CDE may use the 10% state reserve funds, the department will be launching a survey in the next week.

For more information about the projected LEA allocation of and allowable uses for ESSER funds, [visit the CARES Act Relief Funds webpage](#) or contact Nazie Mohajeri-Nelson at mohajeri-nelson_n@cde.state.co.us.










Colorado Department of Education

Professional Development



Check out this comprehensive search tool for [Colorado Department of Education professional development opportunities](#), including in-person and self-paced trainings, webinars, and more. This web page displays upcoming opportunities and scheduled events. You may also view a library of on-demand opportunities you can complete at any time.

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>.

Educator Licensing

Educator Licensure concerns related to COVID-19—CDE’s Licensing Office has received questions about the impacts of COVID-19 on licensure requirements. Educators can find information about state statutes, rules, and prevailing business practices on the [COVID-19-Related Licensure Concerns webpage](#), as well as information about:

- Obtaining, renewing or advancing a credential if an in-state or out-of-state applicant is:
 - unable to access Praxis® or other required exam(s) during COVID-19 closures or cancelations, and/or
 - unable to complete or document professional development or induction program completion.
- Obtaining required fingerprint-based background checks.

Additionally, educator licensing consultants are available to assist at CDElicensing@cde.state.co.us and (303) 866-6628. Please allow 24 business hours for a response.

New COVID-19 Application Incomplete status—A “COVID-19 Application Incomplete” status has been added in the eLicensing Verification Access system in response to [licensing accommodations](#) for applicants unable to complete content exams and/or professional development requirements due to COVID-19 related closures or cancelations. This new status is intended to help districts, BOCES and charter school human resource staff identify the reason an application is pending.

The new “COVID-19 Application Incomplete” status will only apply to applicants that have met all other application requirements but do not have sufficient professional development, coursework or documentation as outlined on the [COVID-19-Related Licensure Concerns webpage](#).

Once posted, the new “COVID-19 Application Incomplete” status will hold applications open pending a content exam through Nov. 30, and those pending an induction certificate or professional development documents will remain open for 120 days. All other applications will be evaluated and processed as usual.



Orientation & Mobility

Distance Learning Activities O&M Style

Thanks to Perkins School for the Blind E-Learning team, for some great activities that reinforce a lot of concepts. Their first post involved [six games that can be played on Zoom](#). They include: Trivia, 5 Second Guess, Jeopardy, Charades, Pictionary, and Taboo.

Their second post had an [O&M Twist](#) and included game information for Bingo, I Hear through My Little Ears, and O&M Scavenger Hunt.



Webinar Recording Available! --Teaching Street Crossings with Simulation / Distance-Based

APH's "Crossings With No Traffic Control" software provides simulation experiences and information that help instructors teach students to analyze situations at street crossings where there is no traffic control, including recognizing when they don't have enough warning of approaching vehicles ("Situations of Uncertainty"). This field-tested tool can assist with building confidence and competence with young and older clients through instruction and coaching.

The presenters of this 3 hour webinar provided an overview of this multimedia product, along with case studies for its use. Experienced O&M panelists explored the ethical use of this product for distance-based consultation with specific clients and students, with a question and answer discussion from the attendees. Among other things, the webinar introduced remote instruction of some street-crossing skills. It was emphasized that remote / simulated O&M instruction can be an effective tool to augment or accelerate learning, but it should never stand alone – it is essential that the O&M specialist assess the student in real situations to ensure that whatever was learned during remote / simulated instruction can be applied effectively to real situations.

The recording of the April APH three hour webinar has been posted, along with videos and descriptions of remotely teaching street-crossing skills, FAQs, and more, at www.sauerburger.org/dona/Remote.html.

Parent Mobility Website

Two Utah Orientation and Mobility Specialists have put together a webpage of resources for parents, families, teachers, and O&M Specialists. The [website has resources that explain O&M skills](#) across grades levels and offers activities, calendars, and videos.

Perkins School for the Blind O&M Resources

The [website has a series of resources](#) that explain the techniques, general importance, and necessity of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training for people who are blind or visually impaired. These resources cover further O&M training, services and resources, specific skills, and how to assist someone who is blind or visually impaired if they need help.

Tony Giles is deaf and blind. He's a world traveler who has written books about his travels and has BBC travel documentaries featuring some of his recent trips. He credits his future success to all goes back to his O&M instructor, Nicola.

Check out [Tony Giles his TedX talk](#) and his documentaries under the media tab (links to an external site).

Orientation & Mobility

ACVREP Letter Regarding Managing O&M Services Since COVID-19

28 April 2020

Dear COMS,

ACVREP has been receiving many inquiries about managing O&M services differently since the COVID-19 pandemic began. As you know, remote service delivery presents unique challenges. Technology offers the O&M profession a variety of new ways to make remote service delivery possible, and current social distancing rules provide the incentive to hone our tele-services and develop new professional practices quickly. The proposed Code of Ethics addresses issues of this nature in Principle 3.7 “The COMS will consider the safety and the best interest of the client, impact on team members, ethical implications of the method based on ACVREP standards, consultation with relevant professionals and jurisdiction regulations”. The Subject Matter Expert Committee met this past week to discuss this challenge and identified key concerns for COMS to consider as follows:

1. Managing risk. While risk assessment is fundamental to any O&M engagement, your ability to evaluate risk might be obstructed through tele-services. Phone calls, verbal descriptions and camera angles may offer less information to the O&M professional than the visual and auditory scope that is usually available when working with a client in person.

These practices can help to maximize client safety:

a. Be methodical in your risk assessment at the start of every client’s program and every session. Give particular attention to the client’s risk of falls and risk of collisions. If you deem the risk too great to be undertaken, then suspend the program or session and do some more homework on how best to manage the risk. It is essential to acknowledge that there are lessons that can only be taught in person as this is the only way to minimize risk.

b. Where appropriate, make and document your risk assessment and conditional recommendations about the client’s independence or need for additional supervision and/or support. While conservative recommendations might limit the client’s independent travel or O&M activities in the short term, they could be necessary until such time as you or another O&M specialist can observe and confirm the client’s abilities in person. As usual, this need for travel restrictions is likely to depend on the client’s age, maturity and level of insight, as well as feasibility given the other support options available.

2. Evaluating Instructional Strategies for Tele-services. Many resources are being developed quickly in the face of COVID-19 and made available on the internet to support O&M tele-services. It is exciting to see this O&M innovation and the generosity of the O&M profession in sharing novel ideas. However, the onus is on the COMS to evaluate the quality of any resource you find, even when it comes from experienced and reputable professionals. Just because the strategy works for others does not mean it will be right for all.

We encourage you to:

a. Evaluate the resources/information yourself.

b. Consult with a COMS, check with a colleague, discuss with a parent or other stakeholder in the client’s program. Collegial support is important when brainstorming ideas for a client’s program. It is also beneficial to debrief after a crucial conversation and to problem-solve.

c. Evaluate any resources you make available to others and build this evaluation into the resource as you share it.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a sobering time and we need to be sensitive to the grief, interruptions and changes it is forcing on every individual in the community. However, it also provides opportunities for amazing innovation in our profession. ACVREP welcomes this O&M innovation to promote safety and wellbeing as we move forward together with colleagues, clients, professionals and others.

Sincerely, ACVREP COMS Subject Matter Expert Committee Dr. Laura Bozeman.

Co-Chair , Erica Ihrke, Co-Chair, Brenda Naimy, Dr. Molly Pasley, Jennifer Urosevic, Lauralyn Randles, Dr. Nancy Higgins, Mathew Hogel, Chris Tabb, Dr. Kim Zebehazy, Dr. Elizabeth (Lil) Deverell, Dr. Rob Wall Emerson, Nolan Markle, Michael Byington, Kevin Hollinger, Immediate Past Chair

4380 N. CAMPBELL AVE., SUITE 200, TUCSON ARIZONA, 85718 | OFFICE: (520) 887 6816 | FAX: (520) 887-6826 CVREP.ORG 28



Calendar of Events



2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
May 20	ExCel Academy —Writing with a Slate and Stylus with Leanne Grillot Registration Link											
May 21	ExCel Academy —Coding with Robin Lowell Registration Link											
May 22	ExCel Academy —Three Determined Students: Laura Bridgman, Anne Sullivan, and Helen Keller Registration Link											
May 25	ExCel Academy —NO CLASS—Holiday											
May 26	ExCel Academy —Reading Connections/Writing Companions w/Cheryl Kamei-Hannan & Leila Ricci Registration Link											
May 27	ExCel Academy —Virtual Family Drum Circle with Steve Turner Registration Link											
May 28	ExCel Academy —My Neighborhood, What’s Around Me? Consortium of Creative O&M Specialists Registration Link											
May 29	ExCel Academy —Independencia en Casa with Conchita Hernandez Registration Link											
June 15-18	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Early Elementary (K-2 grade) Registration Link											
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 22-25	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Pre-Symbolic Language (any age or grade) Registration Link											
June 22-July 3	NRB BELL Academy —online Contact: Martin Becerra-Miranda at mbecerra@cocenter.org											
June 29-July 2	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Transition age (10 grade through 21 years) Registration Link											
June 30—July 5	National Federation of the Blind Convention —Houston, Texas Contact: www.nfbco.org											
July 6- 9	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Junior High (7-9 grade) Registration Link											



Calendar of Events

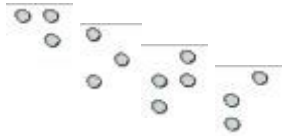
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July 13-16	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Upper Elementary (3-6 grade) Registration Link
July 20-23	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Early Elementary (K-2 grade) Registration Link
July 27-30	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Pre-Symbolic Language (any age or grade) Registration Link
July 27-August 7	NRB BELL Academy —online Contact: Martin Becerra-Miranda at mbecerra@cocenter.org
July 27-August 7	2020 M ~ Power – Helen Keller National Center Contact: Laura Benge at Laura.Benge@hknc.org
August 3-6	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Transition age (10 grade through 21 years) Registration Link
August 10-13	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Junior High (7-9 grade) Registration Link
August 17-20	Virtual ExCEL Summer Camp —Upper Elementary (3-6 grade) Registration Link
August 28	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting: 1-2pm, Zoom meeting Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
September 17	Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting —Cherry Creek Schools, CO Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
November 12	Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting —Denver Public Schools, CO Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
October 8-9	APH Annual Meeting — Louisville, KY Contact: www.aph.org

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

February 11, 2021	Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting —Littleton Public Schools, CO Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
April 22	Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting —Aurora Public Schools, CO Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
October 7-8	APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY Contact: www.aph.org

Best wishes for a healthy and rejuvenating summer ahead!



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.

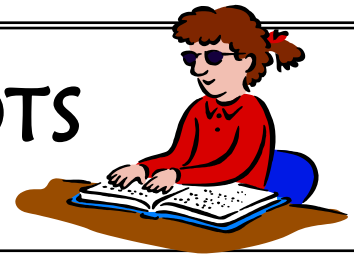
FOR SUMMER BRAILLE COMPETENCY TESTING AND RENEWAL NEEDS, CONTACT TANNI FIRST.

Braillewriter Repair

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



CONNECTING THE DOTS



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>.

TACTILE READING

Braille, graphics and digital aids.
A conference for practitioners and academics

Call for Abstracts

Deadline: May
15th 2020

The [2nd Tactile Reading Conference](#) will be held in Oslo, Norway April 29-30, 2021. The conference will focus on braille and graphics, including digital aids for braille reading and the use of 3D-printed material. The focus will be on early intervention and education for children, youth, and adults within the field of tactile reading. The program will have keynote sessions, parallel workshops/presentations

and exhibitions of technical aids for braille and graphic, as well as poster presentations.

You'll find relevant topics and more detailed information at the [Tactile Reading webpage](#).

The deadline to submit abstracts is May 15th, 2020. You will find the submission form on their home page at www.tactilereading.org.

Call for abstracts:

We are looking for presentations and posters by practitioners and researchers

The Tactile Reading conference in Oslo 29th and 30th of April 2021 will bring together:

- Practitioners, developers and innovators in the field of tactile reading
- Academics in various research areas
- Commercial companies

The conference will promote best practices and inspire new ideas for research, and get people together for future collaboration. Relevant topics are:

- An Inclusive Approach to Early Intervention in Kindergarten and School
- An Inclusive Approach to Braille and Literacy
- Tactile Graphics and 3D Material
- Tactile Reading and Universal Design
- The Neuroscience of Tactile Reading and Understanding

Call for Abstracts

We are seeking practitioners and researchers to give presentations. The time for a presentation is 20 or 40 minutes. It is also possible to give a poster presentation. All presentations will be in English.

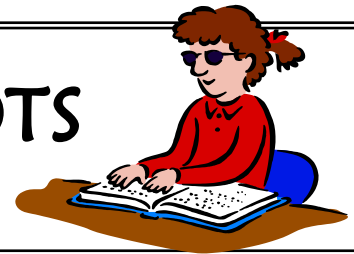
Please also note the pre-conference at 28th April 2021.

For more information and details about the conference and pre-conference visit the [Tactile Reading website](#).

Tactile Reading 2021 is arranged by Statped, The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille, The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, and The Norwegian Braille Authority.



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Blind and Deafblind Students Set to Take Advanced Placement Tests File Civil Rights Complaint Against College Board



National Federation of the Blind Also Party to Complaint

Baltimore, Maryland (May 11, 2020): Five blind high school students and the National Federation of the Blind, the nation's leading advocate for equal education of the blind, have filed a complaint against the College Board with the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) on behalf of themselves and all other blind and deafblind students who are registered to take the May 2020 advanced placement (AP) tests from the College Board. The complaint alleges that the College Board, which is primarily administering the AP tests digitally because of the coronavirus pandemic, is refusing to grant the students approved accommodations to which they are entitled. These accommodations include hardcopy Braille versions of the examinations; hardcopy tactile versions of the charts, coordinate planes, maps, and other graphics that must be interpreted in order to answer examination questions; the use of qualified readers; and approved breaks. Although the students are allowed to use assistive technology such as a screen reader and are being given extra time, any amount of time the student takes to resolve an issue with their assistive technology will still be deducted from their testing time. The students and the National Federation of the Blind have proposed several solutions to meet what the College Board says are security concerns with administering a hardcopy Braille test, but all of these proposals have been rejected.

"By propounding a false choice between equal access and security, the College Board seeks to force a one-size-fits-all accommodation on these students, in clear violation of applicable federal law," said Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind. "Furthermore, the College Board is denying them the right to use Braille, the globally recognized reading and writing method for blind and deafblind people. The National Federation of the Blind is America's civil rights organization of the blind and the nation's leading champion of Braille. We have tried to work with the College Board in the past but significant systemic change has not happened. We will not stand for the College Board's discrimination and are proud to fight alongside these students." For more of the story, [check out the National Federation of the Blind.](#)

NFB BELL In Home Edition—In place of our in-person BELL Academy, along with the National Federation of the Blind, the Colorado Center for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado are happy to offer 3 two-week-long sessions of NFB BELL Academy. These will take place at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time and at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time. So that will be 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. Each session will last for forty-five minutes during the following dates:

- June 1 - June 12
- June 22 - July 3**
- July 27 - August 7

** Please note the 11:00 a.m. session taking place June 22, 2020 through July 3, 2020 will be conducted in Spanish. This will be 9:00 a.m. MST.

Depending on which session your family applies for, the National Office of the National Federation of the Blind will be sending out all necessary materials.

[MFB BELL I-Home registration](#)

If your family has applied for one of the three in-person BELL Academies we were going to run, please visit the registration page to update your application.

The National Office of the National Federation of the Blind will be coordinating the instruction of these lessons.

Each day during the two-week session, there will be two opportunities to connect via web or phone with an experienced teacher.

We will be coordinating local mentors that will be assigned to each family. These mentors will be reaching out to their families at least once per day to check in and provide any necessary support.

This program is free to those hoping to participate. However, please feel free to [make a donation to NRB.](#)

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.

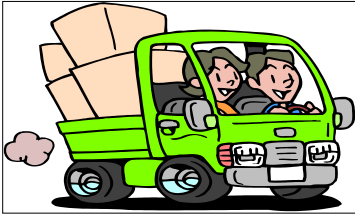
1. Children with all levels of visual impairment (including those with multiple disabilities and those who are deaf-blind) have a right to early intervention and education that is timely, ambitious and results in the highest possible achievement for each individual.
2. Children with visual impairment 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!

Colorado Plans to Offer Seniors free SAT Tests on a School Day Next Fall

DENVER – Colorado 12th graders would be able to take the SAT test on a school day next fall for no cost under an agreement the Colorado Department of Education is pursuing with the College Board, the organization that administers the test.

This spring's administration of the SAT along with the rest of the state's assessment requirements for the 2019-20 school year were suspended by [Gov. Jared Polis' executive order](#) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the SAT plays an important role in the lives of Colorado's high school students as a means of demonstrating readiness for graduation and postsecondary experiences, as well as providing scholarship opportunities, a commitment was made to investigate alternative testing options.

"It's important for many of our students and their families to know the state is still planning to provide them with an opportunity to take the test for free on a school day," said Katy Anthes, Colorado's education commissioner. "Preserving continuity in the assessment expectations and experiences is especially important now as Colorado high school students navigate the many changes brought about by the national emergency."

CDE expects it would be able to offer vouchers for interested students who are unable to take the SAT on the designated school day to participate in a national administration on a Saturday this fall. Additionally, options for offering the PSAT tests that are normally taken by ninth and 10th graders are being investigated.

The results of the assessments are not intended for school and district accountability, which has been [paused for the 2020-2021 school year](#).

As with all state programs, a fall administration of the assessment depends on adequate state funds being available.

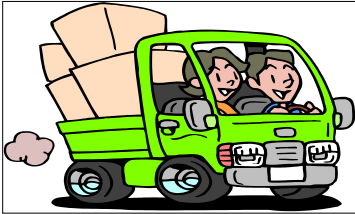
National APSE Virtual Conference

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

June 15-18, 2020 Virtual

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. This conference will be provided in a virtual format this year.

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!

Happy Graduation!



It is that time of the school year for GRADUATION! We salute our high school graduates for this important milestone! It is a time of true celebration for all that has been accomplished during each student's school career. We are proud of each of you!

Thank you to parents and families of our graduating students. Also thank you to the TVIs, O&M Specialists, braillists, and VI paraeducators who have contributed to each student's instructional access and success along the way.

We understand that graduation commencements and celebrations will be different for the 2020 graduates during this time of CO-VID 19, so check out the [graduation ceremony guidelines](#).

Graduation

A celebration...

**A time for looking back on lessons learned,
adventures share, bright moments filled
with special meaning.**

A farewell...

**A time for saying goodbye to old friends,
to good times you've known... a time for
packing away memories, treasures for tomorrow**

A beginning...

**A time for looking forward, a time to set new goals,
to dream new dreams, to try your wings and see
what lies beyond**

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 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

AFB American Foundation[®]
for the Blind

Parent Information – Home Instruction for Your Child

Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss The American Foundation for the Blind has put together resources for families. For the most updated resources, go to: <https://www.afb.org/blog/entry/accessible-education-resources#forparents>

[#AtHomeWithAPH Resources](#): American Printing House for the Blind has put together a list of activities to do at home including experiments, lessons, and art. Also, stay tuned for a series of free webinars on some of their favorite products.

[Virtual Expanded Core Education Learning \(ExCEL\) Academy for Students with Visual Impairments](#) offers free daily lessons for students with visual impairments. Paths to Literacy is collaborating with APH (American Printing House for the Blind) and CalState University to present this programming. Qualified teachers of students with visual impairments from around the country will be presenting a range of lessons. You can call in via Zoom or connect via the Internet.

VISTAS Education Partners Inc is offering a [National Homework Hotline for Blind/Visually Impaired Students \(NHH-BVI\)](#): In response to the wave of K-12 school closures across the United States due to COVID-19, a few concerned teachers of students with visual impairments and advocates got together to organize a free, homework help hotline for blind/visually impaired students.

[Breezy Special Ed](#) offers distance special education materials. This site has materials for students with a variety of disabilities. Several are specifically designed or blind students and some others are good for any student (such as the independent living skills/chore chart).

[Accessibyte Online](#) is offering free access to its entire cloud platform of apps for blind, low vision, deaf and reading impaired students. Highly visual and fully audible typing tutor, games, flash cards.

[Working Together to Support Students with Visual Impairments to Access Curriculum](#): AFB's Director of Research, [Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum](#), has launched a volunteer project to support our pre-K through high school students with visual impairments in gaining access to materials. We know that there are students with visual impairments who do not have full access to online curriculum, supplemental activities, or resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea of this project is to connect students and their families to volunteers who want to provide support during this unprecedented time of need. We're working to locate volunteers who can support students with needs. Families, let us know if you need support. [Learn how you can provide or request support.](#)

Each Thursday at 11 am, NFB is offering [interactive lessons for blind children and their families](#) on Zoom. They are also developing online educational activities and lessons, including a braille story time. NFB is also [collecting information](#) on the needs of their members in order to more effectively serve them and direct NFB's advocacy.



Supporting Parents as Teachers

[Parents: Supporting Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) offers practical tools and easy-to-implement tips to help children learn at home during the school shutdowns caused by COVID-19. Created specifically with parents in mind, this module covers strategies to help parents get children ready to learn, support reading and mathematics instruction, promote children's social and emotional wellbeing, and help struggling learners and students with disabilities. These topics and more can be found in [this engaging multi-media module.](#)

just for PARENTS



Center for
Parent Information
& Resources

Supported Decision-Making

As young people with disabilities grow into adulthood, they also grow into many new decision-making responsibilities such as money management, health care, employment, and transportation. Growing up and taking charge of your own life is no small task. It involves the kinds of discussions, considerations, and preparations addressed in our [Parent's Guide: Getting Ready for When Your Teen Reaches the Age of Majority](#). For many with disabilities, it's downright challenging.

Please check out the resources below are helpful in learning more about SDM and how it can be used to give people with disabilities a "voice and a choice" in how they live their lives.

- [Introduction to Supported Decision Making](#)—Watch this 11-minute video for an overview of the role that supported decision making can play in the lives of people with disabilities, enabling them to maintain their autonomy and independence through a network of support from family, friends, and the community.
- [National Resources Center for Supported Decision-Making](#)—Scads of resources to find here! Explore webinars, video series, articles, and people's stories, find forms and SDM model agreements, and learn the SDM and guardianship statutes in your state.
- [CPR Supported Decision-Making](#)—Here's another website loaded with resources on SDM, starting with basic FAQs and expanding into applying SDM in the different domains of adulthood. There's a very nice section devoted to [individual stories](#).
- [Supported Decision-Making: A User's Guide for People with Disabilities and Their Supporters](#)—this 2019 guide from Disability Rights Maine delves deep into SDM, its benefits, how it can serve as an alternative to guardianship, and the processes and planning that are involved for both the person with a disability and his or her selected network of supporters. The guide is easy to read and provides worksheets for determining what types of supports a person needs in key life areas such as money management, health care, education, employment, relationships, and more.
- [Supported Health Care Decision-Making](#)—(In English, Spanish, and Chinese) Need information on SDM with respect to health care? The Office of Developmental Primary Care in California offers videos, briefs, and training materials tailored specifically to different users, including self-advocates, parents and supporters, and professionals and policy makers.

Virtual IEP Meeting Tip Sheets

The [Center for Parent Information and Resources](#) serves as the host a [collection of tip sheets](#) on planning for and participating in virtual meetings, including those related to a student's IEP ([Individualized Education Program](#)). The tip sheets, [developed by six OSEP-funded technical assistance centers](#), include:

- a sample agenda for a virtual IEP meeting, in English and Spanish,
- technology tips for all participants,
- suggestions for *hosting* a virtual meeting,
- tips for those *participating* in a virtual meeting, and
- an infographic about virtual IEP meetings, in English and in Spanish.

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Advancing Equity in Our Communities—resources taken from the [BUZZ from the Parent Center HUB](#).

Data Sources Reveal Current Realities

Where to look to capture the current profile of the nation, your state, a specific population, even your neighborhood? Start here.

[America's Children](#)

Here, you can find the most recent statistics on children and families in the United States across 41 report indicators, covering a range of domains: family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health.

[The State of America's Children 2020](#)

Children remain the poorest age group in America. Nearly 1 in 6 lived in poverty in 2018—nearly 11.9 million children. The youngest children are the poorest and nearly 73% of poor children in America are children of color.

[The Demographics of the Nation or Your State](#)

Explore the many dimensions of the nation's population at the U.S. Census Bureau, such as race and ethnicity, families and their living arrangements, health, education, employment, housing, and income and poverty. Find out your state's data by entering the name of your state in the search box at the top of the page.



Center for
Parent Information
& Resources



Take
care of
yourself

C. STREETLIGHTS

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.

Southern Region – Jobs

- ◆ **TVI / COMS (1 FTE) and Brailist (1 FTE) Academy 20 School District.** Please contact Belinda Lujan-Lindsey at Belinda.lujan@asd20.org or (719) 234-1328

Metro Region—Jobs

- ◆ **Brailist / Paraeducator (1 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 Denver Public School District effective immediately. For more information, please contact Julie Hemphill at julie_hemphill@dpsk12.org
- ◆ **TVI / COMS (2 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/or 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 Specialists come back to contribute as subs for maternity leave, do contract work, and work at A Shared Vision. You can work at your pace and needs! Magic!



VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2020 - ZOOM

Persons in Attendance: Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Martin Becerra, Melinda Carter, Nancy Cozart, Jayme Cusimano, Julie Hutchinson, Julie King, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Jim Olson, and Michele Reed.

Absent: Paula Conroy

MISSION OF THE VISION COALITION: The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired. (April 1998)

ACRONYM LEGEND

ASV	A Shared Vision
BVI	Blind / Visually Impaired
CAER	CO Chapter of the Association of the Education/Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired
CCB	Colorado Center for the Blind
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CIMC	Colorado Instructional Materials Center
COMS	certified orientation and mobility specialist
CSDB	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
DVR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ESSU	Exceptional Student Services Unit
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
TVI/TSVI	Teacher of students with blindness/visual impairments

MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

- ◆ A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
 - Anchor Center for Blind Children – Melinda Carter
 - Colorado AER Chapter – Nancy Cozart
 - Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Martin Becerra-Miranda
 - Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
 - Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michele Reed
 - Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
 - Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jamie Lugo
 - Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Jayme Cusimano
 - Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
 - Northern TVI / COMS – Julie Hutchinson
 - Southern TVI / COMS – Deb Andrews
 - University of Northern Colorado – Paula Conroy
 - Western TVI / COMS - Julie King



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

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

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our final meeting of the school year was on April 16 from 3:00-4:30 through a Zoom meeting. Since teachers could join through Zoom, we had many more participants! We discussed continuing this option for all future meetings, even when we offer in person meetings again.

The main topic of the meeting was changed to distance learning. Karin Hensel shared an update on the shared Google document available to TVIs across the state. Here is the link: [Remote Learning Resources for Students with B/VI](#).

Discussion: It is suggested to take time at regional TVI / O&M Specialists meetings to open up the document and showcase new items. This can also be done at the CDE Office Hours.

The open discussion was to share successes and challenges with the distance learning format. Information included serving in our consultation role, which has come in to play a bit more with certain students/families. We shared how braille learners were accessing materials. Several O&M service ideas were shared as well as activities for kids with significant support needs. There was also an acknowledgement that some lessons may have to wait for in-person instruction. We brainstormed through logistics such as dropping off materials, video meetings, multiple technology platforms, IEPs, evaluations, ESY services, etc.

Rishika Kartik, a high school student who is president of CCB's Tactile Art Club, asked for ideas on how to include tactile art through distance learning. Ideas included use of household items - recycle materials such as paper towel holders or macaroni. We discussed family resources, providing verbal descriptions for tactile art that has already been produced and talking about/researching what influenced famous artists.

Michelle Chacon shared information on a charter school survey for parents of blind/visually impaired children that has been put together by a committee supported by the National Federation for the Blind to explore if there is a need for a charter school in the Denver metro area. TVIs have to check with individual district to adhere to guidelines before sending survey to parents.

Nancy Knight stated she will not be the Metro Low Vision Clinic Site Coordinator. Two metro area TVIs have expressed an interest in this role.

Jim Olson from CIMC shared that APH is open for business, but personnel are working from home.

Here are a couple links specifically addressed at the meeting.

[ObjectiveEd](#) [TREKS from APH](#) [Parent Mobility](#) [Zoom link about accessibility](#)

Metro Meeting Dates & Hosts for School Year 2020-21 with zoom options for those who cannot attend in person: September 17 - Cherry Creek, November 12 – Denver, February 11 – Littleton, and April 22 - Aurora.

Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

No information regarding retirement or openings for the 2020-2021 school year has been provided at this time. The last northern region meeting was held on January 31, 2020. At the meeting, the northern region TVIs were introduced to Cathy Smyth from the Anchor Center for Blind Children, who provided a training on The Boehm-3 Assessment. The TVIs were pleased with the presentation and the Boehm-3 Assessment itself; many order requests were placed with CIMC from the northern region following the presentation.

Discussion Item: Will we be able to take Braille Renewal Module over the summer? Response: Yes! Be in touch with Tanni on needs and she will work to determine who is available. Tanni will be in touch, if she has not already done so, about expectations for initial and renewal certification in this time of work-from-home and the expected changes with Stay Safer from Home. If anyone has questions, please be in touch with her. First priority is safety, second priority is demonstration of braille competency.

Discussion Item: Poudre is looking to purchase a new embosser and would appreciate feedback from TVIs on the embossers that they are using in their school district, or recommendations for specific embossers. If you are willing to provide some insight or make recommendations, please email Melissa French with Poudre School District. Response: Jim Olson has great information!

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

We welcomed new staff in our region this semester. Jenn Aldaz and Teri Kear are paraprofessionals at CSDB; Jerrod Sonneborn, Special Education Teacher, CSDB; and Lori Wilson, brailist in El Paso District 49, Falcon. Congratulations and Welcome! At our last meeting in March we discussed testing accommodations, IEP goals, technology and the testing materials that we all use.

The last Southern Region TVI / DVR Meeting will take place virtually on May 13th.

Judy Mumford (TVI) and Chris Maynard (brailist) will be retiring from Academy 20 School District. These positions are posted!

Western Region (Julie King)

Everything is going well with the Western slope. Everyone is adjusting to virtual teaching.

As of now, it looks like there are enough students interested in attending the Low Vision Clinic in September for one day. This all depends on what may happen in the fall and people's ability to travel.

The Grand Junction TVIs had two students participate in the Braille Challenge and they both did really well. One took second place in the Apprentice category and the other took first place in the Sophomore Category. It is hoped they can move to virtual regional TVI meetings in the next school year.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and Colorado's leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind or visually impaired. In 2019 more than 200 families received 2,241 service visits – an increase of 38% in visits from the prior year. These numbers reflect our strong partnerships with Community Centered Boards across the state and the need for home-based vision services for our youngest children with visual impairment including blindness.

When the state asked early intervention providers to stop in-home visits for everyone's safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, A Shared Vision's 15 teachers quickly pivoted to provide services through telehealth. Our teachers are currently reaching nearly three-quarters of our families through regular video calls, often teaming with other EI providers. The response has been very positive. As one parent explained, "For us telehealth has been good because Wyatt, our son, has still been able to interact with people he is so used to seeing on a weekly basis. It has also been nice to talk to his EI-TVIs about educational, fun activities to do while stuck at home." It has been a relatively easy transition to the virtual world since the ASV providers had relationships with families and were making home visits. As such the norm was set for parents being present in their homes for EI lessons.

Kimala Rein provided a national presentation on infant massage through a Perkins School for the Blind webcast. Another shout out to Kerry Auld captivated the first BVI Office Hours with her suggestions for working with families with materials in house. A new contract staff person with ASV is Liz Wieder.

A Shared Vision's other programs are also being delivered virtually until Governor Polis' orders are lifted. As part of the Family Support program A Shared Vision is offering online, video classes for parents on infant massage, music therapy and other stay-at-home activities.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Melinda Carter)

Anchor had to make the difficult decision to close for the remainder of the year. However, our program staff has remained engaged with our children and families by providing weekly resources including videos, activities and curb-side lending library to help with books and equipment to use at home. Jessica Hank and others have worked to sanitize this equipment for the lending process. Our website has been updated with a tab labeled "Education Center" to find these resources as well as a YouTube channel, Pinterest page, and links to other online pages. There have been interactive Zoom opportunities from the Music Therapist and specialists in feeding.

Some of our teachers and therapists have been doing Zoom sessions that have been well attended and much appreciated. The families like engaging with each other and being able to come together even if it's from far away. The virtual parent groups have been well received. There is a weekly newsletter. Also, a focus on engaging children with the items that are present in the child's home.

Our preschool graduation has been postponed until August and our hope is we can come together at that time to celebrate our graduates. As for now, our summer program is still planned for July, but we will let families know by June if that needs to be changed or cancelled.

Discussion: What is the protocol for transitioning children from Part C to B or from Anchor Center's preschool to public school. Response: the transition procedures are occurring virtually at the moment, with notations about what will happen when the people can meet in person again, such as child-specifically. It was suggested to do video calls with families and the sending and receiving TVIs to gain more information. Is there a need to have written "guidance" on transition roles / process to assist families with the transition from one set of services to a new set? ASV has some guidance – this might be a good place to look to see if we can craft a universal tool for our EI / private EC providers. Another idea is to do some virtual lunch-bunch opportunities for a school-based TVI to meet with families to talk about broad school district procedures / practices that could be helpful for the transition process.

Colorado Chapter of AER (Nancy Cozart)

The CAER board is working remotely as most of Colorado. We have been able to complete a number of actions that were on our spring agenda. Submissions for Awards (Gary Schmidt, Ken Neve, Lifetime Achievement, Community Connections) were due on April 1st. The board will vote at the May 7th meeting. We hope to share the awards at a future in person CAER event.

White Cane Day Artwork submissions were also due April 1st. The finalists will be determined on May 7th and then the full CAER membership will vote. Be looking in May for an email link to cast your vote!

The History of CAER Survey was recently sent out again. Please take time to complete this survey so we have a more complete record of our professional organization!

The CAER sponsored vendor fair was a big hit! We had consumers, professionals, students/families and community members stop by to gain information and have hands-on opportunities with equipment. Discussion has started about making this a bi-annual event!

Cheers to all those who put together the Spero Winery Fundraiser! Some people gave many personal donations and/or obtained them businesses in the community for wonderful door prizes. It was a great time to socialize with colleagues and friends as well as make money that will be directly used for our mini-grants.

Board Meetings continue to be open to all who are interested. They have been and will continue to be on-line for accessibility across the state through Zoom. We appreciate those who have participated!

Become a board member! It is a 2-year term for at-large positions. Attendance does not have to be in person. Write up why you would like to join or nominate a co-worker. We still have open positions!

Check out our Facebook Page!

We did have to cancel our annual meeting/luncheon this spring. The CAER board will work at our next meeting to create a document to share with members our financial report and review of 2019-20 events. We will also set up on-line voting for new/continuing board members. We will let you know about award presentations and the drawing for a free AER membership at a later date.

Colorado DVR (Michele Reed)

Staff Updates: Please note that DVR and the Blind Low Vision Services Unit are open and continuing to accept referrals, complete intakes, and provide PAT training. If you have a student that needs to complete a referral to DVR to participate in summer Pre-Employment Transition Services, please contact Audrey Wille at audrey.wille@state.co.us. If you have any questions regarding the referral process for Pre-ETS, please contact Michele Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us.

We have a few vacancies to announce including the Field Instructor (O&M/VRT) in Pueblo office, the Rehabilitation Counselor in the Golden office, and the Assistive Technology Instructor in the Colorado Springs office. A few transfers have occurred this quarter: Sarah Hill RCB in the Golden office has transferred to the Northglenn office, Sarah Holm O&M/VRT has transferred from the PAT center program to the PAT field program, and Michelle “Showe” Trela has transferred from the Colorado Springs office to the Denver Metro office to provide Assistive Technology instruction to clients in the field.

The waitlist for Denver Metro Center Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) program is six to seven months. However, this wait period may be affected by the pandemic and statewide “stay-at-home” order. We have been creative to find ways to provide training and services to improve client’s readiness to start at the center. A center instructor will meet with client’s on the waitlist in the field and evaluate priority skills and training such as O&M, typing skills, smartphone skills and provide that training until client has a start date. In addition to individual priority training, we have started group training opportunities at the center on Wednesdays to provide Daily Living Skills such as labeling, organization, medical management and cooking as well as group typing sessions.

We are still in planning stages for our summer workshops and activities. To date we have five workshops planned during the months of June and July. The scheduled workshops include:

- **DVR Denver Metro Bake Off** - June 11, 2020, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. Work readiness skills including daily living skills (cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping), orientation and mobility, teamwork, initiative, and advocacy will be emphasized in this workshop.
- **Free Time, Me Time: Looking at Adaptive Recreation and Leisure Activities**—June 16, 2020 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. This workshop will explore opportunities in the community to participate in adaptive activities and non-adaptive activities. This workshop will look at methods to adaptive activities for individuals who are blind and low vision to fully and meaningfully participate.
- **DVR DENVER METRO BAKE OFF**—June 11, 2020 8:30 a.m. to 2 pm at the DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. Work readiness skills including daily living skills (cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping), orientation and mobility, teamwork, initiative, and advocacy will be emphasized in this workshop.
- **Free Time, Me Time: Looking at Adaptive Recreation and Leisure Activities**—June 16, 2020 10 a.m. to 2 pm at the DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. This workshop will explore opportunities in the community to participate in adaptive activities and non-adaptive activities. This workshop will look at methods to adaptive activities for individuals who are blind and low vision to fully and meaningfully participate.
- **AMAZING RTD RACE - DENVER** - June 25, 2020 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. This workshop will include discussion, hands-on activities, and a competitive community experience that will enable participants to explore the various transportation services available to pursue post-secondary and employment opportunities.
- **S.O.S: STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS** - July 16, 2020 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. This workshop will include discussion, hands-on activities, and a brainstorming “Label Challenge” that will enable participants to explore low, medium, and high tech strategies to improve their organization. Whether at home, school, or work, students will be more successful if they have strong organizational skills.
- **Seven Essential Financial Skills for Young Adults**—July 21, 2020 10 a.m to 2p.m. at DVR Denver Metro Office, 2211 West Evans Avenue Denver, CO 80233. None of us was born knowing how to handle our finances. It is a skill that we learn over time, often with mistakes — aka, learning opportunities — along the way. However, there is no reason young people have to learn all their financial lessons the hard way. This workshop will present seven essential financial skills for young adults with discussion and activities.

Other workshops and activities in development include a preparing for college workshop, group volunteer activities, and a “Make and Take” Activities with the Dumb Friends League. As a result of this unfortunate disruption in our daily routine and lives, and due to the fact that transportation is often a barrier to students participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services, we are looking at ways to make the workshops and activities available to students statewide by utilizing some of the strategies use to work and study from home. Stay tuned!!

Of course, although remote training is available, all in person training and activities are suspended as we wait for Governor Polis’s guidance on reintegration after the “stay-at-home” order has been lifted. DVR and CCB have scheduled a Google Meets meeting with several TVIs, O&M and students in the Denver Metro Office. We will be presenting on summer activities available to Colorado students. If you and your students are interested in attending, please contact me at michele.reed@state.co.us and I will email you the link.

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

Mentoring Program: The 2019/2020 CCB/CSDB Mentoring Program has been a great success! Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this in-person mentoring program has been put on hold. The Colorado Center for the Blind is looking into other means to be able to provide interested CSDB students with blind adult mentors.

FAST Program (Fun Activities and Skills Training): as a way to supplement this program, the Colorado Center for the Blind will be holding FAST Zoom meetings every other Friday at 7:00 p.m. beginning Friday, April 24, 2020.

FAST and Zoom, Zoom and FAST: Our FAST Program for Blind Youth goes virtual!

Who? Blind students of all ages and their family members

Where? This will be a virtual meeting on the Zoom platform

When? Friday, April 24, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Observing “Social Distancing” guidelines doesn’t have to mean being socially disconnected. The Colorado Center for the Blind FAST program will therefore host a virtual get-together every other Friday evening at 7:00 pm starting April 24.

April 24: We have all been doing school and work online for weeks now. Some of it is going okay, but there are also real barriers for blind students in the virtual classroom. In light of this ever-changing virtual learning landscape our blind and visually impaired students face due to the pandemic, the Colorado Center for the Blind want to know how this is affecting blind and visually impaired students and to see what resources and assistance we can offer. We know that by now, most if not all of your school districts have made the difficult decision that in-person classes will not return the remainder of this school year. The Colorado Center for the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and the National Federation of the Blind stand together in supporting your educational and extracurricular needs.

Here are a couple of resources to get started with:

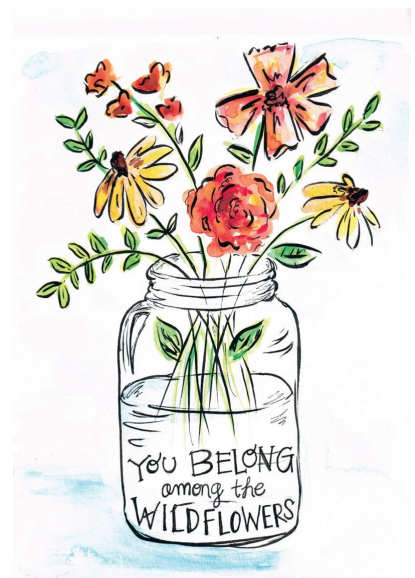
- [Don’t Be A Barrier, Be Accessible Now](#)
- [Complete the Education Technology Survey](#)

Oh, and we’ll definitely include some fun and “social” activities too!

For additional information or to receive the Zoom Meeting link/phone number, please contact Martin Becerra-Miranda by emailing mbecerra@cocenter.org.

FAST Zoom Meeting Calendar:

- Friday, April 24, 2020 at 7 p.m.
- Friday, May 8, 2020 at 7 p.m.
- Friday, May 22, 2020 at 7 p.m.
- Friday, June 5, 2020 at 7 p.m.



2020 Summer Programs: The Colorado Center for the Blind continues to explore options to provide the excellent training, mentoring and endless opportunities we have been offering to blind youth for nearly thirty years. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all in one way or another. With this in mind, we are moving forward with offering a shorter in-person residential program. The specifics are yet to be finalized, but we are hoping to offer some virtual instruction leading up to the residential component, as well as additional virtual instruction subsequently. For the most up-to-date information please visit [Colorado Center for the Blind](#).

Summer Workshops: We will be offering Saturday workshops starting in mid-June and going through early-August. The focus of these workshops will be employment, home management, STEM, and many other hands-on activities.

For information on any of our Youth Programs, please contact Martin Becerra-Miranda by emailing mbecerra@cocenter.org.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

The CIMC is open for business during the Governor’s stay-at-home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have technology and VPN access to our databases enabling working from home when possible. Staff has been taking turns going into the CIMC office building to receive mail and packages and to fill and ship book orders and APH orders. We cannot ship to a student’s home but we have been shipping to the homes of TVIs if they are not able to receive shipments to their usual school building addresses. Office hours are typically 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Statewide Count: at the guidance of CDE and Vision Coalition, the new requirement for signed parent consent forms was added to the statewide count this school year, starting with this January 2020 count day. We are missing a very large percentage of signed parent permission forms. Should the CIMC uncheck the ‘active’ box on all students who are missing a signed parent consent form as of the April 20th date (which is the end of Phase 2 of the FQ census), and reprint reports and send them to districts showing a student ‘active’ only if a consent form has been received? The numbers below reflect registered students – even if a permission form has not yet been received.

Discussion Item: Is this a good time to work with families on signing this one-time consent form? Since most families are at home right now, could we make a concerted effort to explain and seek parent signatures? Response: there are concerns with some families that have very specific questions. There may be questions about who sees the data identifying the child’s name and data. Can we put together more explanation to answer these kinds of questions? People seemed receptive to making another effort with families. We also know that families are feeling overwhelmed with a lot more emails than usual. Can this be part of the “porch drop off package?” This might be a way to avoid email, print-off requirements. Jim and Tanni will work to send out the form with more information about privacy criteria from CDE / APH. Let’s give it a try to see if we can recapture more of our learners with visual impairment, including blindness and deaf-blindness on our APH Count and the State Child Count.

Jim also shared that there is also an issue of not having a current eye report for some families. This is exacerbated by the fact that children cannot be seen by an eye care specialists during our state order to stay-at-home.

Statewide Count numbers for January 6, 2020:

82 - Early Intervention (birth through age 2). This number is not an accurate representation of this population. Agencies providing early intervention services report serving more than 82 students, yet only 82 were registered as ‘active’ on the January 6, 2020 count day.

1,192 - School-age (age 3-21)

Top six causes of visual impairment, including blindness by name of the cause and its frequency across the population of identified children and youth.

Rank 1: CVI

Rank 4: Albinism

Rank 2: Optic nerve hypoplasia

Rank 5: Optic atrophy

Rank 3: Nystagmus

Rank 6: Retinopathy of Prematurity

We continue to have some concerns about the accuracy of our primary etiology of blindness/visual impairment, but our data have improved considerably. Tanni has offered to meet with CIMC staff over the summer to work on addressing questions on these data. For example, if a child has myopia or cerebral palsy or even nystagmus as the primary reason for blindness/visually impairment, we want to clarify as these are not accurate reasons. Nystagmus should only be reported as the primary cause of visual impairment if it is motor nystagmus. These data just need to be right one time, then they will be forever right going forward unless there is truly a change in the child's primary cause of visual impairment.

1,274 - Total statewide (submitted registrations) (Birth – 21). This number is not accurate since we know that infants have not been registered accurately. School aged totals (3-21 years) are believed to be accurate.

Federal Quota Census: Count Day is always the first Monday in January. January 6, 2020 was this year's count day.

Phase I: The Census opens in November for us to begin gathering data. Runs through March 15, 2020. Phase one is the only time accounts may add new school districts and new students to the Student Registration System (SRS). Students no longer with an agency are 'marked for deletion'. We register every student who appears to function or meet the definition of blindness, even if your school district is still gathering the eye report and/or parent permission form. They can be 'marked for deletion' at the end of Phase II if the data is still missing.

Phase II: March 27, 2020 through April 20, 2020. This second phase of the FQ count process was extended this year due to the fact that nearly all agencies were working from home due to the stay-at-home orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During Phase II of the census, no new students may be added to accounts. We are allowed to update student records within accounts. We review and update possible duplicates with all other accounts nationwide. We review student records for missing paperwork at the end of Phase two and, if still missing, mark them for deletion. We review and save the Students Marked for Deletion Report for historical purposes. We click Submit for Review to close Phase 2.

Phase III: Usually begins early May. Closes two weeks after it begins. We save our final reports. We print the Certificate of Attendance for each account. The Ex Officio Trustee signs one original copy which is mailed to APH for auditing purposes. A copy of the original is archived for auditing purposes.

It is a requirement of the federal quota census program managed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) to have a signed parent consent form to share personally identifiable student information (PII) with the Colorado Department of Education, CIMC, CSDB, and the Student Registration System (SRS) database of the Federal Quota census program to register students with the annual FQ count. January 6, 2020 was count day. April 20, 2022 marked the end of Phase II of the FQ census. All students missing any of the eligibility requirements (such as a signed parent consent form or current eye health information, were "marked for deletion" before the accounts were closed on April 20th).

Account 20, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. This includes CSDB early intervention, and any students on campus, across programs (School for the Blind, Transition, etc.):

- 70 entered into the Student Registration System (SRS) for the January 6, 2020 federal quota count.
- 30 needed to be "marked for deletion" (turned 3 and withdrawn from early intervention, graduated, aged-out, withdrew from administrative unit, missing parent consent form, duplicate name, missing current eye report)

Account 22, Colorado Department of Education, public schools:

- 491 entered into the Student Registration System (SRS) for the January 6, 2020 federal quota count.
- 295 needed to be "marked for deletion." 13 were missing a signed parent consent form; the rest were mainly missing updated eye health information and could not be included.

Account 23, Colorado Department of Education:

- 59 students; all have signed parent permission forms.
- 12 were "marked for deletion."

Book returns for this year: The CIMC is able to receive book returns if a district is able to return the complete book (no partials, please) at the end of this school year. We also understand book returns may need to wait until the start of next school year, and the CIMC can accommodate that as well. Some TVIs are able to make arrangements with individual school building principals to enter a building within a limited time frame. Other TVIs have reported they will not be allowed back into district buildings at all for the remainder of this school year. Based on the book order requests submitted for the 2020-21 school year, about 15 titles currently checked out for the 2019-20 school year to one district are needed for a different student in a different district for next, 2020-21 School Year. Instead of having districts return these titles, the CIMC may issue a red colored return label and may ask TVIs to ship the book directly to the next recipient instead of returning the book to the CIMC. Please be sure to ship complete books – double check that you are not missing any volumes when shipping back to the CIMC and/or a new recipient in another district. More information and directions will be announced as decisions are made. If you have any questions or special needs, please be in touch with the CIMC staff.

New book orders for next 2020-2021 school year—an observation on new textbook production. The majority of textbooks acquired by the CIMC are transcribed by one of the many prison braille programs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the braille programs have stopped being able to transcribe braille in their braille programs. As of mid-April, some programs have been able to answer emails, while others have not been able to communicate with at all. Some prisons are totally locked down for the health and safety of the employees and inmates.

Some programs have told us that they think they will be allowed to have extended working hours once their programs are up and running again. This means that books currently in production for this 19-20 school year may be delayed. This also may result in a delayed start of transcription on new textbooks needed for next 20-21 school year.

APH Orders: the CIMC has been processing APH orders as usual. If an item is in the CDE/CIMC inventory then it can be shipped directly to the TVI. If an item needs to be ordered online with APH, we can do that at this time, but shipping may be delayed. Right now APH staff are working primarily from home and the manufacturing plant is closed, but a few staff are going in once or twice a week to process and ship orders, if inventory is available. They are able to receive orders, but are holding shipments to school addresses until we contact customer service to let them know it is okay to ship. Our typical CIMC procedures are for APH products to be used at school only and not to go into a student's home.

With schools being closed we are making a one-time exception to allow districts to determine if a product should go into a student's home (including a braillewriter that is the property of CDE/CIMC) but the district is responsible for the item(s). That means if a district decides to let a CDE/CIMC owned braillewriter go into a student's home, it should be returned to the district TVI by the last scheduled day of instruction according to the school district calendar for this year. If the braillewriter needs cleaning or repair at that time, it will be the responsibility of the school district and not CIMC.

Great COVID resources with APH. Be sure to check them out as these webinars are archived.

Discussion Item: What can the CIMC do to assist with procedures etc.? Response: people would love to see the CIMC host a virtual training on their procedures for new TVIs. Also encourage regional meeting folks to book Jim and his crew to beam in for a CIMC update.

There are so many moving parts and things to learn and it would be helpful to have the CIMC share this information with a larger audience. The CIMC is also available to meet with individual school districts to go through data and have a chance to clean up data together.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Activities: On January 13th, high school students hiked in Palmer Park with the Hike for Life Organization. Hike for Life exists to NURTURE community, INSPIRE exploration, and PRESERVE the great outdoors. The classroom teacher connected this hike to world history with the earliest Americans and facts about Colorado geography. After the hike, the students created a podcast. Students conducted a blind sensitivity training for 10 employees from the Independence Center on January 14th.

The School for the Blind hosted the Southern Region Braille Challenge on January 16th. All of the students participated in the celebration of braille. There were 26 competitors, 22 rookies, and 12 student helpers. The Colorado Center for the Blind volunteered by assisting with rookie activities for the day. Kim Ann Warlow from the Audio Information Network and Kevan Worley from WE Fit Wellness supported the students with their accomplishments. The Braille Challenge proctors scored the sessions on February 3rd. We will have results soon!

On January 19th-21st, four middle school and high school girls participated in a ski trip to Vail Mountain with Foresight Ski Guides. High school students celebrated the Chinese New Year on January 23rd with an activity supported by the Colorado Springs Public Library. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade were recognized for their 1st semester accomplishments at CSDB award ceremonies on January 24th. Trevor Thomas visited our campus on January 28th. Trevor is the only blind professional hiker in the world. He stopped by elementary classrooms during the morning, presented to secondary students during 6th period, and later that evening presented to parents and stakeholder. His message was powerful and engaging.

Seniors have been participating in monthly Career Connect session with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Eight UCCS students have begun their 2nd semester observations in four of our school for the blind classrooms. These students will observe for six weeks and also co-teach two lessons throughout their experience at CSDB.

Tina Boddicker has now been teaching a staff braille class, once a week. Due to popular demand a second class will be added. Staff from across campus are motivated and excited to be learning braille.

High School students attended the 27th Annual Cherry Creek Diversity Conference on February 1st, 2020. The conference is 100% planned for and by students! The conference deals with a wide range of topics including clichés, race, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical and mental challenges, multicultural art and music, socioeconomic concerns, and teenage social problems.

CSDB Outreach Services (Jayme Cusimano)

All May and June activities are cancelled, this includes iAdvocate Camp. CSDB is current advertising for a new Director of Outreach. Dr. Laura Douglas retired earlier in the spring.

This year the Denver Metro Braille Challenge added a Rookie category for students who are not yet ready for contest level categories. The goal of this category is to increase exposure to and excitement about braille while providing a social component to connect with other students with visual impairments who are braille learners. Station areas included Music, O&M, Literacy, Activities of Daily Living, and Art. We had 12 students participate in this category, as well as contestant level students join these groups after the completion of their contests. The stations were planned and run by some wonderful volunteers: Natalie Palmer, Van White, Elsa D'Angelo, Caitlin Geoffrion, and Ann Cunningham. Following the event, we received great feedback as well as great suggestions to support the continuation of the Rookie category in the coming years. Thank you to our volunteers as well as Jamie Lugo and the CSDB School for the Blind for sharing their Rookie group activity ideas to help us get our Rookie Category up and running!

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: we are in the third year of our five year grant cycle. The project's mission is free technical assistance to parents and service providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are deaf-blind or who have both a vision and a hearing loss. The project has a lending library and a website with a multitude of electronic resources that are available to families and educational personnel.

Project Goals. Goal One: to collaborate with state, local education agencies, and local agencies to implement a statewide system to identify Colorado children and youth, 0-21 years, of age, who are deaf-blind, and to heighten awareness of deaf-blindness. Goal Two: to ensure family members of children who are deaf-blind have the training and information needed to maintain and improve productive partnerships with service providers and contribute to the academic and functioning outcomes of their children. Goal Three: to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills of EIS providers, general / special educators, and related service providers regarding evidence-based practices that will promote academic achievement and improve results for children and youth with deaf-blindness.

Project Staff: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are co-directors on the grant project. Wendy Stoltman and Shelley Moats are our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist for the project. Both provide onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Shannon Cannizzaro is our Family Specialist. To request FREE technical assistance, please contact [Gina Herrera](mailto:Gina.Herrera@cde.state.co.us) at (303) 866-6681 or Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us. This has been a strong year for TA requests. Project services are open throughout the full calendar year. If you have needs over the summer, please be in touch with Gina!

Annual Deaf-Blind Count: the Child Count Data for December 1, 2019 is being tallied for submission to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. Thank you to all who submitted their updated census forms. You are most appreciated! We will report out the data in the August – September 2020 *Keeping in Touch* newsletter.

Please note that a child can be registered at any time in the school year. If you work with a learner with both vision and hearing loss, please be sure to work with Tanni to register the child. All learners identified as having combined vision and hearing loss are eligible for free technical assistance. This can be child-specific consultation and customized staff training.

Interveners: one area that has received recent attention is the use of interveners in Colorado schools. Gina Herrera is working currently to train seven interveners across four school districts. We are also teaming with parents and a few others to investigate other state models of training and supporting interveners. This will be an activity we hope to actualize over the summer months to build out a state plan!

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

Summer Institute: Due to the COVID-19 uncertainty, the 2020 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs has been cancelled for this summer.

BVI State Funded Activities: the CDE has a strong commitment to services and supports to our students and the staff who serve them. We are pleased to offer training and TA supports to the field serving children who are blind/visually impaired.

BVI Office Hours: Tanni is offering CDE BVI Office Hours every Wednesday from 1:00 -2:00 via Zoom. The purpose is to have a dedicated time for people to share how it is going in this time of remote instruction. Attendance is optional. The sessions are open to sharing ideas of what is working and problem solving challenge areas.

Google Docs: based on the all of the resource needs, we did a quick organization of resources so they would be in one place. Thanks to the help of Karin Hensel, Elsa D'Angelo, Nancy Cozart, Julie Hutchinson, and Jamie Lugo, there is one dedicated site of BVI-related resources for remote and home instruction / kid activities / etc. They can be found at: [Remote Learning Resources for Students with B/VI](#). Tanni will also be using her CDE BVI webpage as a place for these resources for the broader field. They can be found at [CDE Visual Impairment, including Blindness webpage](#).

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: due to the Colorado stay-put order, this even was cancelled. We hope to bring Mickey Damelio and Dr. Penny Rosenblum back for the 2020-21 school year.

CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: four Low Vision Evaluation Clinics were scheduled for this school year. Thanks to a whole group of wonderful people, we enjoyed a Western, Southern, Northern, and Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic. We thank our Regional LVE Clinic Coordinators: Angela Sims (Western Region), Debbie Haberkorn (Southern Region), Liz Weider (Northern Region) and Nancy Knight (Metro Region). We thank our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Team of Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, Jim Olson, and Debbie Haberkorn. The LVE Evaluation Team met with Tanni in March to plan for the clinics in the 2020-21 school year. Tanni will be sending out information in April about expected numbers of students for these regional clinics, so we can create a plan for dates and sites. We are hopeful we can offer clinics in the next school year when we are clear to meet in person once again.

Recruitment and Retention: We have a number of TVI / O&M Specialist openings - 2 FTE in Cherry Creek, 2 FTE in Denver, 1 FTE in Academy 20 and 1 FTE in Thompson School Districts. There is a braillist opening in Academy 20. Please be in touch with Tanni about expected vacancies. CDE has an active job posting for Colorado TVI / COMS jobs with AERBVI and specific to COMS jobs with ACVREP. We are hearing good news with paraeducators who are interested in moving toward a TVI degree. Thanks to those of you who are recruiting for our field!

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

Parent Database: we currently have about 226 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,200 families across the state. The database is used to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate addresses AND families of children with visual impairment, including blindness that are currently enrolled in our Colorado early intervention or public school programs. As children graduate or families move out of state, we need to ensure that we remove those families. As new families come into the system, please help Tanni to be proactive with getting families registered on the database. This is a voluntary process – so families need to complete and sign their registration forms.

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

The process of ensuring that school-based TVIs in Colorado are braille competent went very well this school year. Since the 2016 Braille Refresher Course, 42 TVIs and braillists have demonstrated competency in the Unified Braille Code using the CDE testing materials. Mentors have been provided to support TVIs in this process.

BVI Coach/Mentor Project: We have two amazing veteran TVIs/O&M Specialists who can provide free technical assistance to school-based TVIs/Orientation and Mobility Specialists. They are Shelley Moats and Wendy Stoltman. To request a coach / mentor, contact Tanni at (303) 866-6681 or anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CDE BVI Budget for 2020-21

The following activities have been approved for the new school year ahead!

- ◇ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- ◇ BVI Coach / Mentor Project
- ◇ CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- ◇ CDE O&M Seminar
- ◇ Vision Coalition
- ◇ UEB Math Training – on hold
- ◇ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- ◇ *Keeping in Touch* Newsletter



We discussed holding the State BVI Conference virtually with two days of four-hour sessions on the foundations of reading and then another two days of four-hour sessions on reading and the impact of blindness/visual impairment. If we are clear to hold a face-to-face conference in the fall, that would be ideal, but we would like to have a virtual plan in place. Tanni will check on the status of the READ Act teacher training requirements to work for a match with our reading training.

The UEB Math training is on hold until we can confirm a face-to-face training.

The content that was scheduled for the April 2020 CDE O&M Seminar will be transitioned to April 2021.

Virtual / Remote Education for BVI and DB Students

We have had two BVI Office Hour sessions and a recent Metro Region TVI meeting dedicated to “how is it working in the time of remote education.” We are hearing some great reports of creativity and getting it done. We have heard about Facebook pages, virtual family get togethers, virtual student get togethers, a ton of materials being dropped off at families’ houses, and braille instruction via distance learning. This home time has been, for many families and students, a great time to focus on the Expanded Core Curriculum. The goal is to do what we can for authentic instruction. It is a time to reach out to families to find out what is working and what is not working. The latter may fall into a category of home activities that can be supported by remote coaching and instruction and tied back to academic needs with a little ingenuity. This has also been a time to learn how to use paraeducators to support students – time making materials and also time for their own professional learning.

Another highlight came from our early intervention providers who have found the transition to virtual home visits not to be too daunting for families who are used to professionals coming into their homes and using materials within the home environment to teach their children within naturally occurring routines. The school-age folks can take some cues from this focus!

We also know there have been some steep learning curves on how best to address new platforms and accessibility challenges, difficulties for parent and student engagement during such a complex time in the home, and the struggles of how slow it can be for families/ students to receive mailed materials.

The CDE / field sponsored Google docs have been a source of information, as have many trainings across the country sponsored by AFB, Paths to Literacy, American Printing House for the Blind, and a host of other entities.

Needs Assessments

The Needs Assessments that were assigned to CDE and CDE and CSDB Outreach staff were working on designing and disseminating are on hold during this time period of work-from-home.

0-5 Vision Screening

Vision and hearing in-person screenings are not possible at this time. They cannot be completed with fidelity and it may not be possible for some time for kids to be seen by eye care specialists until the stay-at-home order is lifted. In the interim, we have designed a *0-5 Vision Screen Family Questionnaire* that can be used to collect information from families on risk indicators. The protocol was organized and populated by Tanni, Paula Landry, and Melinda Carter. It is posted on the [CDE COVID resource-Vision Screening webpage](#) (scroll down to this section):

Vision Screening

- [0-5 Vision Screening Protocol during COVID-19\(PDF\)](#) -0-5 Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire to be used during the period of time when in-person vision screenings are not being conducted due to COVID-19. It has been translated into Spanish.

Members of VC for the 2020-21 School Year:

The expectation is that most of the current VC members will be returning in school year 2020-21. Please be in touch with Tanni if there will be any changes.

Next Meeting Dates for School Year 2020-21:

September 10th, 2020 at the Anchor Center for Blind Children or via Zoom.



With Gratitude, We Say Farewell

Judy Mumford, from Academy District 20 School District, has been in the field of education for almost 30 years. In 2000, Judy received the Education Specialist of the Year in Academy D20 and the CAER Gary Schmidt Award in 2014. She was a Nominee for Teacher of the Year from the Braille Institute in 2012. Judy continues to be involved with the SWAAAC team for over 23 years. She also participated with Vision Coalition and so many other things throughout her career. Thankfully, Judy has balance in her life and finds time for faith, family, and nature.

Judy has been an ongoing mentor and guiding light to Deb Andrews and Melissa Shular. Her vast knowledge and ever so-calm-yet-assertive ways have made her an asset to any team she's on. This quiet, witty, humble, effective, thoughtful teacher has touched the lives of students, parents, and staff alike. She is truly a leader!



A student once said, “Judy Mumford was instrumental in providing me the foundation in blindness skills to help me become a successful professional. Her attentiveness to teaching me not just blindness skills, but also to making sure I can function as a blind person in a sight-ed world, was tremendous in making me the person I am today.”

“Less is Best - listen more and talk less is the Mumford way!” is what her colleagues say!

Editor's Note: I have known Judy since my first days at CDE. She was an instant friend and I have treasured our many years together. Wishing you all the best! Thank you!



Barbara Buswell, the PEAK Parent Center's co-founder and Executive Director, is retiring from this role. What began 34 years ago as a grassroots effort by Barb and Judy Martz, who both had young children with disabilities, PEAK Parent Center has become one of the most well-established, federally designated Parent Training and Information centers for parents with children with disabilities in the nation. Her work is recognized nationally.

We wish Barb all the best in all that is ahead and thank her for her many contributions to so many families here in Colorado and other states. We will miss you, Barb!

With Gratitude, We Say Farewell



Christine Maynard will be retiring this school year! She shares, “It has been my pleasure to work as a Certified Brailist/Vision Para for Academy D20 Schools for the past 16 ½ years. This work has been rewarding and challenging, but most of all in honor of our oldest son who lost his vision to a degenerative brain disease at the age of seven and his amazing perseverance. I learned the basic Braille Code with him and later learned all the rules when I became a part of the D20 Vision Team!”

Chris earned her Colorado State Braille Certification in 2006, her Library of Congress certification in 2010, and then earned her Proficiency in UEB in 2015. She was awarded the D20 Classified Employee of the Year Award in 2012. She joined the CDE Braille Committee in 2015 and has not stopped working with braille testing candidates since that time!

Chris reports, “I have learned and gained so much through these years and experiences providing braille and low vision materials for our students and offering a parent perspective to our D20 families and Vision Team. I look forward to continuing my opportunities to serve as the CDE Southern Region Braille Mentor and Proctor. Anticipating a great next chapter!” We thank Chris for all her contributions, which included being a proofreader for the *Braille Enthusiast’s Dictionary* and being an instructor during the 2016 CDE Braille Refresher Course series. We are happy to share that Chris will continue in her role as a CDE Braille Specialist in between all the new adventure ahead!

We say goodbye to **Savannah Spicer**, who has worked at the School for the Blind at CSDB for the past two years. Savannah is moving to Los Angeles, where to pursue an itinerant position! She shares, “This is the second largest district in the United States, so it is going to be a huge change from CSDB. The students, families, and staff that I met here have taught me so much. I am glad to have made another family here in the mountains. CSDB was an incredible learning experience and I have made many lifelong friends. I look forward to visiting in the future.” We thank Savannah for her time in Colorado and all her contributions. All the best to you, Savannah!

Also we said goodbye to **Dr. Laura Douglas**, who came out of retirement to once again lead the CSDB Outreach Program for a good part of the 2019-20 school year. She is back retired and we say our thanks for all she contributed in this last role with the Outreach Program.



colorado connections



◆ Gracias! Merci! Mahalo! Danke! Tualumba! Grazie! Tak! Thanks to our CDE Braille Team for their work with initial and renewal testing proctoring and mentoring activities over the course of this school year. It was a successful year for so many people who earned their initial CDE Certificates of Braille Competency or their Renewal Certificates of Braille Competency! A big shout-out to **Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein**. Thank you also to **Jo Pinto** for her work as our braille proofreader! It takes a village!

- As the school year closes, we thank our Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project staff for their work: **Tanni Anthony** and **Gina Herrera** – Project Co-Directors, **Roberta Curtis** – Program Support Assistant, **Shannon Cannizzaro** – Family Specialist, and **Wendy Stoltman** and **Shelley Moats** – DB Technical Assistance Specialists. Tanni and Gina have just finalized the Annual Performance Report and it was a pleasure to review the data of so much rich activity over the school year. It was a banner year for technical assistance requests. We co-hosted the Western Region Early Intervention Conference. Gina launched our first ever formal training plan for interveners with seven participants. There will be some follow-up spring – summer activities to design a Colorado intervener training and support plan. **Dinah Beams** is helping to build a series of short narrative training videos on pediatric deafness. Gina and Roberta are finalizing our December 1, 2019 Colorado Child Count of children and youth who are deaf-blind. **Tanni Anthony, Paula Landry, and Melinda Carter** put together a *0-5 Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire* during the suspension of in-person vision screening. Sadly, our summer institute was cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are looking forward to more opportunities for training and TA in the new school year ahead. If there a deaf-blind TA need over the summer months, be in touch!
- A big thank you to all the amazing people who contributed to the success of this year’s four CDE Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. This is a partnership activity with the CSDB Outreach Program. Thank you so much to our LVE Clinic team extraordinaire **Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, Jim Olson, and Debbie Haberkorn**. What a dedicated team! Also thank you to our Site Coordinators: **Angela Sims, Debbie Haberkorn, Liz Wieder** and **Nancy Knight**. We know how many logistics they pull together to set up the site, confirm the docket of students, and help host the clinic – so thank you so much. A special shout out to **Debbie Haberkorn**, our overall LVE Clinic Coordinator, who adds the glue to the Low Vision Clinics and keeps all the moving pieces together!
- We say a very special thank you to **Nancy Knight** for all of her years as a LVE Clinic Site Coordinator. Nancy will be “retiring” from this role and we have so appreciated all of her work and special touches to the metro clinics this year and in years past. Thank you so much, Nancy, in your both of your past roles as a Certified Low Vision Therapist and a LVE Site Coordinator.
- Thank you also to the TVIs who have brought their students to the LVE clinics: **Nancy Barron, Jill Bookwalter, Danielle Burden, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Meghan Crosby, Elsa D’Angelo, Kari Finholt, Melissa French, Chris Holmes, Julia Hutchinson, Christopher Kinney, Kaitlin Lombardi, Lori Mattick, Aryn McNichol, Brooke Miller, Anitha Muthukumaran, Erin Noe, Mike Pillow, Amber Rundle-Kahn, Wendy Schlageter, Angela Sims, Savannah Spicer, Brooke Thomas, Maggie Tutt, Julie Vinikoor, Erin Warden, and Liz Wieder**. We thank all of the parents and students who attended and the following agencies/ schools who hosted the clinics. This includes Anchor Center for Blind Children, CSDB, Ensign Skills Center, and Mesa County School District. So thankful to all who have been involved in offering our students the gift of magnification in their school and personal lives.



colorado connections

- A shout out of appreciation for our CAER Board! **Nancy Cozart**, President of our Colorado AER Chapter, has worked tirelessly with her colleagues to provide activities to support our profession. Thanks to **Brent Batron** (Past President), **Heather Solberg** (Treasurer), **Michele Robinson** (Secretary) and board members at-large, **Paula Conroy**, **Stephanie Crosen**, **Barb Galgano**, and **Jeannie Lei**. We have appreciated the mini-grants, the fund raisers, the work to collect past Colorado AER history, the White Cane tee shirt contests, the newsletters, and other activities supported by our CAER Chapter. Thank you!
- How do you spell gratitude? T H A N K S!!! A round of applause to the amazing active members of the 2019-20 Vision Coalition for meeting twice in-person and once, most recently via Zoom. These individuals bring issues to the table and problem solve the next steps. Thank you to the following member representatives: **Deb Andrews** (Southern region), **Tanni Anthony** (CDE), **Martin Becerra** (Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs), **Melinda Carter** (Anchor Center for Blind Children), **Nancy Cozart** (Metro region), **Jayme Cusimano** (CSDB BVI Outreach), **Julie King** (Western region), **Julie Hutchinson** (Northern Region), **Paula Landry** (A Shared Vision), **Jamie Lugo** (CSDB School for the Blind), **Jim Olson** (CIMC), and **Michele Reed** (DVR). Your service is most appreciated!
- Congratulations to **Jenna Martin** of Windsor School District and **Jared Walker** of Pikes Peak BOCES on their upcoming graduation from the UNC Program on Visual Impairment. We are so proud of you two and know you are already making positive contributions to student lives.



- Hats off to the following people who earned their initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate: **Sharon Kay** of CSDB and **Jenna Martin** of Windsor School District. Also hats off to those the following people who completed CDE Renewal Braille Modules: **Erin Noe**, **Melissa French**, **Sarah Goodfellow**, **Jeanine Holmes**, and **Julia Hutchinson**. Many thanks to proctors **Brenda Shepard** and **Sarah Sonnier**.

- So proud of **Kimala Rein**, with A Shared Vision, for giving two national webinars on *An Introduction of Infant Message for Kids with VI*.

Check out the video at: <https://www.asharedvision.org/rein.html>

- Thank you to all who were able to participate in the BVI Office Hours. I know that the selected time did not work for so many people. It was sure good to see and interact with those who could join the Wednesday, 1:00 to 2:00 time period. It was helpful to have these opportunities to talk through situations, problem solve, share resources, and just be together.

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 COTMSs: 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

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